Communication Department  
Four Year plan, Classroom to Career

1A. Freshman Year, Communication Department

☐ **Craft Your Own Future**
Employers regularly cite communication skills as the most desirable attributes in potential employees. That is a great thing for Communication Majors! The Department of Communication offers a broad theoretical orientation to our field as well as a chance to prepare yourself for particular professional interests. The ability to “craft your own future” is at the heart of our Communication Interests. In your lifetime you will have numerous professions, not to mention jobs. Start thinking about that future now. Do some exploring on your own and discover what you can do with a Communication Major.

☐ **Getting Involved Early**
Being a Communication major isn't just about taking classes; it is about being a part of a program. Comm. majors are inherently social and we offer a host of opportunities to get involved with your faculty and fellow majors both face-to-face and virtually. Check out some of the events listed here, and get the most out of your major!

☐ **Hear from alums**
Attend Communication Career Night in the Spring to hear from graduates of the program.

☐ **Campus media**
Work with student newspaper, radio station, HAM channel, or other campus media to gain experience.

☐ **Start Planning Early**
If you plan well, you can achieve all your academic and career objectives. Planning can be challenging if you want to do a double major or more than one minor, if you study abroad, and/or if you begin the major after Sophomore year. We strongly encourage you to “internationalize” your education through coursework, service, travel, and study abroad opportunities. It is never too early to begin considering your professional aspirations and to take advantage of resources on campus that will have you prepared for life after Fairfield. Talk to faculty advisers.

☐ **Communicating beyond our shores**
Even as a freshman, attend the study abroad fair to learn about international study. Consider new or continuing foreign language if this requirement is complete.

☐ **Look at related fields**
Our faculty participates in a wide-variety of interdisciplinary campus programs and initiatives. Consider Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, the Ignatian Residential College, the Honors Program, Asian Studies, American Studies, plus Service Learning.
Dream Job
What is your "dream job" after graduation? What are you passionate about? Talk to your faculty adviser and other mentors. As a Communication major, how can you use your time at Fairfield to prepare for it through class work, internships, volunteer activities, summer jobs, leadership positions with clubs and organizations, and other relevant out of class experiences.

Our graduates are attractive to many employers who identify communication skills as the most important factor in hiring and promotion decisions. Employers also value our students' intensive coursework in the major, the experience gained from the internship, and the broad liberal education that all Fairfield students receive. The department regularly sponsors career events to help students think about their future careers and how communication classes connect to communication practice.

Comm.Unity
This student organization that serves to orient interested students to career opportunities in the Communication field. The club sponsors guest lectures from alumni and other professionals, as well as field trips, socials, and colloquia.

Information Fair
Communication is always represented at the Majors/Minors Information Fair. If you are considering our program, come by and say hi.

Life After Fairfield
A major in Communication prepares students for careers in a variety of communication and other industries, as well as for graduate study in areas such as communication, education, law, politics, public administration, social work, and business. Our majors and minors will also develop the skills necessary to make valuable contributions to society and develop a commitment to influence the media and other organizations to become more just and socially. Take a look at the careers and graduate programs that our students choose. Then use this Classrooms to Career guide to help get you there.

1B. Freshman Year, University wide

Hear From The Experts
Attend lectures on campus and hear from professionals and experts in your field of interest. Start with the Open VISIONS Forum and look for other events listed in the university calendar. In choosing FYE events to attend, include those most related to career interests.

Seek Out As Many Experiences As Possible
Not sure of a career path? Use extracurricular activities to help you expand, or narrow, your choices.

The Core: Start Exploring
Talk to your faculty adviser about how to choose core courses that will encourage you to explore new areas and supplement your areas of interest and career goals.
Showcase Your Material
Start collecting materials you put in a portfolio to market yourself and help show your experience. Create a blog or e-portfolio to both present the work (newspaper stories, poetry, well-crafted essays, videos) and to offer reflections on them. Contact CAS Associate Dean Aaron Perkus for help in creating an e-portfolio.

Discover your passion!
Take chances on different classes and majors. Find faculty members who can guide your journey here. Get plugged in and, along the way, discover what you are passionate about.

Summer Jobs
Work with your faculty adviser to discuss options for a summer job that could give you experience and add content to your resume.

