

**Digital Marketing & Communication Strategy Third Certificate and Master's Program  
Submitted by Tim Russert Department of Communication and Boler College of Business**

**Broad description and purpose of Program**

The JCU Graduate Program in Digital Marketing & Strategy takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding digital marketing. The program combines course work from the Tim Russert Department of Communication and the Boler College of Business to give students a marketplace advantage through integrated studies in the fields of marketing, communication, PR, and advertising. Students don't study these fields separately, but draw from the best practices and theories of each field as they examine concepts such as marketing analytics, social media and digital advertising, and content marketing.

We propose the third in a series of stackable certificates that could culminate in a Master's degree, as well as seek approval of the Master's degree. Students would complete the three certificates and then have the option to enroll in a capstone course where they complete a project that demonstrates their understanding of the integration of marketing, advertising, public relations, and communication as well as the ethical practices associated with these fields. As credentials become prevalent in industry, these certificates offer people an opportunity to gain credentials that are integral to professional development as well as offer the option of the Master's degree. What will distinguish us in the market is our commitment to Jesuit pedagogy and infusing ethics into the course content.

*Currently, we are requesting approval of our third certificate and the Master's degree.*

A benefit of this program is its uniqueness at John Carroll University. A current strategic initiative is to diversify graduate-level offerings, and these certificates and Master's degree address this need. In addition, because of its uniqueness, it should not draw students from other programs. However, the Boler MBA and the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship programs will share some of the courses, which we see as a positive, as it will support enrollments as we grow the program. Therefore, each course in the certificate is developed as a three credit course to allow students in other programs to participate in the certificate courses.

***Rationale***

Three traditional areas, brand and advertising, public relations, and direct marketing, form integrated marketing communication today. We argue that marketing professionals today need fluency not only across these areas but also in data analytics to operate successfully in a digital marketing environment. We have developed a program of certificates and a Capstone course that integrate these knowledge bases.

Historically, each area approached marketing and promotions from a different perspective. However, the move to digital marketing necessitated cross-disciplinary understanding, as it uses a one-to-one messaging platform (Direct Marketing) while also requiring firms to manage a brand's image (Brand and Advertising) and reputation (Public Relations). Despite this need and the increasing dominance of social media, each area continued to approach issues/problems/products from their own perspectives.

Further, as management perspectives shifted and more leaders had MBAs, an operational focus prioritizing return on investment (ROI) became essential. For hiring, marketing leaders wanted

people who were comfortable with creating, reading, and using spreadsheets (data), and were savvy using numbers for decision-making. However, leadership began to recognize that something was missing, the storytelling. They needed people who could look at the data but also had the skill for storytelling, which provides the context, message, and meaning behind the data. In turn, this information can be leveraged into developing, producing, and fine-tuning digital marketing strategies.

The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication rests on the principle that businesses work more effectively if these three distinct areas of messaging integrate seamlessly.

*What learning opportunities are missing/needed in the marketplace?*

- The understanding that we no longer talk “at” people, but need to engage them in conversation, if we want to be successful;
- People who have deep subject matter knowledge of each of the three primary areas of integrated marketing communication. They need to know the theories, fundamentals, and best practices within each area; they must understand the perspective from which people in that area approach their work;
- Integrated strategic planning, where all areas have line of sight to all other areas;
- People who are able to bridge gaps; they need to be able conversant in each area such that they have the ability to translate ideas from one area to the other;
- A level of business fluency that allows them to move between different areas of the organization, not just among the areas of integrated marketing;
- Understanding and embracing the central role of strategy in decision making, such that it is inherent in their approach;

We have developed our certificates to meet these marketplace needs. By providing credentials that are shorter than a typical master’s degree, working professionals can select the certificate that provides them with the content knowledge they are missing to operate more seamlessly in a digital marketing space. We envision that students, typically working professionals, may complete one, two, or three certificates. Each certificate is independent of the others. Students who complete all three certificates may choose to enroll in one additional course, a capstone project that leads to a Master’s degree.

- **Prevalence of comparable programs at similar institutions (nationwide and/or regional competing institutions)**  
Examination of ten comparison programs to evaluate the marketplace resulted in an understanding of the current landscape. Traditional master’s programs remain a significant part of higher education institution’s program offerings. All ten programs offered traditional MA programs. Two programs, Georgetown and Northwestern targeted working professionals with distinct programs. Both offer degrees/programs focused on the needs of professionals, rather than traditional age students. While we target the same market, the proposed program is distinct because of the approach; no other program offers stackable certificates. This structure allows students flexibility as well as the ability to choose the graduate level education they desire.
- **Relationship between proposed program and existing programs:**
  - Are there existing programs with similar goals and learning outcomes?
  - Is the new program expected to draw students away from existing programs?

- Could there be perceived conflict with existing programs?

Currently, JCU does not offer any graduate programs that focus on digital marketing communication. Boler's MBA program includes an elective in digital marketing and that course will be part of this program as well. We do not anticipate this program will draw students from existing programs, particularly Boler's MBA program. This will be a complementary program, offering MBA students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of digital marketing. The beneficial nature of this collaboration extends to both departments in terms of engaging students in certificate programs as well as graduate degree programs.

### **Program Curriculum**

The overall program is presented first. Each certificate is presented along with learning goals, objectives, and course descriptions. Whereas many graduate programs require prerequisites to ensure knowledge of foundational concepts, we discussed it and decided that because the intended market for the certificates is professionals working in the field, our goal is to deepen their knowledge in the given areas. In addition, the committee was hesitant to add barriers for people interested in registering for perhaps just one, nine-credit hour certificate. We want flexibility for participants, a main driver of graduate student enrollment.

## **Digital Advertising and Social Media Marketing Certificate**

### *The Goal of the Certificate*

Students examine various strategies to effectively engage consumers and the public using social media and digital advertising.

