1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Communication includes four subjects, Journalism, Organizational Communication and PR, Speech Communication, and Intercultural Communication. All these subjects have done their own alumni work. The purpose of this report is to find out what the Department of Communication has done and how it can improve its alumni work.

This report follows a three-fold plan: what has been done in the past, what has been done this fall, and what will be done in the future. The situation at the Department level and in all four subjects is discussed throughout the report.

1.1 Main ideas

Alumni work can consist of alumni mentoring students, organizing alumni days, having training sessions during alumni days for alumni, inviting alumni to give lectures, arranging work practices, and proposing topics of theses.

Collaboration between subjects in the Department of Communication and also at the University level is recommended to strengthen the network of alumni and organize large events. Collaboration is also useful because there is no real budget for alumni events. Students organizations are also involved in organizing these events (Imago, Lööppi, Parku).

Keeping in touch with alumni through mailing lists can be difficult because alumni information contacts have to be updated on a regular basis. That is why it may be good to make more use of social networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook). Alumni can use these channels to connect, talk with each other, share information (e.g. job offers, current topics in their field).

It is important to carry out a good follow-up marketing of alumni events. For instance by adding some pictures to a website for alumni who did not come may join next time.
2 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST

2.1 Department of Communication

The web page of the Department of Communication has information about alumni in Finnish but not in English. There are three links: to speech communication alumni page, OCPR alumni page, and the University of Jyväskylä alumni page. There is no information about Journalism and Intercultural Communication alumni.

The Department of Communication has its own Facebook group (Department of Jyväskylä/University of Jyväskylä) with 148 members registered (fall 2012) and a twitter feed (#jyucomm). As head of Department, Pertti Hurme has a blog (jcommunicators.wordpress.com).

2.2 Speech Communication

Speech communication organizes an Alumni Day every two years for both alumni and students. This event has been arranged twice. Before that, another event called “Puheviestijä meets puheviestijä” (PMP) was organized. This new Alumni Day is a professional day where speakers are alumni of Speech Communication. Alumni can update their knowledge and students have an opportunity to see what people do and where they work after graduation. Speech Communication always gives an award to a highly-merited alumni. That is, somebody who is doing well in her/his job, has stayed in touch with the Department of Communication, and has kept up the reputation of Speech Communication. The evening programme is organized by the student organization Parku.

Web
There are 20 alumni stories on the web page of the Department of Communication. The stories are updated and new ones are regularly solicited. Speech Communication alumni have their own mailing list. When larger events are organized, alumni are contacted via postal mail.
Speech Communication has its own alumni group on Facebook (Puheviesitnnän alumnit, 43 members) but none on LinkedIn. The student organization Parku also has a Facebook page that is meant for all Speech Communication students.

Questionnaire
Twice in the past, Speech Communication has set up an online questionnaire for alumni to answer. The first one was sent out in 2006 and the second one in 2012. The aim of these questionnaires was to know about alumni’s careers and future plans. The results
can be found on the webpage of the Department of Communication (Puheviestinnän alumnikysely 2012).

2.3 Organizational Communication and PR

A professional profiles course has been organized twice as an event where alumni and students can meet. The course was organized for the first time in November 2011 and the second time in November 2012. In 2012 the course lasted one day. OCPR had an Alumni Day in 2008.

Web
OCPR alumni have both a Facebook group (YVI Alumnit, 123 members) and a LinkedIn page (Jyväskylän yliopiston yhteisöviestinnän alumnit, 103 members). The student organization Imago also has a Facebook page that gathers some alumni.

OCPR has two active blogs. The first one is managed by the student association Imago and is called Kärki (http://imagory.net/blogi/). The aim of this blog is to create a bridge between students and the working life. Writers are alumni, students, and communication experts. The second blog is an informal news site for the community of students, staff and alumni of OCPR called Org.com and PR News (http://orgcomnews.blogspot.fi/). Some alumni started a blog called “ps. post scriptum” (http://postscript-yvi.blogspot.fi/) which was meant only for alumni. The project did not succeed and there has been only one post.

OCPR has its own alumni newsletter via e-mail. There are seven OCPR alumni stories on the Department webpage and also two stories about doctoral students and their work.

2.4 Journalism

There has been little alumni work in Journalism. However, they celebrated the 25th anniversary of the programme in 2007. In addition, every classes arranges its own event, for example ”10 years from starting university”.