Campus Clubs and Student Organizations
Invest your time in activities that give you experience in your field of interest and put you in touch with students who might have similar career interests.

Study Abroad

Work, Work, Work
Look for a relevant job on or off campus to gain work experience. Consider volunteer opportunities, often tied to your academic interest, to give you experience and provide information on potential careers, especially with non-profit organizations. Looks for summer internships and jobs so you can apply classroom lessons to the professional world.

Living and Learning
Make plans for sophomore year to team up and network with other students who share your career interests.

Lead On
Look for chances to begin building your leadership skills. Take advantage of New Student Programs that bridge the classroom with the residence halls. Network with students in your residence hall who are enrolled in the same Cornerstone classes and participate in the First Year Experience (FYE) program. This will help you to make friends who share your passions and interests.

Preparing for graduate school, early
A large percentage of Fairfield students further their academic careers after four years at Fairfield. Fairfield’s pre-law program has a full-four year agenda of recommended activities. For freshman year, interested students should concentrate on attaining high grades in your University Core classes; develop good study habits; attend St. Robert Bellarmine Society Events; and follow the Pre-Law website for events and tips on applying to law school. Talk to your academic adviser about preparing for graduate school options.

Ask A Librarian
The DiMenna-Nyselius Library has resources to help you to discover, begin and manage your career. If you would like assistance in using any of these resources, contact a librarian.
Start Career Planning. Now
Make an appointment with the Career Planning Center (CPC) to meet with staff, talk about your goals and aspirations, and how to best utilize your next four years of college. Read about jobs in which you might be interested. Attend Career Fairs and ask employers what they are looking for in new hires. Look at the CPC's online Career Planning Advisor Videos and Research Tools.
2A. Sophomore Year, Communication Department

- **Area of Interest**
  Work with your faculty adviser and decide on an area of interest within the major of Communication that suits you

- **Clubbing around**
  Get involved in Comm.Unity, the Communication Club. The club sponsors guest lectures from alumni and other professionals, as well as field trips, socials, and colloquia. Recent field trips have included visits to ESPN and other national television networks, and attendance at tapings of television talk shows. Club officers and members engage in fundraising activities, organize activity fairs, schedule meetings, and run yearly elections. It gives students the opportunity to get to know departmental faculty members outside of the classroom

- **Package Yourself Professionally**
  Start building a [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com) profile, one of the most popular ways to find jobs and internships for college students. Establishing a professional profile page and networking with both peers and working professionals will significantly enhance the chance to have a flying start in the real world

- **Mass media experience**
  Practice those skills by working with [The Mirror](https://www.themirror.org), student newspaper, radio station WVOF, the HAM channel TV station, or magazine

- **Hear from alums**
  Communication Department graduates work in a wide variety of industries and settings. Attend Communication Career Night in the Spring to hear from graduates of the program

- **Foreign shores**
  Consider new or continuing foreign language. Consider Study Abroad

- **Comm.Unity**
  The student organization serves to orient interested students to career opportunities in the Communication field. The club sponsors guest lectures from alumni and other professionals, as well as field trips, socials, and colloquia. Recent field trips have included visits to ESPN and other national television networks, and attendance at tapings of television talk shows. Club officers and members engage in fundraising activities, organize activity fairs, schedule meetings, and run yearly elections. Students elect Club officers every spring, who set the agenda for the following year. Active participation in Comm.Unity gives students the opportunity to get to know departmental faculty members outside of the classroom environment, develop a sense of community with other communication majors, and learn more about careers and internship opportunities.

- **Keep Dreaming**
  What happens after Fairfield? What would be your "dream job" – and how do you get there? Talk to your faculty adviser and other mentors: How can you use your remaining time at Fairfield to prepare for it?
Honors Program
Qualified Comm. students participate in the Honors Program at Fairfield University and, for students with an exceptional academic record of achievement, the opportunity to be elected to the country's premier honor society, Phi Beta Kappa.

Line Up References
Start to look for 3+ professors in Comm. and elsewhere who might serve as professional references for you. Discuss your future plans with them and ask for guidance. Stay in touch with them so they can speak about your successes in an informed way.

Internships
Start thinking now about how you can “try on” two careers -- and get credit for it.