### *Learning Objectives*

1. Understand online reputation management strategies and analyze consumer behavior on digital platforms;
2. Develop effective social media accounts and manage consumer response and engagement strategies on social media;
3. Analyze performance and engagement metrics of social media efforts;
4. Gain the knowledge to launch digital advertising campaigns and assess ROI;
5. Demonstrate the ability to create social media influencer marketing strategies;
6. Understand different forms of digital advertising and be able to design and evaluate digital advertising campaigns;
7. Utilize digital advertising tools (e.g., Google Ads) to implement and manage digital advertising campaigns;

### *Courses*

#### **Digital Advertising and Marketing (3 credits) (DA)**

Students will learn the paid, owned, and earned digital media model, a framework for managing and analyzing multichannel digital campaigns. Through experiential learning projects, students will develop hands-on experience in applying marketing tools (e.g., Google Ads); creating, targeting, monitoring, optimizing, and evaluating digital campaigns. Students will gain foundational knowledge in digital strategy preparing them to navigate all types of digital media and future careers.

*Note: This is a foundational course for this certificate and for the capstone course for the Master's degree; it provides context for all courses in the degree.*

Proposed Textbook: <https://www.stukent.com/higher-ed/digital-marketing-essentials/>

Proposed Topics Covered:

- Week 1 - Digital Marketing/Paid, Owned, and Earned Media
- Week 2 - Digital Marketing Strategy and Analytics
- Week 3 - Websites and Mobile Apps
- Week 4 - Other Owned Media
- Week 5 - Paid Media
- Week 6 - Earned Media
- Week 7 - Careers in Digital Marketing

### **Online Reputation Management (3 credits) (ORM)**

Word-of-mouth communication reaches massive audiences through digital platforms. This communication about brands provides opportunities to analyze and strengthen organizational reputation. Students use industry tools to learn analysis techniques for reputation management on search engines, rating and review platforms, and social media. Students analyze customers' digital footprints, such as topical trends, sentiment, and influence to gain a big picture about customers' mindset. Therefore, students develop strategies of reputation building, crisis management, and engagement from real world examples.

Proposed Textbook: <https://www.stukent.com/higher-ed/pr-principles/>

Proposed Topics Covered:

- Week 1 - Public Relations in the Digital World
- Week 2 - Social Listening/Reputation Management on Social Media
- Week 3 - Reputation Management on Search Engines
- Week 4 - Reputation Management on Rating and Review Platforms
- Week 5 - Research and Planning
- Week 6 - Implementation and Evaluation
- Week 7 - Crisis Management

### **Social Media Marketing (3 credits) (SMA)**

This class covers the structure and nature of social media platforms and how they function to advance organizational goals and facilitate the decision-making process. Students learn effective social media strategies (paid and organic), segmentation analysis, engagement with stakeholders and influencers, and marketing strategies using social media tools. This course allows students to understand how to measure the success of social media initiatives.

Proposed Textbook: <https://www.stukent.com/higher-ed/essentials-of-social-media-marketing/>

Proposed Topics Covered:

- Week 1 - Social Media Marketing
- Week 2 - Marketing with Facebook
- Week 3 - Marketing with Instagram
- Week 4 - Other Social Media Platforms
- Week 5 - Blogs, Vlogs, Podcasts, and Webinars
- Week 6 - Paid Social Media
- Week 7 - Influencer Marketing with Social Media

### *Assessment Plan of Learning Goals*

1. Understand various social media and online channels for social media listening. - **Assessed in ORM**
2. Develop effective social media profiles and manage consumer response and engagement on social media. - **Assessed in ORM**
3. Understand engagement metrics of social media efforts. - **Assessed in ORM**
4. Gain the knowledge to launch social media advertising campaigns and assess ROI. - **Assessed in SMA**
5. Demonstrate the ability to create social media influencer marketing strategies for advertising and PR purposes. - **Assessed in SMA**
6. Understand different forms of PPC advertising and be able to design and evaluate digital advertising campaigns. - **Assessed in DA**
7. Utilize digital advertising tools (e.g., Google Ads) to implement and manage digital advertising campaigns. - **Assessed in DA**

## **Culminating Experience to Complete a Master's Degree in Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy**

### **Capstone**

Students who complete three certificates are eligible to enroll in a Capstone course that leads to earning a Master's degree. The Capstone course is designed to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning, commitment to ethical practices, as well as their ability to integrate marketing, advertising, and public relations functions effectively.

**Learning Goal:** Students will demonstrate their ability to perform appropriate marketing research techniques to develop marketing and communication strategies into a fully integrated marketing communication plan. Students create a client-based project that allows assessment of learning objectives.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Select and execute appropriate marketing research techniques;
2. Use research findings to create appropriate and effective strategies;
3. Create a thorough, strategic marketing communication plan;
4. Create appropriate integrated marketing content to achieve marketing and communication objectives;
5. Demonstrate creativity, strategy, and reliance on research/consumer intelligence to develop a marketing communication plan;
6. Demonstrate integration of content learning from completed certificates through project

### **Assessment**

Program learning goals are assessed through capstone course project

## **Approved Certificates**

## **Digital Marketing Analytics Certificate**

### *The Goal of the Certificate*

Students will acquire practical knowledge and skills in collecting, parsing, visualizing, and analyzing marketing data through digital marketing analytics techniques and traditional market research methods. Students will gain hands-on experience in obtaining consumer insights, applying marketing analytical tools and techniques, and transforming marketing insights into forming and optimizing marketing strategies.

### *Learning Objectives*

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the processes and techniques of marketing data collection, analysis, and visualization;
2. Demonstrate the ability to work with large data sets commonly associated with real-world marketing problems;
3. Develop a comprehensive knowledge of digital marketing metrics and performance assessment based on KPIs;
4. Apply digital marketing techniques to optimize digital marketing performance, including content analysis, A/B testing, etc.;
5. Gain skills to obtain consumer insights through both qualitative and quantitative methods;
6. Demonstrate the capability of incorporating consumer and marketing insights in marketing strategy development;

### *Courses*

#### **Introduction to Applied Data Analytics (3 credits) (ADA)**

Teaches foundational data analysis and business intelligence concepts, theories, and skills that inform data driven decisions. Students gather and manipulate large data sets to address real-world cases and generate insights for data driven decision-making. Students apply data manipulation tools such as pivot tables, visualization tools and statistical applications in Excel. Topic areas in statistics include data summary, probability, hypothesis testing, linear regression, time-series, classification algorithms, and biases in data.

