



Date: May 20, 2018

From: Ford Risley, Associate Dean

Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

To: Marie Hardin, Dean

Russ Eshleman, Journalism Department Head

Matt Jackson, Telecommunications Department Head

Anthony Olorunnisola, Film-Video and Media Studies Department Head

Fuyuan Shen, Advertising/Public Relations Department Head

CC: Rod Bingaman, Film-Video SLA Team Leader

Ben Cramer, Telecommunications SLA Team Leader

Frank Dardis, Advertising and Strategic Communications SLA Team Leader

Maura Shea, Film-Video and Media Studies Associate Department Head

Re: Student Learning Assessment Report: 2016-2017 Academic Year

Action Item for Department Heads

Each program must determine how to best apply the findings of this report “to improve curricula, instruction and learning.” Please respond by or before June 18 with measures: a) already taken, based on earlier Student Learning Assessment reports, and b) being considered, based on this report. What are some realistic short-term and long-term improvements that could be made to your curriculum, and what, generally, would be needed to pursue them?

Executive Summary

- The conclusion for this annual assessment cycle is that all assessed majors are meeting the learning goals for our 12 professional values and competencies. This assessment also points to areas across the College where we should continue our efforts to focus on key learning outcomes; it also reinforces our understanding that our response to past assessment reviews has yielded positive results and is worth the time and effort involved.
- Each program must determine how to best apply the findings of this report “to improve curricula, instruction and learning.” Faculty across the College will review the findings of this report and plan improvements accordingly.

Introduction

The Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications' student learning assessment program has completed its fourteenth year. By all accounts, it is a successful program, and has helped the College identify areas of excellence to maintain and areas of weaknesses to address through curricular improvements.

The primary goal for the College's assessment process continues to be evaluating student learning according to requirements of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). The Council provides criteria and standards for assessment. The three criteria that guide assessment of student learning are *awareness, understanding and application*. The standards stipulate, in part, that student learning be assessed in 12 areas of competence. (See Appendix A.)

The College uses a combination of primary (direct) measures and secondary (indirect) measures. The primary measures are a team review of student work that comes mostly from capstone or senior-level coursework, and a survey of internship supervisors. In Spring 2017 we completed the final year of our new three-year cycle of assessment in which the faculty representative from each major and Alumni Society Board members reviewed the materials individually and then met for a face-to-face discussion of their findings. Each spring semester four of the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies are reviewed. In summer 2016, with the help of College Ad/PR Network Board volunteers, we assessed the online Strategic Communications option of the Advertising/Public Relations major. Faculty representatives created evaluation rubrics that included guidelines for excellent, satisfactory and unsatisfactory work within each of the criteria.

We plan to continue with this method of review utilizing the expertise of the Alumni Society Board and the Ad/PR Network Board, and will focus on assessment of four learning objectives each year in the three-year cycle. Teams comprising experienced media professionals conducted the reviews except for one program, Media Studies, where doctoral alumni teaching in other mass communication programs also participated in the review. Most professionals involved in assessment are College alumni. (See Appendix B for a list of team members who participated in assessment.) One team was organized for each of the College's degree programs, with separate teams for the Advertising, Public Relations and Strategic Communications degree options within the major. The internship supervisor survey was conducted during the Summer 2016, Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters.

Secondary measures used in the Student Learning Assessment included College-based retention and graduation rates and evidence from student competitions. During the Spring 2017 semester we initiated student focus group discussions as an additional secondary measure.

Summary of Findings

Programs were assessed as meeting minimum expectations in all areas based on feedback from the direct and indirect measures we examined. The data suggest that student learning reflects the objectives outlined in the values and competencies adopted by the College. These reviews and other data indicate areas that faculty should address as they contemplate improvements to the curriculum.

Primary Direct Measures

Team Evaluations of Student Work. Student work was selected, organized and distributed to teams of industry professionals and in accordance with the College's assessment plan. Reviewers also received the syllabi for the courses from which assignments were selected. A faculty member in each major summarized the conclusions in a report based on face-to-face discussions with alumni reviewers. The design of our curriculum assures the basic criterion of assessment, *awareness*, is achieved; all students are *exposed* to the 12 values and competencies. However, our aim is always that student learning will rise to *understanding* and *application*.

The review of student work by assessment teams must be understood within its limitations; teams examined course materials from just one section of any particular course although multiple sections were usually offered.