Journalism students have practical training during the first and second year of studies. Therefore they have much contact with work life. Most students do their internships in YLE, Helsingin Sanomat or Keskisuomalainen. All of these workplaces procure a mentor who is journalism alumni. However, according to journalism teachers nothing formal is organized because almost everybody in the profession knows each other and alumni often hire journalism students.
The Union of Journalists (Journalistiliitto) organizes events where students are also invited. Therefore, journalism teachers feel that they don't need alumni day for networking as much as speech communication, OCPR, and ICC do. In their opinions, Journalists’ alumni day would be more informal events where people can meet and catch up.

Lööppi is the student organization for journalism. The membership of Lööppi ends when you graduate. Therefore they focus on students, not on alumni.

Web
Lööppi has a forum where there are active discussions every day. There are 192 members (November 2012), of which some are very active and others make no comments at all. The forum has a restricted access, only members of Lööppi can join in. There are mostly students but also a few alumni. If members get a job in managerial positions they have to leave the forum. The alumni and students on the forum can talk about news, studies, trends etc.

Journalism has no Alumni-Facebook page but the student association Lööppi has one. There is no alumni letter in Journalism.

2.5 Intercultural Communication

Students receive the leaflet of the University of Jyväskylä (Opiskelijasta Alumniksi). The leaflet is only in Finnish, which prevents from effectively conveying any information to most of the international graduates of the ICC Master’s Programme.

Alumni from the ICC Master's Programme have the possibility to be involved online by joining or following different pages:

- the LinkedIn InCoMaS Alumni group
- the InCoMaS group on Facebook
- the InCoMas page on Facebook
- the InCoMaS blog (http://incomas-jyvaskyla.blogspot.fi/)
- the InCoMaS twitter account (@Incomas1)
- the ICC Alumni mailing list from the Department

The InCoMaS Alumni group on LinkedIn is only for alumni. The page was created in 2011 and had 25 members in fall 2012. The group is however not very active. Few discussions have been started or commented upon. The InCoMas group on Facebook is the most active place where students share information related to internships,
courses, events, personal questions etc. The ICC-Alumni mailing list has not been used or updated in a very long time.

Alumni can join the University website alumninet.jyu.fi. However, the page is not easily accessible for non-Finnish speakers. The main menu on the left remains in Finnish and the flag to swap languages does not function. The University alumni newsletter is also only in Finnish.

On the Department page:
Until fall 2012, no information was provided about alumni on the page of the Master's Degree in Intercultural Communication. There was only a small paragraph titled “Our programme’s graduates’ careers” stating that “as our Professor Emerita Liisa Salo-Lee says, "There is no such job as an Intercultural Communicator".

3 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FALL 2012

3.1 Department of Communication

We interviewed the Amanuensis Sari Mäkikangas about the webpages of each subject of the Department and agreed to update some of them.

b) Speech Communication

We asked the opinions of University Teacher Vilja Laaksonen, Professor Maarit Valo, and the chairman of the student association Parku Otto Hämäläinen.

Speech communication has had its Alumni Day on 5.-6.10.2012. There were about 60 participants, of which 10-15 alumni.

A questionnaire was sent to alumni in fall 2012. The results were put on the webpage of the Department https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/viesti/oppaineet/puh/alumnit/alumnikysely2012). The results show that alumni would like:

- More communication between alumni and the Department
- Meetings in small groups in order to have the possibility to talk with other people who work in the same field
- Information on current research results and challenges in work life
- More presentations from alumni on the alumni day
- To know more about the history and the future of speech communication.
Parku’s chairman thought that speech communication alumni work is good. However, he suggested using collaboration with alumni to increase work life contacts (e.g. offering practical training places or jobs). Parku proposed to have a Facebook page where alumni could post information about job/training offers and tips to find jobs.

Parku recommended having informal events connected with Alumni Day. They would enable students and alumni to talk more easily and share experiences and knowledge. During this year's Alumni Day, Parku arranged an evening programme but unfortunately not many alumni were present. Parku suggested that the Department arranges some official common programme for students and alumni (e.g. meeting just after the seminar, having a common lunch or brunch before the second seminar day). Parku also thinks that it would be nice to ask alumni what kind of cooperation with students they wish for.

3.2 Organizational Communication and PR

OCPR had their Profile Day on 2.11.2012. There were 35 students and 14 alumni. The evening programme was in Hotel Alba.

We interviewed a doctoral student Laura Asunta, Professor Marita Vos, Imago’s chairman Eeva-Liina Kyöstilä and vice-chairman Anniina Sulku. They said that it would be nice to have alumni coming to give presentations to students during the academic year. Imago can organize something for the visiting alumni, for example coffee time or dinner where they can meet students. Imago wants to be active in alumni activities. Imago has an anniversary every spring and has always invited alumni, but only few have come. Now there is discussion about who would be Imago’s alumni contact person.