#### **Digital Marketing Analytics (3 credits) (DMA)**

Focuses on the analytics behind planning, evaluating, and optimizing digital marketing efforts. Students will apply practical tools and techniques of digital marketing analytics (e.g., text mining) to gain knowledge and skills related to topics including data tracking and collection on the web, digital marketing metrics (e.g., web metrics, SEO, advertising, and social media metrics), KPI assessment, and conversion optimization.

#### **Market Research and Analysis (3 credits) (MRA)**

Students will develop the ability to conduct qualitative and quantitative marketing research and analysis to gain consumer insights. Students examine common qualitative and quantitative tools marketers use to develop, monitor, and evaluate marketing strategies. Topics include the use of online survey tools, interviews and focus groups, statistical analysis using SPSS, market share metrics, financial analysis, and analysis of promotion effectiveness.

### *Assessment Plan of Learning Goals*

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the processes and techniques of marketing data collection, analysis, and visualization. - **Assessed in ADA**
2. Demonstrate the ability to work with large data sets commonly associated with real-world marketing problems. - **Assessed in ADA**
3. Develop a comprehensive knowledge of digital marketing metrics and performance assessment based on KPIs. - **Assessed in DMA**
4. Apply digital marketing techniques to optimize digital marketing performance, including content analysis, A/B testing, etc. - **Assessed in DMA**
5. Gain skills to obtain consumer insights through both qualitative and quantitative methods. - **Assessed in MRA**
6. Demonstrate the capability of incorporating consumer and marketing insights in marketing strategy development - **Assessed in MRA**

### **Content Marketing Certificate**

#### *The Goal of the Certificate*

Students examine the fundamentals of branding, brand storytelling, copywriting, design & production to understand the foundations of content creation across media.

#### *Learning Objectives*

1. Apply appropriate criteria (e.g. communication theory, communication objectives, research data) to evaluate brand messages and marketing content;
2. Understand and apply fundamental storytelling techniques;
3. Develop and refine strategies for creating effective communications across media channels and platforms;
4. Understand how media channel and platform influence effective media writing;
5. Explain fundamental principles of design and production techniques. Critique work based on these principles;
6. Create content and provide appropriate explanation and reasoning behind creative decisions;
7. Integration and application of concepts;

#### *Courses:*

##### **Branding and Content Strategy (3 credits) (BCS)**

Students examine the fundamentals of branding -- what brands are and how they work in the minds of consumers, and how they work for businesses and organizations. Building upon this foundation, students develop an understanding of how brands are communicated through campaigns and content, as well as how brands can be evaluated. Students apply this knowledge to content planning strategies, digital marketing campaigns and performance assessment.

##### **Writing and SEO (3 credits) (WRS)**

Students learn how to write user-friendly content that converts readers and earns significant visibility. This course allows students to learn the fundamentals of writing across digital platforms, including websites, mobile apps, social media, and email. Throughout the course, students practice important content optimization techniques such as conversion rate optimization (CRO) and search engine optimization (SEO).

##### **Brand Storytelling Through Content (3 credits) (CON)**

Students develop a foundational understanding of brand digital storytelling. They examine the strategic use of various content elements—color, texts, images, graphics, video, audio, *et cetera*—in crafting an authentic brand story and voice.. An emphasis on the fundamentals of each medium is blended with how different platforms and media can be leveraged to tell a brand’s story to its audiences. Additionally, students develop ways to critique and evaluate brand content across media platforms. By the end of the course, students will be sharing brand stories in an authentic and relatable way, establishing a deeper connection with their audiences.

#### *Assessment Plan of Learning Goals*

The learning objectives will be assessed through assignments with appropriate evaluation rubrics across the three courses in the following way.

#### *Learning Objectives*

1. Apply appropriate criteria (e.g. communication theory, communication objectives, research data) to evaluate brand messages and marketing content. **Assessed in BCS, WRS, CON**
2. Understand and apply fundamental storytelling techniques **Assessed in WRS**
3. Develop and refine strategies for creating effective communications across media channels and platforms **Assessed in WRS, CON**
4. Understand how media channel and platform influence effective media writing **Assessed in WRS**
5. Explain fundamental principles of design and production techniques. Critique work based on these principles. **Assessed in WRS, CON**
6. Create content and provide appropriate explanation and reasoning behind creative decisions **Assessed in BCS, WRS, CON**

If we need to change a course, we presume a curriculum committee will be developed and we would take it to that committee; if not, both areas pledge to collaborate on any required changes.

#### **Evidence of faculty willing to teach in the program**

Christina DeVoss, Maurice Emelu, Tina Facca-Miess, Nathan David, and Elle Wu have expressed interest and willingness to teach in the program. Because of demand in the undergraduate program, we anticipate needing to use adjuncts for some undergraduate courses when these faculty teach a course for the certificate.

#### **Program Faculty**

**Nathan David, MBA**

Nathan David is the founder and lead consultant at his communications and analytics consultancy, Meta Impact. He has over 10 years of experience in digital communications and business analytics, during which he has driven results for a range of businesses from Fortune 500 companies, including Nationwide Insurance, to large health systems, such as Cleveland Clinic. He is the author of Stukent’s “Digital Marketing Analytics: Strategic Decision-making” digital courseware (used by over 40 colleges) and has designed curriculum for Wharton, Kellogg, Rotman, and Imperial College London.

**Christina DeVoss, PhD**

Dr. DeVoss brings a blend of industry and academic experience to her teaching and research at John Carroll University. Prior to earning her PhD she worked in public relations and marketing as an editor and copywriter. Her teaching and research focus on new media technology and how traditional communication concepts translate to the digital environment.



