September 3, 2002

Dear members of the Rhetoric and Communication study group:

Here is a digest of my notes on what we decided we needed to know and how we decided to divide up the initial work. NB: Catherine Roberts will be creating a website for our group.

1. What are Holy Cross faculty doing now to provide students with opportunities to develop oral, written and electronic communication skills?

2. Are we happy with what we are doing? In what areas do we believe we need to improve/repair deficiencies?

3. How do we evaluate students' work in these areas?

Dan Bitran, Mark Hallahan, and Loren Cass will consider means of obtaining responses to these questions from the HC faculty [a survey??].

4. What do comparable small liberal arts colleges do in these areas [including Jesuit schools]?

Ed O'Donnell and Brian Linnane will attempt to obtain this info from catalogs in the Dean's Office, websites, etc.

Mary Morton will be providing data from a national study that addressed students' perceptions of schools' performances in these areas.

5. What does professional literature say about writing across the curriculum, speaking across the curriculum, etc.?

Pat Bizzell will attempt to find some useful readings, which will be posted to the website [along with her paper on rhetoric in Jesuit education].

6. What constitutes cyber-literacy?

7. What oral communication skills are discipline-specific and what seem more universally applicable/generalizable?

8. What part if any is played by ethical questions and the evaluation by the teacher of values expressed in students' work, when one is teaching and evaluating communication?

These last three questions came up and should remain on the table but certainly were not resolved by today's discussion, nor did we devise a way to immediately pursue them.