Reviewers rated course materials as "Excellent," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory" within criteria applicable to the specific learning objective. Competencies determined inapplicable were noted as such on the reviewer grid. Reviewers were encouraged to provide comments to support their evaluation of student work.

Readers should give team reports, reproduced in full in Appendix F, thorough consideration. They contain specific praise, some concerns and useful suggestions for each program's curriculum. The following summary provides only general findings.

Overall, reviews indicate that students are meeting minimum acceptable standards for all values and competencies in the programs reviewed. Reviewers were positive overall about student learning and the quality of the work they reviewed.

Reviewers found strengths in each major, but they also found areas that needed improvement. Team assessments for each competency are summarized below. Not every program is summarized under each standard, however, complete team reports are included in the appendix.

1. *Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the*

range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and to petition for redress of grievances.

This standard received generally high praise from reviewers, although not all majors assessed the standard. Reviewers for the Journalism major said students showed an “Excellent” understanding of First Amendment concepts. Reviewers for the Telecommunications major said students showed an outstanding grasp of free speech theories, but only a satisfactory understanding of other issues, including libel and dissent. The Advertising and Public Relations major did not assess the standard, nor did the Film-Video major. Although students in both majors are exposed to the competency in courses within or outside of the major, they are not assessed within the major.

2. *Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.*

This standard received mixed reviews. Journalism major reviewers said students, overall, were meeting the learning objective with assessment ranging from “Satisfactory” to “Excellent.” Reviewers for the Media Studies major rated the competency of students as either competent or unsatisfactory. They believed that assignments used in relation to the competency should be more carefully considered. The Film-Video major did not assess the standard because it relies on students taking a related course in Media Studies. (The major plans to offer its own course in 2018.) And although the Advertising/Public Relations students are exposed to this competency, it is not assessed.

3. *Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.*

This standard received high praise from reviewers of most majors. Reviewers for the Advertising and Public Relations options said that the assignment samples revealed an excellent understanding of the importance of ethics for the profession. Reviewers for the Film-Video major noted that students displayed an awareness of complex ethical issues and an understanding of what filmmakers can do to subtly communicate the issues. Telecommunications major reviewers said students showed an outstanding ability to discuss ethical issues but sometimes they lacked the final step in finding practical solutions. Ad/PR Network Board volunteers assessing the Strategic Communications option rated this competency as “Satisfactory,” however, recommended restructuring the assignment to provide a better result.

4. *Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.*

This standard also received generally high praise from reviewers of all majors. Reviewers for the Advertising option said students demonstrated an outstanding understanding of research

methods, although visual information (graphs, charts, etc.) too often was not clear. Film-Video major reviewers found that students showed an “Excellent” ability to prepare research for creative projects, although in some cases the research was either too academic or too informal for the subject matter. Reviewers for the Media Studies major found that students showed an effective ability to conduct research at a high level.

Survey of Internship Supervisors. During the summer 2016, fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters, internship supervisors responded to a survey assessing interns on the values and competencies.¹ (See Appendix C for survey instrument, results over the past several years and written comments from the 2016-17 survey.) As in previous assessment surveys, respondents were asked to rate students on a one-to-five scale, with five being the highest rating. A total of 409 out of 410 supervisors responded, a rate of 99.8 percent.

Survey data suggest that internship supervisors found, on average, that student interns performed well in all areas. Supervisors “agreed” that students met all competencies; average ratings for each ranged from 4.60 to 4.83. All but two areas increased slightly from last year’s survey. It is difficult to assert a trend, however, as our methods preclude us from claiming statistical significance.

The highest average ratings included being able to competently use tools and technologies, and demonstrating sensitivity to the diversity of groups in a global society. The lowest average ratings were for critically evaluating work for accuracy and fairness.

Secondary Measures

Graduation and Retention Rates. The College’s one-year retention rate for the Fall 2015 cohort remained steady at 91 percent. In relationship to the previous year, four-year graduation rates increased by two percent (82 percent for the 2012 cohort), while five-year rates increased by one percent (89 percent for the 2011 cohort), and six-year rates increased by 2 percent (89 percent for the 2010 cohort).

National Competitions and Awards. The College’s students continue to excel in national and regional competitions, evidence that many of the professional competency goals are being achieved. The College strives to maintain a national reputation among academics and professionals for achievement of students in rankings and competitions.

The College finished seventh overall in the final standings of the William R. Hearst Foundation’s Journalism Awards Program, where students earned six top-10 awards. A record 1,267 entries were submitted from students from 100 nationally accredited schools.