Fr. Maurice Emelu, PhD

An assistant professor of communication (digital media), author, television director and producer, non-profit board chair, web developer, and brand storyteller—whose research and practices are on digital storytelling and design, media aesthetics, and theological aesthetics. Has a Doctor of Philosophy in media aesthetics and religion from Liverpool Hope University, England and Master of Arts in communication management from John Carroll University.

Tina Facca-Miess, PhD

With an extensive background in applied research, Dr. Facca focuses on utilizing quantitative business statistics and qualitative customer feedback as a foundation for strategic planning, product development, and marketing strategies. Her consulting and professional marketing experience spans varied industries including food service and hospitality; healthcare; professional services, including law firms and accounting firms; entertainment; and non-profit organizations. She received her Ph.D. in Statistics and Econometrics from Goettingen University, Germany. She holds a Master of Science in Statistics from Case Western Reserve University as well as a Master of Applied Communication Theory and Methodology from Cleveland State University.

Yingling (Elle) Wu, PhD

Yinglu Wu is an associate professor of marketing for John Carroll University's Boler College of Business. Dr. Wu received her Ph.D in Marketing and Master of Applied Statistics from Louisiana State University. She is currently a member of INFORMS Society for Marketing Science and American Advertising Federation. Dr. Wu offers expertise in online marketing strategies through both quantitative and qualitative analyses of consumer online shopping behavior and companies' online activities.

### **Organization and Administration of Program**

#### *Responsibilities of program director*

Chairs and Graduate Program Directors play important roles in the recruitment and retention of graduate students. At the program level, they are responsible for implementing the strategic graduate enrollment plan, overseeing academic integrity of the graduate programs, serving as the primary point of contact of graduate students, and facilitating clear communication between the program, the department, and the Graduate School.

- Working with the Graduate School, build cohorts that support the strategic enrollment goals with respect to academic quality, diversity and inclusion, net tuition revenue, etc.;
- Maintain up-to-date information on the program's website, communications, and Bulletin;
- Oversee operation of the program, including admissions, comprehensive exams, thesis/essays/creative projects, among others, as appropriate;
- Serve as departmental resources regarding processes and procedures pertaining to graduate programs in the department;
- May oversee placement and evaluation of graduate assistants in programs or departments;
- Serve as the program representatives on the Graduate School Committee;
- Serve as the primary points of contact for graduate students in programs, overseeing recruitment, orientation, and other programmatic events;
- Advise students on timely degree completion (or works with faculty advisors to do so);
- Help students navigate problems in the program, if they arise;
- Encourage best practices for supervision of graduate students;
- Promotes a positive environment for graduate education in the department;

Initial Graduate Program Director will be the Chair of the Russert Department. The program director reports to the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of CAS, and the Dean of Boler.

### **Implementation Timetable**

- a. The first course in the Content Marketing certificate is offered in fall 2021, in the second seven week session.
- b. Timeline for students completing a certificate with seven -week sessions: if student completes six credits per term, 1.5 semesters
- c. Timeline for students completing the MA: 27 credits=3 certificates plus Capstone course, 1.5-2 years, part time (if completing 6 credits/semester, 1 calendar year –spring, summer, fall-to complete three certificates; one additional semester to complete MA capstone course)

### **Assessment (see curriculum section)**

Anticipated method of assessing the learning outcomes

Indicators that will be used to gauge program success; e.g., strong enrollment for certificate programs, positive course evaluations demonstrating value of the program for students, the number of students electing to pursue the Master's degree, and the students' who have completed the program reporting positive outcomes for their careers once they complete the certificates/Master's program.

### **Enrollment**

In our first semester (21-22 AY), we anticipated five students and actually enrolled eight students in the first certificate in the Content Marketing program. With consistent marketing in place, we anticipate growing enrollment by five students per year. Our ideal is to enroll up to 20 students per course in each of the certificates. With multiple certificates offered at the same time, we would imagine enrollment between 30 and 40 students at any point in time. Our projections are premised on data from Eduvantis as well as the outcomes of the research Falls Communication conducted for us that we used in developing the stackable certificate program.

### **Anticipated budget**

*Description of expenses during start-up: FTE Faculty and Benefits (if new faculty hire), capital equipment, library resources, etc. Description of ongoing expenses: Administrative/staff support (including load reduction for director if applicable), equipment replacement, travel, supplies, etc.*

Ongoing expenses include

The Director's position may request a course load reduction (one annually) based on the success of the program and the associated workload. We anticipate needing 25+ student enrolling annually before we request a course load reduction or stipend for the program director

The Graduate School provides support for maintaining applications, marketing and information flows, tracking student progress, and answering basic questions.

### *Description of expected revenue from the program*

Our goal is to enroll 10 students per certificate course in the first year. We will increase enrollment to 20 as knowledge of the program increases. We plan to offer two three credit classes per semester

initially. As the program develops and enrollment increases, we will offer multiple modules per semester.

**Tuition Revenue**

		Year 1-10 students	Year 2-20 students
Credits/certificate	9		
Tuition per credit hour	\$778	\$7,780	\$15,560
Revenue per student /certificate	\$7,002	\$70,020	\$135,040
<b>Expenses</b>			
Operating expenses	Software/Supplies	\$10,000	\$15,000
Course development grants	\$3000/each	\$12,000	\$12,000
Fringe	15%	\$1,800	\$1,800
Course load reduction for director when program is fully up and running	1/annually once enrollment is 25+	~\$5,000	~\$5,000
Adjunct Faculty stipend to teach undergrad classes	\$4000/semester	\$8000	\$8000

**Sample Schedule for Offering Courses**

	Fall 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Summer 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Summer 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Fall 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Fall 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2023 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2023 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks
Courses offered	Branding and Content Strategy	Brand Storytelling through Content	Writing and SEO	Introduction to Applied Data Analytics	Digital Marketing	Market Research	Online Reputation Management	Social Media Advertising	Digital advertising
						Branding & Content Strategy	Brand Storytelling through Content	Writing & SEO	Intro to Applied Data Analytics

Total 30 credit hours

## **Appendix: Comparative Analysis of MA/Certificate Programs**

### **Method**

We identified ten higher education institutions that offer Master's programs in Communication/IMC. In a Google search of graduate programs in IMC, Florida State University and Northwestern emerged as the initial search results. We used several ways to identify the other programs; for example, we know from the JCU Office of Admission that students who do not choose JCU for Communication, most often choose Ohio University and Syracuse. Kent State's local reputation is that they offer a strong mass communication program; Marist, Duquesne, and Gannon are private, faith-based institutions; Ohio State was included because of their reputation in Ohio.