2B. Sophomore year, University wide

Hear From The Best
Look for lectures on campus when professionals in your field come to speak and often meet with students

Career Readiness
Want to get a jumpstart on your future? Sophomore Success is a series of casual dinners developed to help you figure out such questions as: Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter – do they really matter? Will my posts impact my future? How do I write a resume? How can I make myself stand out in the job market? Should I study abroad? How do I get an internship? What about grad school? Should I do service? Have I really given enough thought to my major based on my career goals? Networking Skills? Business etiquette - what the heck is that? Students meet over dinner with Career Planning staffers and discuss topics. Look for sign-up information early in the year.

Yes, employers look at GPA
Keep your eye on the goal of academic excellence.

Leadership Skills
Consider a leadership role with a student club or organization to help give you leadership and management experience.

Service Learning Courses
Look for Fairfield courses that give you a chance to interact with the off-campus community, gain experience, and maybe pick up a resume credit.

The Study Abroad Fair
The Study Abroad Fair will give you tips to use in finalizing any travel plans for junior year. Talk to faculty and other students on how the experience could help further your career goals.

Build A Portfolio
Consider creating a blog or e-portfolio to collect materials that you can use to promote yourself in the future. Build a blog.
**Relevant Summer Job**
Talk to faculty and Career Planning to increase your chances of securing a summertime job (after sophomore year) that is related to your career goal, can give you some experience, and serve as a credit on your resume. Use Facebook and LinkedIn to present yourself to the world in a professional manner.

**Career Planning**
Don't wait! Make another appointment with a Career Planning Center counselor. Consider taking a "self-assessment inventory” test to help you get a better handle on where your strengths might be directing you. Update your resume. Look for workshops that can sharpen skills in writing resumes, networking, and mock interviewing. Register with Experience, Fairfield's online recruiting system, and get familiar with how it works. Students can search for jobs, internships, information on career fairs, and submit resumes to jobs and internships of interest.

**More Career Planning**
Attend Career Fairs and ask employers what they are looking for in new hires. Make an appointment with the Career Planning Center to meet with staff and talk about your goals and aspirations. Look at their online Career Planning Advisor Videos. Look at the Research Tools for Careers.
3A. Junior Year, Communication Department

☐ **Check on your progress**
Meet with an advisor to chart academic progress in the major and discuss possible scholarships, and other honors

☐ **Options After Fairfield**
How can you best use your remaining courses and free electives to both round out your education and prepare for a career? How about possible graduate school work in Comm. ... or scholarships like a Fulbright Fellowship ... or Teach for America? Talk to your adviser.

☐ **Lead On**
Take a leadership position in Comm.Unity, the student Communication Club, or campus media organizations

☐ **Watch the pros in action**
Attend presentations on campus, like Open Visions Forum, that help you connect with leaders and thinkers in the communication world and elsewhere

☐ **Work with the best**
Lambda Pi Eta is the internationally recognized honor society for students and scholars in the fields of Communication Studies, Rhetoric, and Speech. Students who maintain a high grade point average, overall and in their major, will be invited by the department faculty to be inducted into Lambda Pi Eta during their senior year. Involvement in this honor society increases opportunities for individual potential and advancement, for example, through developing leadership skills, networking with international members, and contact with professional organizations. Membership in Lambda Pi Eta is also impressive on graduate school applications. Active participation in Lambda Pi Eta gives students the opportunity to work more closely with department faculty members outside of the classroom setting. Students plan events, sponsor guest speakers, organize field trips, and other activities. Students may also choose to participate in national or regional communication conferences through the presentation of research and attendance at panel discussions. For information about Lambda Pi Eta, contact Professor Sallyanne Ryan.

☐ **Try on a career: Intern**
Here’s a chance to investigate career opportunities while adding a distinctive learning experience to their resumes. Our majors regularly say that their internships were some of their best experiences at Fairfield. We couldn't agree more, and we hope that you'll take the time to learn more about how to find an internship and how to make the most out of your internship experience.

☐ **Supervised Research**
Talk to favorite professors about possible supervised research projects you might do in your area of interest, in the summer or during the school year. Interested in a research area but there is no course offered in the catalog? Talk to a faculty member or department chair about a possible independent study.
CAS Awards
Communication presents department awards for outstanding students every spring; they are honored at the College of Arts and Sciences award night in April. Attend the event and look for projects that might earn you this honor. With your faculty adviser, gain experience in entering such a competition and learn how to effectively package and present your work—and yourself. Non-seniors are often singled out for their great work.