¹ The internship survey addresses all competencies except images. Diversity is addressed in one item (instead of 2).

The College's students also continued to excel, as in previous years, in the AAF Most Promising Minority Program, the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards, and other state, regional, and national contests. For a list of winners in these competitions, see Appendix E.

Student Focus Groups.

As noted, during the Spring 2017 semester the College initiated student focus group discussions as an additional secondary measure of assessment. Eight to twelve students from each major met separately with a faculty member in the major to discuss a range of questions about the curriculum.

It is difficult to summarize the responses from so many students across all the majors, but in general they reinforced the positive features of the curriculum as well as what needs to be improved. Transcripts from the focus groups will be shared and should be considered, along with other measures, in assessing the curriculum.

Appendix A

Professional Values and Competencies for Assessment

Individual professions in journalism and mass communication may require certain specialized values and competencies. Irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

1. understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and to petition for redress of grievances;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
5. understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
7. think critically, creatively and independently;
8. conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
9. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
10. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
11. apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
12. apply basic tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Appendix B
Student Learning Assessment Teams, 2016-2017

<u>Advertising</u>
Frank Dardis, faculty team leader
John Dolan, Associate Dean, Georgetown University
Bernadette Dunn, Senior Director Global Internal Communications, ARRIS
Cindy Viadella, Marketing Consultant, Media, Marketing & Advertising Industries
<u>Film/Video</u>
Rod Bingaman, faculty team leader
Clara Benice, Owner/Director, Writer and Producer, LuLuh, LLC
Amy Camacho, Associate Producer for Television (freelance)
Mark Stitzer, Videographer/Editor, WPSU
Tyler Walk, Motion Picture Editor/Director
<u>Journalism</u>
Russ Eshleman, faculty team leader
Kurt Knaus, Managing Director, Ceisler Media & Issue Advocacy
Dan Victor, Senior Staff Editor, New York Times
Bianca Barr Tunno, Multimedia Journalist (Freelance), Accuweather
<u>Media Studies</u>
Kevin Hagopian, faculty team leader
Katherine Hansen, Communications Manager, Procurement, Bank of America
Jianghanhan Li, Graduate Student, Columbia University
Cristina Mislan, Assistant Professor, Missouri School of Journalism
<u>Public Relations</u>
Marcia DiStaso, faculty team leader
Natalie Buyny, Account Executive, Tierney
Alyson Joyce, Associate, Stakeholder Relations, Seneca Resources Corporation
Meredith Topalanchik, Executive Vice President, Operations & Client Services, CooperKatz
<u>Telecommunications</u>
Ben Cramer, faculty team leader
Patrick Bunting, Manager, Corporate Communications, NBCUniversal
Patrick Mairs, Editor/Producer, Associated Press

Jarred Romesburg, President/Owner, Romesburg Media Group, LLC
Strategic Communications
Frank Dardis, faculty team leader
Monica Miller, Senior Director, Operations, CoxAutomotive Media Solutions
Kathy Swidwa, Communications Strategist, Penn State College of the Liberal Arts
Brenna Thorpe, Strategic Communications Senior Consultant, Booz Allen Hamilton

Appendix C
Internship Assessment Questionnaire with Average Scores for 2010-2017

Intern Assessment Questionnaire

Introduction to survey: The College of Communications and its accrediting agency, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, have established a broad set of learning objectives for our students and we would like your help in assessing the extent to which the Penn State intern under your supervision, through his or her work, exhibits qualities associated with those goals. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your agreement with the statement, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. You may also note when the statement is not applicable (NA) to your situation.

1. The intern used tools and technologies appropriate for the job.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.83
2015-2016	4.81
2014-2015	4.83
2013-2014	4.76
2012-2013	4.85
2011-2012	4.74
2010-2011	4.56

2. The intern wrote correctly and clearly.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.73
2015-2016	4.71
2014-2015	4.80
2013-2014	4.63
2012-2013	4.70
2011-2012	4.62
2010-2011	4.47

3. The intern acted judiciously, creatively and independently.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.66
2015-2016	4.60
2014-2015	4.69
2013-2014	4.63
2012-2013	4.68
2011-2012	4.76
2010-2011	4.44

4. The intern demonstrated the ability to conduct research and evaluate information.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.66
2015-2016	4.7
2014-2015	4.73
2013-2014	4.74
2012-2013	4.72
2011-2012	4.66
2010-2011	4.47