We created an excel spreadsheet to ensure we recorded consistent information for all programs. The categories examined included Institution, Title of Grad Program, Hours Required for degree, Purpose Statement, Master/PhD/Certificate?, MA/MS?, Online/Hybrid/F2F?, Required Courses, Elective Courses, Capstone?, Certificates Offered?, Clusters, Faculty, and Admission Criteria

### **Results**

Of the ten programs reviewed, credit requirements for semester-based programs varied from 30-36 credits for the MA/MS. Northwestern operates on a quarter system; they require 13 units.

Seven of the programs offered a Master's degree as well as certificates; the certificates were associated with the Communication departments.

Three offered a Master's degree only. Eight of the Master's programs offered an MA, one offered a MSPS, and one a Master of Science degree. No one offered a certificate program that leads to a MA.

Content delivery methods include all options, online, hybrid, and face-to-face. Most programs offered as least two modes of delivery, with the exceptions of Gannon and Marist College. Syracuse required students complete a five-day residency each semester of the program. For Florida State, the traditional Master's degree program is face-to-face primarily but certificate programs are online.

Curriculums varied greatly; examination of required courses in programs required two to ten courses for all students. Electives varied based on the orientation of the program. Those institutions that offered primarily traditional MA programs began with theory, research methods, and foundational courses in Advertising, Public Relations, or IMC. One program, Marist College, offered students no electives.

Seven programs require a capstone course/experience; Duquesne requires a thesis and two programs did not specify a capstone course or experience. Capstone experiences included an applied research project, a thesis, and a Capstone course. Syracuse required students to complete an ePortfolio (includes an application paper, case study analysis, and a training module), comprehensive examinations, applied research project, or thesis

We identified four programs with Certificates as part of their programs. Certificate titles included Multicultural Marketing Communication, Digital Video Production, Project Management (Florida State); Health Informatics (Kent State); Crisis Communication, Interacting with Media for non-Journalists, Interacting with media for STEM Professionals, Digital Media Transformation (Ohio University); and Digital Marketing, Social Impact Partnership Design, Social Impact Storytelling, Social Media Management, Media and Education, and Journalism and Digital Media (Georgetown).

Faculty expertise/rank varied quite a bit by program. Gannon offers their graduate program with two associate professors and three adjunct lecturers. Georgetown lists 41 faculty without providing ranks. Northwestern listed 36 faculty, ranging from full professor (6), to associate professor (8), assistant professor (4), senior lecturer (1), lecturer (15), and adjunct lecturer (2). Kent State identified 28 faculty, primarily tenure/tenure track; Florida State identified nine full time, tenure/tenure track faculty supporting the program. Ohio University reported 24 tenure/tenure track/emeriti faculty plus a director of forensics on their website. Syracuse listed 13 faculty, ranging from two professors, one Professor of Practice, and ten adjunct professors. Marist listed 12 faculty for their program; faculty rank was tenure/tenure track /professor of practice ranging from the Dean of the School of Communication and the Arts to five assistant professors, four associate professors, two full professors, and one Professor of Practice. Only one associate professor is specifically associated with the graduate program. Duquesne identified a faculty (tenure/tenure track) of 12; four full professors, four associate professors and four assistant professors. Ohio State University has 54 faculty; rank ranges from lecturer (14) to professor (11). Other ranks include Affiliated Faculty-1; Clinical Faculty-1 (associate professor); Associate professor-9; Assistant professor 9; Emeriti-2; Senior lecturer 7.

Examination of requirements for applicants found quite a bit of consistency. Most programs required an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 minimum, a transcript documenting a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, three letters of recommendation, resume, and personal statement. Five programs required the GRE-with one dropping the requirement effective spring 2021 (Kent); others did not. Kent State, Ohio University, and Duquesne required the GRE if the student's undergraduate GPA was lower than 3.0. Another required it for those applying for graduate assistantships. Northwestern listed three years professional experience as a preferred qualification. They also ask applicants to articulate their personal and professional expectations from the program.

Alternative programs in Communication fields appear to be somewhat available; for example, Georgetown's website highlights a newly added Digital Marketing Bootcamp. A quick Google search of professional certificates in Communication yielded a site ([academiccourses.com](http://academiccourses.com)) that listed the top 20 certificate programs. The majority are outside the US. UC Irvine and USC came up as the US campuses offering programs. [Mastersincommunication.com](http://Mastersincommunication.com) lists a different set of programs; Arizona State offers an Audience Strategy Certificate. The site lists the general categories for Communication Certificates as

- Graduate Certificate in Communication (General): Some universities offer general graduate certificates in communication. The coursework in these programs can vary significantly, given the general focus and short program length. Courses might cover areas such as communication theory, media effects, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, strategic communication, or health communication, to name just a few possible topics.