References
Look for three professors, in and out of the department, who can speak about your successes in an informed way.

Honors
Lambda Pi Eta is the internationally recognized honor society for students and scholars in the fields of Communication Studies, Rhetoric, and Speech. Students who maintain a high grade point average, overall and in their major, will be invited by the department faculty to be inducted into Lambda Pi Eta during their senior year. Involvement in this honor society increases opportunities for individual potential and advancement, for example, through developing leadership skills, networking with international members, and contact with professional organizations. Membership in Lambda Pi Eta is also impressive on graduate school applications.

3B. Junior Year, University wide

Shadowing
Fairfield is expanding its program for students to shadow alumni, where the student can take an inside look at a career, get an overview of a company or industry, explore individual career options and goals, and receive advice from a professional. Students in biology and psychology are among those who benefitted in the past. Contact Alumni Relations

Study Abroad
Use a Study Abroad trip to gain a cross-cultural perspective, move toward becoming a global citizen, and think more broadly about your studies and career possibilities.

Resumes
Continue to polish and hone your resume. What’s missing? How can you use your remaining time at Fairfield most effectively?

Working with professors
Talk to your academic adviser and other professors in your department about what else you can do to build on classroom learning.

Leadership
Gain management experience - and give something back - by taking as leadership position in a campus club or student organizations.

Networking
Begin networking by connecting with Alumni Career Services and its Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN) program. Look for relevant information in the Alumni Career Webinar Series,
focusing on such issues as the job search and professional development. Look at the Fairfield Alumni groups on LinkedIn and join those that are relevant. Look at the Jobs Board and Internship Board.

- **RCADE workshops**
  These free, mini-courses can strengthen technical and computer skills. These days, to compete, you must be proficient in Excel, PowerPoint and Word, plus programs you might need for specialized jobs such as Photoshop and In Design. Beyond RCADE, how can you use any final elective courses to gain additional skills needed for your dream job?

- **Summer Jobs and Internships**
  Work with your professors to help find relevant summer jobs and internships that can give you more experience and add a credit to your resume.

- **Service Learning**
  To learn about paying careers with non-profit organizations, make room on your four-year course schedule for a Service Learning course.

- **Civic Engagement**
  As you add to your resume, what other opportunities can you choose to give you applied experience and civic engagement beyond the classroom? They might include summer jobs, internships, leadership roles in campus clubs, or mentoring other students. Work to become a leader and an explorer, through engagement with the broader community.

- **Hit The Library**
  The DiMenna-Nyselius Library has a large array of resources to help you to discover, begin and manage your career: If you would like assistance in using any of these resources, please contact a librarian.

- **Hear from the professionals**
  Attend lectures on campus when professionals in your field come to speak and often meet students. Start with the Open VISIONS Forum and other events at the Quick Center.

- **Leadership**
  Gain management experience - and give something back - by taking a leadership position in a campus club or student organization.

- **Your Portfolio**
  Consider creating a blog or e-portfolio to collect materials that you can use to promote yourself in the future. ([Build a blog.](#))

- **Volunteer Opportunities**
  Look for a relevant job on campus to gain work experience. Consider volunteer opportunities, often tied to your academic interest, to give your experience and provide information on potential careers, especially with non-profit organizations.

- **Career Planning Counselor**
  Have a counselor review your updated resume to develop it further and add your summer
activities. Upload your resume on Experience for summer internships. Practice interviewing techniques with Counselors and take advantage of Mock Interview opportunities with real employers. Attend workshops. Participate in the Career Fair so you can see what it is like, begin meeting employers and researching who you might want to work for.
4A. Senior Year, Communication Department

☐ **Capstone Courses/ Independent Study**
Use the CO309 Capstone Course to integrate what you have learned and reflect upon how you have grown at Fairfield and where your path will lead you next. The course also is usually a chance to also sharpen research skills, strengthen any Portfolio, and make fresh connections among courses and experiences. You also can consider a directed independent study opportunity with a Communication faculty member.