5. The intern could use basic numerical and statistical concepts.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.80
2015-2016	4.79
2014-2015	4.76
2013-2014	4.71
2012-2013	4.77
2011-2012	4.67
2010-2011	4.51

6. The intern critically evaluated his or her own work for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.60
2015-2016	4.57
2014-2015	4.67
2013-2014	4.58
2012-2013	4.64
2011-2012	4.52
2010-2011	4.24

7. The intern demonstrated an understanding of professional ethical principles.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.80
2015-2016	4.53
2014-2015	4.74
2013-2014	4.76
2012-2013	4.76
2011-2012	4.74
2010-2011	4.55

8. The intern appeared to understand principles and laws of freedom of speech and press.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.79
2015-2016	4.78
2014-2015	4.80
2013-2014	4.70
2012-2013	4.80
2011-2012	4.67
2010-2011	4.43

9. The intern demonstrated sensitivity to the diversity of groups in a global society.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.82
2015-2016	4.80
2014-2015	4.89
2013-2014	4.69
2012-2013	4.82
2011-2012	4.71
2010-2011	4.46

10. The intern demonstrated an understanding of the role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Average Scores

2016-2017	4.81
2015-2016	4.84
2014-2015	4.81
2013-2014	4.70
2012-2013	4.80
2011-2012	4.69
2010-2011	4.47

Close to the survey: Please offer any additional comments about the skills and abilities of the intern.

Note: The internship survey results are reported for 10 of the 11 questions on the survey. (We asked a second question relating to Value/Competency #10: "The intern critically evaluated the work of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness." The responses to this item were not useful, as many supervisors noted that the interns are usually not in position to evaluate the work of others at the workplace.)

Intern Assessment Survey
Summer 2016, Fall 2016 and Spring 2017
Sample of supervisor comments

"[Student] produced an excellent final piece, managed all of the work connected to the story, corresponded regularly with the artists and management and kept me apprised of all details throughout the process. Her approach focused on diversity and inclusion in the arts."

"[Student] was well prepared for this internship. Not only did they come in with knowledge about the company, but gave suggestions on ways to improve based on their research of our previous social media campaigns."

"[Student] has been an asset to our department since day one. [Student] completes assignments in a timely and professional manner and isn't afraid to ask questions so they can continue to learn."

"[Student] was generally well prepared, but started off with little knowledge of Cision or Excel."

"[Student's] classroom experience, camera and edit skills provided them a great platform for the internship."

"[Student] is a hard worker, she always conducted herself in a professional manner, was good about seeking and responding to feedback, had good story idea (such as a story on how students from other countries spent Thanksgiving here and another one on the rigors faced by athletes who are members of Schreyer Honors College), and writes very well."

"[Student] displayed a basic understanding of Adobe Premier through the utilization of images, music, SFX, and graphics. He was able to create content in a timely manner and brought a unique creative style. He did not understand some other essential Adobe products such as Prelude and Media Encoder which are essential for encoding footage. He did learn how to use these programs and as time progressed, he learned the different codecs we used and the importance of the finer details."

"Her work was instrumental for us to recruit competitively against other universities across the country."

"I believe that [student] was definitely prepared for this internship. The quality of both his written and video work has been at a high level from his first story moving forward."

"[Student] came prepared each day, she effectively worked with our teams and was a strong contributor to our project and the social media campaign."

"[Student] came to work every day on time and ready for the day ahead. She effectively executed any task placed before her. She possesses strong writing skills and the ability to pick up new tasks easily."

Appendix D
Retention and Graduation Rates

Year	1-yr retention	4-yr graduation	5-yr graduation	6-yr graduation
2015	91%			
2014	91%			
2013	95%	82%		
2012	93%	86%	90%	
2011	93%	82%	89%	89%
2010	93%	81%	88%	89%
2009	89%	76%	87%	87%
2008	93%	80%	88%	88%
2007	94%	79%	87%	88%
2006	94%	80%	88%	89%
2005	94%	78%	89%	90%
2004	93%	80%	88%	88%
2003	91%	76%	84%	86%
2002	92%	78%	86%	87%
2001	91%	73%	82%	83%

Data obtained from Enrollment Management Retention and Graduation Reports web site:

<https://intranet.uao.psu.edu/sas/broker.exe? PROGRAM=retcode.retentionweb.sas& SER VICE=pool1>

Report generated 05-16-18.