- **Graduate Certificate in Business Communication:** These programs aim to give students the skills they need to develop impactful proposals, presentations, and reports in business settings. Additionally, graduates typically learn how to deliver effective speeches, manage conflict in organizations, and develop persuasive messaging.
- **Graduate Certificate in Digital Marketing or Digital Media:** This certificate program combines marketing courses like Integrated Marketing Communications and Marketing Communications Strategy with study of digital marketing topics such as data mining and analytics.
- **Graduate Certificate in Health Communication:** Students pursuing this certificate generally learn about health promotion, education, and literacy. This results in a curriculum focused on changing audience behaviors as they relate to health and healthcare.
- **Graduate Certificate in Organizational Communication:** Students who earn a graduate certificate in organizational communication learn how to effectively lead and motivate teams, manage conflict within organizations, and improve decision-making across various organizational contexts.
- **Graduate Certificate in Public Relations:** This concentration focuses on media relations, researching target markets, building media plans, and managing organizational reputation. Students learn how to effectively manage the exchange of information between an organization and the public, as well as deal with any PR crises that might arise.
- **Graduate Certificate in Sports Communication:** Sports communication certificate programs combine strategic communication courses such as Writing for Social Media with sports-specific courses like Sports Writing and Sports Psychology. This curriculum is designed to prepare students for building communication plans within the context of a sports or sports media organization.
- **Graduate Certificate in Strategic Communication:** This certificate combines study of advertising, social media management, international public relations, visual communication, and crisis communication. Together, this curriculum prepares graduates for roles that involve developing strategic communication campaigns.

A Google search of Public Relations Certificates yielded several institutions offering programs. Purdue, Drexel, UCLA, etc. offer programs to earn a certificate. For example, UCLA's program requires seven core courses, an ethics class, and eight units of electives (courses vary between 2 and 4 credits). Drexel requires four courses that they offer in 10-week sessions (instead of their traditional semesters). Purdue's Certificate is in Strategic Communication. Students complete a required course, Seminar in Strategic Communication plus two electives.

A Google search of IMC Certificates yielded Northwestern, DePaul, Utah, Rowan, and West Virginia on the first two pages of results. DePaul required 18 credits, Utah required 15 one-hour sessions. Rowan required three courses and West Virginia required four courses. Utah's program is on hiatus for fall 2020.

Coursework covered topics such as

- Communication research
- Digital marketing,
- Social media,
- Healthcare communication,
- Higher education communication,
- Public relations leadership,
- IMC and new media
- Online public relations

- Building an Effective Marketing Plan
- Multichannel Marketing
  - Communications: Creating Direct, Interactive and Measurable Media Strategies
- Practical Internet Marketing
- Online Practical Internet Marketing
- Practical Internet Marketing
- Content Marketing Strategy
- Digital Marketing Fundamentals
- Effective Presentation &
- Communication Skills
  - Marketing Research
  - Mobile Marketing
  - Negotiation Strategies and Skills
  - Online Content Marketing Strategy
  - Online Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
  - Online Digital Marketing Fundamentals

- Online Google Analytics Prep
- Online Predictive Analytics
- Online Public Relations Essentials in a Digital World
  - Online Social Media Marketing
  - Predictive Analytics
  - Professional Business Writing
  - Public Relations Essentials in a Digital World
- Search Engine Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Business Writing and Grammar Essentials
- Consumer Behavior
- Marketing Boot Camp
- Marketing Return on Investment
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Social Media Marketing



A Google search of Digital Marketing Certificate Programs in Ohio yielded several options. Cleveland State offers a certificate that requires two semesters to six to nine months to complete. The webpage indicates students must register individually for each course and that they award the certificate once students complete the required courses. They offer courses in the following areas: Digital Marketing Strategies; Using Google Ads; Understanding Google Analytics; YouTube for Business (online); Video Marketing (online); Search Engine Optimization (SEO); Social Media Marketing; and Writing & Editing for the Web. The page does not indicate how many are required and how many are elective. The University of Cincinnati offers an Online Marketing Graduate Certificate. Students learn "Knowledge of buyer behavior analysis and behavioral science as it relates to product consumption, Insight for developing an integrated marketing communications plan, and Knowledge of new product development, including product mix, product development and strategy, and product-market integration" (<https://online.uc.edu/certificates/marketing-graduate-certificate/>). Students complete a required course in marketing strategy for managers (two credits) and five 'electives' (two credits each; they only offer five courses therefore, they are not electives!). The electives include systematic innovation tools, buyer behavior, new product development, advertising and marketing communication, and marketing ethics.

### Summary

Examination of ten comparison programs to evaluate the marketplace resulted in an understanding of the current landscape. Traditional master's programs remain a significant part of higher education institution's program offerings. All ten programs offered traditional MA programs. Two programs, Georgetown and Northwestern targeted working professionals with distinct programs. Both offer degrees/programs focused on the needs of professionals, rather than traditional age students. For example, Georgetown offered weekend classes for on campus requirements and online for other aspects, especially for their certificate programs.

Because most programs are traditional in nature (length of time such as semester or quarter; traditional three credit courses, etc.), offering a certificate program that follows a non-traditional time frame such as offering courses in five-week increments would be unique. Given the credit hour policy, we would need to develop 2.5 hours/week of engagement plus an additional 6 hours of additional coursework/week.

Eduvantis strongly recommended we pay attention to naming; as the Eduvantis rep said, IMC is not a program name that resonates with people in Northeast Ohio. Reviewing the programs' names, most offer programs in IMC or Communication. An advantage we have entering the process is that we know IMC and Communication do not resonate with people in our target market. The Eduvantis rep suggested including the word *marketing* in the title as their research demonstrated more awareness of/interest in marketing.

With the list of course names, we see Digital as an important concept. Research, social media, consumer behavior are also important areas to consider including in the program. Creating five-week modules that address students' highest interest areas will help generate enrollment.

When considering the number of courses per certificate, no standard exists. Certificates ranged from 3-10+ courses. MA/MS programs ranged from 10-12 courses, a standard number of credits. DePaul allows people to take certificate courses independently but recommends applying for and enrolling in the Certificate program.

In terms of faculty support for programs, Gannon was the smallest number of faculty, five. Three of the five were adjuncts. The largest program, Ohio State, reported 54 faculty supporting the program (plus several administrative posts). Clearly, the number of students in the program matters but for most programs, we did not find that information online.