☐ **Bring it all together**
With a faculty member, start to narrow your interests and look for ways to use classwork, internships, summer work and potential independent studies to further your interest. Strategize plans for after graduation (and take GRE if necessary).

☐ **Honors**
Lambda Pi Eta is the internationally recognized honor society for students and scholars in the fields of Communication Studies, Rhetoric, and Speech. Active participation in Lambda Pi Eta gives students the opportunity to work more closely with department faculty members outside of the classroom setting. Students plan events, sponsor guest speakers, organize field trips, and other activities. Students may also choose to participate in national or regional communication conferences through the presentation of research and attendance at panel discussions.

☐ **Join the Honor Society**
[Lambda Pi Eta](#) is the national undergraduate honor society in communication. The primary purpose of Lambda Pi Eta is "to recognize, foster, and reward outstanding scholastic achievement in communication." Since its inception in 1985, the honor society has grown to more than 400 chapters nationwide. In March 1997, the National Communication Association (NCA) recognized our local chapter, Epsilon Sigma, in hopes of promoting and honoring academic excellence in communication here at Fairfield University. Membership is conferred upon graduating seniors who maintain high standards of general scholarship, achieve outstanding academic success in communication, and demonstrate genuine commitment to the field of communication. Each year, approximately 10 to 15 percent of senior communication majors meet the criteria of membership in Lambda Pi Eta. Contact: Dr. M. Sallyanne Ryan, advisor, Ext.: 2566; E-mail: sryan@fairfield.edu

☐ **Final Internship**
Use your final internship(s) to try out careers, sharpen your resume and cover letter, develop a portfolio, make contacts, and take classroom skills and apply to real world.

☐ **Line Up References**
Finalize 3+ professors from Communication and elsewhere who might serve as professional references for you. Discuss your future plans with them and ask for guidance.

4B. Senior Year, University wide

☐ **Final Work With Career Planning**
Fine-tune your resume by adding summer jobs and senior classes. Hone your interviewing techniques. Read the Experience calendar daily. Network with alumni through the Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN). Attend the fall and spring Career Fairs. Update your resume on
Experience. Apply for specific jobs by uploading your resume to that job description. Participate in real interviews. Look at the employment information and online job board.

- **Learn While Doing**
  Look for learning opportunities where you also gain useful experience. They might include internships, Service Learning courses, volunteer positions, and campus leadership roles. Become a leader of a campus organization or club and gain management experience.

- **Preparing for law school and graduate programs**
  About half of CAS students further their academic careers after four years at Fairfield. Fairfield’s pre-law program has a full-four year agenda of recommended activities. For senior year, the program encourages interested students, in the summer before senior year, to narrow the list of law schools in which you are interested. Work on your personal statement and application. Line up your letters of recommendation from faculty members and others. Have your application and supporting materials ready by late summer of your Senior year and apply as early as possible. If you were unable to take the LSAT in June of your junior year, plan to take the October exam in the fall of your Senior year. Apply as soon as possible after getting your scores. Attend St. Robert Bellarmine Pre-Law Society Events. Let the Pre-Law Advisor know of your progress in getting accepted. Other students will be anxious to learn from your experience!

- **Research**
  Look for opportunities to publicly present your research at academic conferences or on-campus poster sessions.

- **Capstone? Internship?**
  How can you most effectively tie together what you have learned? Your final courses allow you to reflect upon how you have grown at Fairfield and where your path will lead you next.

- **Role Models**
  Look for lectures on campus when professionals in your field come to speak and often meet students. Start with the Open Visions Forum.

- **Technical Skills**
  Attend workshops (sponsored by RCADE and others) to strengthen technical and computer skills. How can you use your remaining courses to gain additional skills needed for your dream job?

- **Non-Profit Sector**
  Look for a relevant job on campus to gain work experience. Consider volunteer opportunities, often tied to your academic interest, to give your experience and provide information on potential careers, especially with non-profit organizations.

- **Library Help**
  The DiMenna-Nyselius Library has a large array of resources to help you to discover, begin and manage your career: If you would like assistance in using any of these resources, please contact a librarian.
Final Work With Career Planning
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View Your Contacts As A Network
Do you have faculty references lined up? How about classmates who can help inform you about jobs they hear about. Network!