Appendix E
Student Award Winners, 2016-2017 (Selected Competitions)

American Advertising Federation Most Promising Minority Students Program

Sabriana Pimentel

Rachel Nagpal

American Advertising Federation Stickell Scholarship/Internship Award

Nikolas Revmatas

John W. Oswald Award

Courtney Testa

Association for Women in Sports Media ESPN Scholarship/Internship

Erin Dolan

Multicultural Resource Center Student Leadership Award

Anita Nham

Broadcast Education Association Festival of Media Arts

Kesly Salazar - National Award of Excellence, TV Anchor

Jessica Arnold - 2nd Place, (Magazine Producer)

Megan Roethlein - 2nd Place Student Short Form Documentary

Caleb Yoder - 3rd Place Student Narrative Video

Chris Rencavage - 3rd Place Student Narrative Video

Aaron Andrews - 3rd Place Student Narrative Video

Jacob Jenny - 3rd Place Student Narrative Video

Chris Rencavage - 2nd Place Student Narrative

Caleb Yoder - 2nd Place Student Narrative

BEA Super-Regional Conference

Caroline Miller - 1st Place Student Documentary; 1st Place Student Open

Aaron Andrews - 2nd Place Student Narrative

Jacob Jenny - 2nd Place Student Narrative

Cora Hankey - 2nd Place Student Open

Jaime Chan - 3rd Place Student Open

Hearst Foundation

Mark Fischer - 13th Place Feature Writing

Cameron Hart - 15th Place Photo News and Features

Claire Going - 19th Place Enterprise Reporting
Leon Valsechi - 8th Place Feature Writing
Antonella Crescimbeni - 18th Place Multimedia News
Shannon Ryan - 10th Place Multimedia News
Haley Nelson - 13th Place Tie Photo Picture Story/Series
Junior Gonzalez - 13th Place Tie Photo Picture Story/Series

Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award

Alexandra Hogan - 1st place General Assignment Reporting
Ian Logan – 1st Place, College/University Student Production - Long Form: Fiction
Nick Serricchio – 1st Place, College/University Student Production - Long Form: Fiction
Jordan Thompson – 1st Place, College/University Student Production - Long Form: Fiction
Abigail Wilson – 1st Place, College/University Student Production - Long Form: Fiction
Thomas Stewart - College/University Student Production 1st Place, Arts and Entertainment/Cultural Affairs

Dow Jones News Fund Internship

James Madden

Society of Professional Journalists – Region 1 Mark of Excellence Award Winners

Carter Walker - 1st Place In-Depth Reporting
Matt Martell - 1st Place Online Feature Reporting
Anna Pitingolo - 1st Place Online Sports Reporting
Jess Arnold - 1st Place Television In-Depth Reporting
Laura Barbosa - 1st Place Television In-Depth Reporting
Taylor Bisacky - 1st Place Television In-Depth Reporting
Scott Cikowski - 1st Place Television In-Depth Reporting
Scott Cikowski - 1st Place Television News and Feature Photography
Lesly Salazar - 1st Place Television Sports Photography
Kristen Garrone - 1st Place Television Sports Reporting
Christine O'Connor – Best All-Around Newscast
Arif Aminuddin - 1st Place Breaking News Photography
Antonella Crescimbeni - Finalist General News Photography
Camerson Hart - Finalist General News Photography
Leon Valsechi – Finalist Online Feature Reporting
Antonella Crescimbeni – Finalist Sports Photography
Best All-Round TV Newscast: “Centre County Report” Staff
TV In-Depth Reporting: “The Refugee Crisis in Greece” – “Centre County Report in Greece” Staff

Student Keystone Press Awards (Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation)

Haley Nelson – 1st Place Feature Photo

Cameron Hart – 1st Place News Photo

Matt Martell – 1st Place Personality Profile

Haley Nelson – 1st Place Photo Story

Antonella Crescimbeni – 1st Place Sports Photo

Erin McCarthy – 1st Place Sports Story

Leon Valsechi – 1st Place, Feature Story

Junior Gonzales - 2nd Place Photo Story

CLGBTQE Emerging Leader Award

Nadia Souada

Appendix F
Program Assessment Reports
Alumni Society Board and Ad/PR Network Board Reviews

DATE: May 6, 2017

FROM: Frank Dardis, Associate Professor of Advertising

TO: Ford Risley, Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education, College of Communications