Office of the Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences  
1 John Carroll Boulevard  
University Heights, Ohio 44118-4581  
[www.jcu.edu](http://www.jcu.edu)

To: Chrystal Bruce, Chair, Committee on Academic Programs

From: Bonnie Gunzenhauser, Dean, CAS

Date: November 9, 2021

Re: MS in Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy

I write this memo in support of the proposed new MS in Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy. This degree consists of three stackable certificates (Digital Marketing Analytics and Content Marketing are already approved; Digital Advertising and Social Media Marketing is included in this proposal) plus a capstone course that requires students to synthesize their coursework to create a comprehensive integrated marketing communication plan for a real-world client.

The department designed the curriculum with input from interviews conducted by Falls Communication, from research into peer/comparator/competitor programs, and from faculty with relevant expertise in Communication and in Boler. The program design is informed by best practices for the target market of working adults, which indicate that flexibility, affordability, and time to completion are the three primary factors in building an enrollment funnel and, ultimately, a student population. The certificate-sized modules delivered in an intensive online format are consistent with this approach; a student could complete two certificates in one calendar year, and the full degree program in two academic years plus a summer. Additionally, the certificates and overall program will benefit from the significant new expertise in online course design and pedagogy that faculty have built over the past several semesters.

The start-up costs for these certificates and the master's degree are fairly minimal. The proposal identifies five full-time faculty members (three from CAS, two from Boler) with appropriate interest and expertise to offer a significant percentage of the program coursework. Assistant Professor of Communication Christina DeVoss has agreed to serve as program director. As the program launches and grows in its first few years, it will be administered as part of her regular departmental service expectations. As it gains momentum and scale, this administrative work will increase; the current enrollment/growth projections include funding for a CLR for the director starting in 2024-2025.

The individual certificates and the degree program align closely with JCU's strategic initiatives to expand our graduate offerings and provide our students with innovative interdisciplinary preparation for the future of work. I am grateful to the department and to our colleagues in the Boler College of Business for their fruitful collaborative work on this new program. The proposal has my full support, and I write to request that CAP support the certificate and degree program as well.

December 2, 2021

Dr. Chrystal Bruce  
Department of Chemistry  
Chair, Faculty Committee on Academic Policies

Dear Chrystal,

The Digital Marketing & Communication Strategy graduate program proposal has my enthusiastic support. The proposed graduate program offers an important addition to our existing graduate programs portfolio. National trends in graduate master's programs indicate specialized concentration programs are gaining prominence and becoming standard options at many universities. Current trends also suggest business schools that rely solely on traditional MBA programs risk missing attractive market segments.

As the proposal narrative explains, this integrated certificate and master's program provides potentially appealing new options for students from any academic background or discipline to pursue graduate education. The program design allows John Carroll to serve students who want to pursue shorter and more concentrated study without a commitment to a full time master's program. The online format allows John Carroll to serve students in Northeast Ohio and beyond.

The proposed program also offers a path to a full graduate degree for students who meet prerequisites different from those that underpin an MBA. Furthermore, the Master's of Science degree has the potential to appeal to a different market segment than our MBA offering. The program may attract students completing B.S. degrees in business, B.S. degrees in science, or B.A. degrees. This broadens the overall appeal of graduate programming at JCU and expands the funnel profile of our potential students. Unlike other graduate programs in the BCOB, this program, therefore, has the potential to add new net tuition revenue to the University.

One of Boler's strategic objectives is to maintain our graduate programs' relevance and viability by staying on the cutting edge of academic and market demand changes. Adding the Digital Marketing & Communication Strategy graduate program, therefore, contributes to the BCOB strategic plan for graduate programs. Further, the BCOB can commit faculty and administrative resources to the support the program.

If I can provide additional information regarding my support or that of the Boler College for this program, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Scott

Dr. Scott B. Moore  
Interim Dean, Boler College of Business  
216-397-4531  
moore@jcu.edu

22 September 2021

Dr. Chrystal Bruce  
Chair, Committee on Academic Policies  
John Carroll University

Dear Chrystal:

I am writing in strong support of the proposed graduate certificate in Digital Advertising & Social Media Marketing, as well as the proposal to stack the three communication-related certificates into a Master's in Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy with the completion of a capstone course. This suite of certificates represent a collaboration between the Boler College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences and were designed with best practices for adult learners (online format, short duration for each certificate, skills-based) and with input from professionals in the field. In particular, the faculty considered how to bring forward the management aspects of the coursework as well as the ways in which to emphasize and capitalize on trends in digital and social media marketing. Despite the modest growth in graduate credit hours over the past three to four years, most interest has focused on a select group of experiential, career-focused programs (e.g., Counseling, MBA). To continue our growth trajectory, we need to invest in a broader variety of program types, which are responsive to market demand. Based on market research, we see an opportunity for John Carroll in this graduate space, and we have provided a sufficient timeline for review (based on the certificate approval process) to determine if this venture is successful. For these reasons, I provide my strong endorsement for the proposed certificate program and Master's program.

Sincerely,



Rebecca E. Drenovsky  
Dean of Graduate Studies  
Professor of Biology

September 20, 2021

Dr. Mark Waner,  
Chair, Faculty Council

Dr. Chrystal Bruce,  
Chair, Committee on Academic Policies  
John Carroll University

Dear Dr. Waner and Dr. Bruce:

I am writing to indicate my support for the proposed Digital Advertising and Social Media Marketing Certificate and new Master's degree in Digital Marketing and Communication. I encourage the members of the Committee on Academic Policies to recommend that the proposed new program be approved by the faculty and made part of the curriculum.

I have been asked to provide information regarding the relationship of new program to the overall curriculum, the viability of its assessment plan, and the availability of resources to support assessment of the program.