According to the interviews, it would be good to organize alumni says that focus on alumni but that students can also join. Renowned people from OCPR could come to speak, panel conversations could be organized, and there could be some time for networking. It is also important to have an evening programme so that alumni have time to meet other alumni and make new contacts. Such alumni days could be organized with the whole Department and each subject could have its own workshops.

Imago suggested to have some course or training opportunity organized for alumni. This can be part of alumni days or at any other time. Alumni could learn something new and also get some fresh ideas to bring in work life. The main objective is to show alumni they can return to the Department of Communication and get some new know-how after graduation. These training sessions could have a fee that maybe employers could participate in paying.
Some alumni said they are interested in knowing about current research in the Department. They could then receive links to MA theses, dissertations, and research reports using the alumni letter.

Marita Vos also raised the idea of having actions taken at the University level to gather data on the careers of alumni. Surveys could be sent every two years to map the evolution of alumni’s careers and get a more global picture of the situation.

We also collected feedback from alumni during OCPR’s Profile Day. Seven answers were received. The questionnaire included questions about the type of alumni activities and cooperation that alumni would like. There were also questions about the information alumni would like to find on the Department of Communication website.

Generally the feedback was positive. They think that the current alumni work is good (e.g. profile day, alumni newsletter, Facebook-groups). They hoped to hear about the latest research projects and information about their field. Two alumni hoped to have some kind of courses or lectures about current topics. Some alumni mentioned the possibility to organize trips, for instance to some alumni’s workplaces. Alumni also would like to increase their network by meeting other alumni.

Other wishes from alumni were to have more events in Jyväskylä, events organized only for alumni, some smaller informal events like “alumni coffee”, to have an alumni qs the contact person for all other alumni, to explain to students how to be good alumni.

Some alumni proposed to be guest lecturers, to offer case-studies to students, thesis subjects, and work practice places.

The alumni wishes for web pages were to have clear information, news about current research in the field, alumni greetings, career stories, stories about MA students’ plans for the future, information on alumni’s workplaces, information about basic knowledge and competences needed in OCPR, and alumni questionnaires.

We also collected some feedback from the OCPR Facebook-group and got four comments. They hoped that in the alumni newsletter there is information about the latest research results and also topics of theses. If these can be posted in the Facebook-group, they can discuss about them. Alumni Day is a good thing but they would like to have bigger names for speakers. If the topics are relevant to their work they might be able to take a day off for work. For example topics can include some current trends. They also proposed that the Profile Day would be on Saturday so that they can participate without missing work.
3.3 Journalism

We interviewed Professor Raimo Salokangas, Panu Uotila and Lööppi’s chairman Laura Hyvönen. Teachers and Lööppi’s representatives would like to have an updated email list. After talking with Professor Raimo Salokangas, it was agreed that information about journalism alumni would be added to the webpage of the Department.

Representatives of Lööppi thought that organizing alumni days would be nice. It could be an informal event for example with dinner and music. There can be also some alumni presentations about career stories or media issues. Lööppi can participate in planning and organizing the day.

Feedback from the Journalism Forum
Having alumni day is a nice idea. Students would prefer alumni days to be informal get together where they can meet other alumni and catch up. Students would like the programme to benefit them as well. Some alumni can come and make presentations about their careers if the Department pays their travel costs.

We wrote information about alumni work for the journalism page on the Department website.

3.4 Intercultural Communication

We talked about the project with both Professor Stephen Croucher and lecturer Marko Siitonen.

There has been no letter sent by the Department to tell students who graduate about the alumni network, mailing list, and web pages they can join. Such sample letter was written so that it could be sent to students who graduate from now on.

A text in English was written and uploaded on the web page of the Department. The text explains the main goals of developing alumni relations. It also lists pages that ICC alumni can join online.

The mailing list was updated and an email was sent to let alumni know about the pages that exist. The message also asks alumni to share their career stories so that they could be put online and give information to new and current MA students.
4 WHAT WILL BE DONE IN THE FUTURE

4.1 Department of Communication

In 2015, the Department will celebrate its 30th anniversary. This could be an opportunity to organize some big alumni day with all the subjects. There could be some common programmes and also separate sessions organized by the subjects themselves. There could also be a common evening programme that gathers alumni, staff, and students from all subjects.

4.2 Speech Communication

Speech Communication has a very good and long tradition of alumni work that they will maintain in the future. One aspect that can still be improved is the between students and alumni. Parku’s idea about having a Facebook page dedicated to information on practical trainings and jobs can help. It would be a nice channel for alumni to find new talents and for students to develop connections.

4.3 Organizational Communication and PR

Similarly to Speech Communication, OCPR has a good tradition of alumni work. The alumni letter is good but should be improved a little bit. It would be better if it had a short table of contents at the beginning so that people know whether they are concerned by the message and do not delete it before reading it.