CC: Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

RE: Department of Advertising Student Learning Assessment Spring 2017: Research and Information, Ethics

Background

The Department of Advertising has nine learning objectives for its undergraduate curriculum. As part of the department and college's ongoing assessment program, samples of student work are examined periodically by a committee made up of faculty and industry professionals to assess whether students are demonstrating competency in the established learning objectives. In Spring 2017, the department conducted an assessment of two ACEJMC learning objectives: Research and Information, and Ethics. Four people (three industry professionals and one faculty member) discussed student work on March 19, 2017: Cindy Viadella, Marketing Consultant, Media, Marketing & Advertising Industries; John Dolan, Associate Dean, Georgetown University; Bernadette Dunn, Senior Director, Global Internal Communications, ARRIS; and Frank Dardis, Associate Professor, Department of Advertising and Public Relations. Evaluation of each objective is discussed below.

Data Collection

Student work samples were comprised of the following:

- 2 Advertising Campaign Books from the capstone course, *COMM 424 – Advertising Campaigns*. In these, students are tasked with developing an entire campaign for a client: situation analysis, consumer analysis and target selection, secondary and primary research, branding/creative insight, media and other promotional strategies, and evaluation methods.
- The syllabus and some take-home, Final Exam samples from COMM 417 – Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations (elective course). The exam questions ask students to apply the concepts learned throughout the course to develop an ethics orientation seminar for new employees at an advertising or public relations firm.

After reading all of the samples, we evaluated the presence of the two ACEJMC criteria as reflected within the student work using categories of “Excellent” (Outcome is strongly demonstrated), “Satisfactory” (Outcome is demonstrated), and “Unsatisfactory” (Outcome is not demonstrated).

Results

Learning Objective #3: The student will be able to describe qualitative and quantitative research methods; evaluate information from primary and secondary sources; and collect, synthesize, and analyze data to provide insight with empirical underpinnings. (ACEJMC Value: Research and Information)

Summary: This outcome received scores of “Excellent” across all four reviewers. Alumni reviewers believed this criterion was effectively demonstrated in student projects. Reviewers believed that this outcome was one of the strongest points of the work and that students demonstrated deep understanding of industry practices, tactics, and know-how. They were especially impressed with how student work "was both broadly and specifically driven by research and insights" and "demonstrated a solid understanding of research data and its critical importance to the foundation of building an overall campaign." One area noted for improvement related to graphs, charts, and visual information: "inadequate or missing labels, typos, and lack of explanation to help reader understand key takeaways." The department is encouraged to maintain the level of research emphasis, while further stressing among students the importance of proper visual communication in reports.

Learning Objective #8: The student will be able to apply ethical principles to contemporary issues and activities in strategic communication. (ACEJMC Value: Ethics)

Summary: This skill also was well evidenced in the student work, with three reviewers scoring the outcome as “Excellent” and one reviewer as “Satisfactory.” Reviewers were impressed with how students showed a very strong understanding of the importance of ethics within the profession, and how students applied their insights to professional situations. One reviewer believed that some students were better at applying principles than others. The professional reviewers also were quite impressed with the independent thought being demonstrated by the students. The syllabus also was rated as comprehensive and positive. The largest suggestion regarding ethics was that the reviewers wished that the ethics course was required in the major. The faculty member explained that the department does try to weave ethical principles into every course, but that changing graduation requirements could become part of a larger discussion about the curriculum as a whole as some faculty turnover is occurring. In short, the conclusion drawn was it seems to be a good idea if it can work. But reviewers also were pleased to see that ethical principles are included in all department courses.

DATE: May 10, 2017

FROM: Amy Camacho, Associate Producer, Lion Television
Tyler Walk, Motion Picture Editor & Distinguished COC Alumnus
Mark Stitzer, Cinematographer/Editor, WPSU Creative Group
Rod Bingaman, Senior Lecturer, Film-Video Production

TO: Ford Risley, Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education, College of Communications

CC: Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

RE: Film-Video Student Learning Assessment Spring 2017
Research, Ethics, Freedom of Speech, History

The Department of Film-Video & Media Studies has eight learning objectives for the Film-Video Production curriculum. As part of the department and college's ongoing assessment program, samples of student work are examined periodically by a committee made up of faculty and industry professionals to assess whether students are demonstrating competency in the established learning objectives. In Spring 2017, the department conducted an assessment of four learning objectives. Amy Camacho, Associate Producer, Lion Television; Mark Stitzer, Cinematographer/Editor, WPSU Creative Group and Tyler Walk, Editor & Distinguished COC Alumnus submitted assessment comments electronically to Rod Bingaman, Senior Lecturer, Film-Video Production. A meeting was held by the Alumni Board on March 19, 2017, to evaluate samples of student work. Evaluation of each objective is discussed below.