*The proposed program is novel in its structure of stackable certificates and yet congruent with our existing academic structure, being comparable in size and structure to other Master's degrees at the institution. The learning goals and course of study show a strong awareness of the needs of working professionals. As noted in the proposal, this new program also demonstrates strong alignment with the current strategic direction of the University, as articulated by the President and the Provost.*

*This proposal provides a solid framework for a viable assessment plan. It describes program-level goals that are specific, measurable, and focused on student learning. The proposal also indicates from which courses direct and indirect measures of student learning that are closely matched to the goals will be selected. Data obtained from these measures should enable the faculty and director to make curricular changes at appropriate intervals to best ensure student learning.*

Assessment of student learning is a routine part of faculty work and every academic program at John Carroll University is involved in assessment. This program will be no different. As with all

departments and interdisciplinary programs, the director or a designated faculty member in the program will need to agree to serve as assessment coordinator, coordinating program assessment with my office. *There is nothing in this proposal to suggest that assessment of this program will require additional resources beyond those already provided by the institution in general or my office, in particular.*

If the certificate and master's degree are approved, I look forward to the opportunity to work with Dr. Finucane to further develop a formal assessment plan, finalized curriculum map, and assessment instruments and procedures if the proposal is accepted.

Neither program will require approval from the state of Ohio. The state does not approve certificate programs, and the state considers this new Master's Degree as equivalent to our previous offering in Communication Management (same general content area and degree level). The certificate will not require approval by our institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, but the Master's degree may. As I learn more from HLC, I will remain in touch with Dr. Finucane. We cannot pursue HLC approval until institutional approval is granted.

I fully support the approval of this new program. Please contact me at x1600 or [rbruce@jcu.edu](mailto:rbruce@jcu.edu) if there is anything else that I can provide to inform your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Todd Bruce". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Robert Todd Bruce  
Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment



**TIM RUSSERT**  
 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
 COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

September 20, 2021

Dr. Mark Waner, Chair  
 Faculty Council

Dr. Chrystal Bruce, Chair  
 Committee on Academic Policies

Dear Dr. Waner and Dr. Bruce,

On behalf of the Tim Russert Department of Communication, I write to support the proposed Digital Advertising and Social Media Marketing Certificate and the new Master's degree in Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy. The department supports adding these courses/program to our curriculum. We believe the program will draw graduate students to John Carroll.

As chair of the Russert Department, I have been asked to address the following points:

1. Likely frequency with which departmental courses supporting the new program will be offered
2. Support for the development of new departmental courses that support the new program, and a commitment to schedule such courses
3. Extent to which departmental faculty will be available to teach outside the department in support of the new program
4. Extent to which departmental faculty will be available to serve as director of the new program

1. As part of the program, we designed a rotation that allows each course in the program to recur each year. See proposed schedule below:

*Sample Schedule for Offering Courses*

	Fall 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Summer 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Summer 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Fall 2022 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Fall 2022 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2023 1 <sup>st</sup> 7 weeks	Spring 2023 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7 weeks
Courses offered	Branding and Content Strategy	Brand Storytelling through Content	Writing and SEO	Introduction to Applied Data Analytics	Digital Marketing	Market Research	Online Reputation Management	Social Media Advertising	Digital advertising
							Branding & Content Strategy	Brand Storytelling through Content	Writing & SEO

2. Support for development of courses was approved as part of the proposal for the first two certificates in the program. We would assume that upon approval of this certificate and Master's degree program, we would have similar funding for course development. The first certificate course will begin in October 2021.



3. We recognize that having our faculty teach these graduate level courses will affect teaching our undergraduate courses. Because the rotation is shared with Boler College of Business, and the courses are seven weeks in length, we do not expect that more than two faculty in any given semester will be pulled from undergraduate teaching to cover a certificate course. In addition, we have strong, qualified adjuncts who are experts in the subject areas needed who will cover. We are committed to the program.
4. For a director of the graduate program, I have agreed to serve in that role initially. As the program increases in enrollment, another member of the department who is teaching in the program will step in to support the workload.

I offer my full support for the certificate and Master's program proposal. If I may provide any additional information, please contact at x1608 or [mfinucane@jcu.edu](mailto:mfinucane@jcu.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret O. Finucane".

Margaret O. Finucane, PhD  
Chair, Tim Russert Department of Communication


November 22, 2021

To the Faculty Council Committee on Academic Policies:

I am writing this letter in support of the new Digital Marketing Certificate program. This certificate program will combine the strength of two departments Management, Marketing, and Supply Chain with Communications. It also allows our students to stay competitive in a world that is driven by digital marketing. At this time, we will support the certificate but the future will depend on the resources that are available to the department. As long as we can maintain the current resources we should be able to support the courses that are offered in this certificate program.

This program has the full support from the Management, Marketing and Supply Chain Department.

Sincerely,



Dr. Charles A. Watts  
Professor of Supply Chain Management/Chair  
Management, Marketing, and Supply Chain  
[cwatts@jcu.edu](mailto:cwatts@jcu.edu)  
(216) 397-4448

October 20, 2021

Chrystal Bruce, PhD  
Professor of Chemistry  
Chair, Committee on Academic Policy

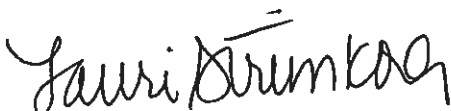
Dear Dr. Bruce:

The University Committee on Resource Allocation (UCRA) has reviewed the proposal for a Digital Marketing, third certificate, and the Master's Program in Digital Marketing.

Based on the budget information, and projected enrollment, the UCRA committee supports a recommendation to move this program forward to the Committee on Academic Policies (CAP) for approval.

Please let me know if CAP has any questions.

Sincerely,



Lauri Strimkovsky  
Vice President for Finance and Administration



To: Dr. Mark Waner, Chair of Faculty Council  
From: Michelle M. Reynard, Registrar  
Date: September 16, 2021  
Re: Review of Digital Marketing & Strategy Third Certificate and Master's Program

Dear Dr. Waner,

After reviewing the proposal for the Digital Marketing & Strategy Third Certificate and Master's Program, I have concluded that there are no special needs for scheduling, billing, formalizing a degree audit or other exceptions that would prevent the programs from being implemented.

I am also satisfied that if approved, the degree specifications and new courses will be communicated to the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner for implementation in Banner and the Bulletin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle M. Reynard".

Michelle M. Reynard  
Registrar  
[mreynard@jcu.edu](mailto:mreynard@jcu.edu)