4.4 Journalism

The main problem is to be able to reach alumni who are not in the Lööppi forum. Lööppi thought that having an alumni e-mail letter would be good, but there must be an e-mail list for that. It would also be nice to have an alumni questionnaire and a Facebook group for alumni. Lööppi mentioned that Twitter would be a useful tool to use because it is popular.

If there is some event in Helsinki it is possible to use sponsors for bus transportation (e.g. Keskisuomalainen). Lööppi can help to organize these events. Lööppi already organizes Helsinki excursions to visit Yle etc. Maybe there could be some alumni meetings at the same time.

In the future there could be some career stories on the webpage of the Department. There can be also events and instructions on how to join in the alumni-mailing list.
4.5 Intercultural Communication

Organizing an alumni day is one of the goals for the future. The main challenge is that most of the alumni are living worldwide. Professor Stephen M. Croucher suggested that alumni meetings could be organized in Helsinki to increase the chances of having a maximum of alumni present. Another possibility is to organize alumni days at the same time as communication conferences anywhere else in Europe for instance. This would be a good option to gather staff, doctoral students, MA students, and alumni. He also said that informal get-together and evening parties are likely to attract more people. It can also make it easier for people to talk with each other.

5 TIPS FOR THE FUTURE

5.1 Alumni Days

Organizing Alumni Days is a good way to make students and alumni meet. The day programme can consist of panel conversation and speakers (alumni). The evening programme can be more informal to encourage alumni and students to talk together. In 2015 it will be the 30th anniversary of the Department. There could be an Alumni Day organized for the whole Department. Every subject can have its own programme but there could also be some common activities. Such large events may make it easier to attract renowned speakers and receive funding. Student organizations can help organize and plan such event.

A good way to make Alumni Days beneficial for alumni is to organize activities that will increase their know-how. There could for instance some training sessions or presentations about current issues in the field. MA and doctoral students could be involved in these activities by for example presenting their research topics.

5.2 Webpages

The Department webpage should provide updated information about all the pages that exist for alumni. It is important that all the links are easy to find. The Department webpage is visited by future students, current students, alumni, and staff. It is therefore the best place to promote our alumni work.

It is important to have a good follow-up marketing after the event. A thank you letter, pictures, and a summary of the event can be put on a website and sent via a newsletter. All types of social media can also be used for this purpose.
Including career stories about alumni, sharing information about past, upcoming events, and results of alumni questionnaires are ways to make alumni web-pages more attractive. There could be information about cooperation opportunities between Department and alumni (e.g. offering training practices, topics of theses, mentoring). There should be the name of the contact person for alumni activities, information to sign up to alumni mailing lists, and links to join online groups.

5.3 Social Media

Alumni Facebook group is a good place to have discussion and share information like job offers. These groups are easier to manage than mailing list because people sign up by themselves and nobody has to update their contact information. In addition, mailing lists provide a one-way communication whereas social media encourage alumni to discuss more easily with each other. There could also be groups for alumni and students to share internship offers, thesis topics etc.

Twitter is also a good tool for alumni communication because alumni can keep up with the fast release of information. Twitter can also be used for Alumni Day to promote the event. For instance, alumni who cannot attend the Alumni Day can follow tweets about the programme.

LinkedIn is a good way to widen one’s professional network. Alumni can find each other using the page of their subject. LinkedIn is also a good place to find job offers and share them with other alumni. Following Alumni Days when students and alumni have met face-to-face they can easily connect on LinkedIn and stay in touch overtime.

Blogs can also be a nice channel of information for alumni. However, there has to be somebody in charge so that the blog is active. This person can ask alumni if they want to write, suggests them topics, and uploads their texts online. The one in charge can be from a student association or from the Department.

5.4 Alumni Newsletter

Newsletters are good to keep alumni informed of life at the University and news in the Department. Newsletters can be used to promote upcoming events and current research results from the Department (e.g. MA and doctoral theses). It is good that it has a table of contents so readers quickly know what it is about. Newsletters are good to gather information about all channels (e.g. latest blog posts, Facebook events etc). Each subject can have its own newsletter so that the content is specifically targeted. Each subject can decide how often they send it, 2 to 4 times a year can be good
depending on how much there is to share. Sending it too often without any good information can take away the value of the newsletter.

5.5 Other alumni work

Students and teachers have mentioned that it would be great if alumni could give lectures. This can bring more first-hand practical information about worklife. It can be very motivating for students and dynamise the curriculum. Alumni can also be involved by being mentors of current students, arranging work practices, proposing case studies and topics of theses.