Research

Learning Objective #3: Apply critical thinking, research, and adaptive abilities to the processes of preproduction, production, and postproduction. (ACEJMC Value: Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work).

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the fall 2016 semester were collected from an intermediate level Film-Video course: *COMM 342—Idea Development and Media Writing*. We reviewed two documentary workbook samples, one five pages in length (Hunter Fisher) and one three pages in length (Megan Canale). We used three criteria for evaluating student mastery in applying research concepts: Methodology, Computation/Accuracy, and the Format of the research; using a scale of excellent, satisfactory (good), or unsatisfactory.

Summary: Based on our evaluation of student samples, it is clear that the department's curriculum is satisfactory in helping students learn how to prepare research for creative projects. Student work was cited positively for proficiency in backing up thoughts with facts and for ease of reading. There were instances where research proposals were either

too academic or too informal, depending on the audience and subject matter. The department is encouraged to place additional emphasis on encouraging students to include more tangible references to reinforce the technical and visual style of each piece.

Ethics

Learning Objective #2: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; applying the principles of fair use and copyright laws. (ACEJMC Value: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity).

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the Fall 2016 semester were collected from one intermediate level Film-Video course: *COMM 346—Writing for the Screen I* and from the spring and fall 2016 semesters of two advanced level courses: *Comm 437--Advanced Documentary Production* and *Comm 438--Advanced Narrative Production*. We reviewed one written sample, three short documentary films and one short narrative film, ranging from a twelve-page script to films three to fourteen minutes in length. We used three criteria for evaluating the student mastery in applying ethics appropriately: understanding the role of ethics, integrating issues of ethics into material, and identifying possible actions or outcomes; using a scale of excellent, satisfactory (good), or unsatisfactory.

Summary: Our overall conclusion is that this learning objective is being met at a very high level—excellent from all three outside evaluators. Reviewers noted particular strength in the students’ awareness of complex ethical issues and a comprehension of what the craft of filmmaking can do to communicate these issues with subtlety. While the solutions posed by the students were “not necessarily groundbreaking” (T. Walk), they were cited as powerful, relevant and delivered messages effectively to the viewer.

Freedom of Speech

(ACEJMC Value (ACEJMC Value: Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites the ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances).

Data Collection: No samples of student work were submitted for this competency as there were no specific assignments addressing this explicit proficiency.

Summary: Freedom of speech is an implicit component in the creation of all work by Film-Video Production students.

History

Learning Objective #7: Recognize the social, economic and technological factors that shape films from different historical periods; gender, race and sexual orientation perspectives; as well as domestic and international cultural contexts. (ACEJMC Value:

Demonstrate an understanding of history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications).

Data Collection: No samples of student work were submitted for this competency as there were no specific assignments addressing this explicit proficiency.

Summary: History is an important and implicit component in the creation of all work by Film-Video Production students. At present, film history is provided by the Media Studies faculty in required courses. However, Film-Video Production has submitted a proposal to teach a new required film history course beginning in 2018. Work from this course will be appropriate for assessment in the next cycle.

May 1, 2017

FROM: Journalism assessment committee: Kurt Knaus, Bianca Barr Tunno, Dan Victor, Russ Eshleman

TO: Ford Risley, associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education

CC: Julie Evak, coordinator of undergraduate education

RE: Student Learning Assessment, Spring 2017, Department of Journalism

The four of us met at the Nittany Lion Inn on March 19, 2017, to review our individual assessments of student work samples and instructor teaching materials for the following four learning objectives:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and to petition for redress of grievances.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and to petition for redress of grievances.

Data Collection: We evaluated materials from Comm403 (Media Law), including a class syllabus, instructor assignment guidelines and three different examples of student work – a multiple choice examination, student background research for mock court cases and student papers on U.S. Supreme Court justices.

Summary: We deemed these materials “excellent,” according to the rubric, because they demonstrated that First Amendment concepts were being taught in the class and the student samples showed a grasp of the material and the ability to use it.

Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

Data Collection and Summary: Using the same materials, the committee concluded that the course, instructor and students, overall, were meeting the learning objective. The committee’s grade fell somewhere between “satisfactory” and “excellent.”

Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

Data Collection: For this learning objective, the committee examined Comm409 (News Media Ethics). The committee looked at the course syllabus, a final examination, the professor’s instructions for three distinct assignments and examples of student work – student-created PowerPoints designed to analyze particular journalism case studies of

ethical dilemma, a student paper on his/her interview with a professional journalist about an ethical issue he/she faced and a student “man on the street” paper seeking public comment about perceived ethical lapses in the news media, as well as student exam answers on a variety of journalism ethics concepts.

Summary: The committee awarded an “excellent” rating from the rubric on this learning objective, noting the variety of student work designed to enhance student learning.

Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

Data Collection and Summary: Using the same materials, the committee likewise viewed demonstration of this learning objective as “excellent,” noting that students were required to conduct their own research for their presentations as well as do live interviews.

General remarks from the meeting: Eshleman noted that all four of these learning objectives show up in many journalism courses, not just those highlighted above. In some cases, the objectives play a “minor” role in the course. For example, numerous courses review aspects of journalism history in an effort to place today’s skills and knowledge in context. In such cases, students are rarely evaluated on their knowledge of that history, however, because instructors view teaching and learning other course material, such as practical skills, more important to the students’ future.

Overall comments from Knaus: “Given all that we see in the news and the pressures reports are under today, this was a very timely and relevant review. I can only imagine the class discussions to be lively and not just because of the content but also because of what is in the news each and every day.”

Overall comments from Tunno: “Comm 403 and 409 meet expectations. I did not see any student work that would be considered unsatisfactory. There was a nice range of satisfactory and excellent work to analyze.”

April 27, 2017

*To: J. Ford Risley, Associate Dean, and Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education
From: Media Studies Student Learning Assessment committee: Katherine Hansen,
Jianghanhan Li, Cristina Mislán and Michael Elavsky, faculty team leader*

Re: Student Learning Assessment

The following summary represents the work done on the final phase of the department-specific Student Learning Assessment (SLA) which replaces the learning self-study component of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) accreditation for the academic year 2016-17. This work was ultimately completed in the Spring semester of 2017. The work consisted of presenting sample student work to be measured against standards for four learning objectives -- "Freedom of Speech/Press," "History," "Professional Ethics," and "Research" -- by reviewers from our own Alumni Board, and outside reviewers. The purpose of this final phase of the SLA project, as in previous phases, was to identify student competency, rather than excellence, in these learning objectives, taken *in toto* across their education in the Media Studies major; no one course is expected to satisfy all of these competencies.

Data Collection: A sample of course assignments, exams, and powerpoints from several courses for Media Studies majors were solicited. These included courses taught by full-time faculty and graduate students. Course assignments included papers ranging in length from 2-10 pages, power point presentations, and multiple choice exams. Student work using qualitative approaches was surveyed from the following designated courses: Comm 205, "Gender, Diversity and the Media," Comm 410: "International Communications" and Comm 419: "World Media Systems." Instructors' written guidelines for specific assignments, including syllabi, grading rubrics, content requirements, and criteria for general evaluation, were provided to reviewers. Students' work was found to be entirely "satisfactory" or "excellent", with one exception relative to an evaluation by one reviewer regarding the History competency, which was deemed "unsatisfactory" (clarification presented below)

Learning Objective: Freedom of Speech/Press

Conclusions: Although students' work was rated as competent or above, an outside assessor felt that more detail in the assignments could have been included to more fully demonstrate the student's knowledge and understanding of the concept. Notably, as was pointed out, this competency was not expressly present in the assignment instructions, though students work reflected general consciousness of the competency. One reviewer went on to note that the selection of classes/assignments reviewed most likely did not best reflect the ways in which Media Studies students engage this concept, suggesting other courses/course materials be collected in the future to more accurately assess how this concept is engaged and understood by our students.

Learning Objective: History

Conclusions: This was the most critically-assessed competency in the assessment by the reviewers, being rated as either competent or unsatisfactory. One reviewer found the multiple choice design problematic in the case of assessments from Comm 410, suggesting this approach be reconsidered or thought through more effectively so as to emphasize the connections between content and assessment more clearly (e.g. writing assignments which

more effectively reflect student engagement with the critical thinking/objectives outlined in the syllabus). Underscoring that the overall class design was in fact impressive, this reviewer nonetheless felt that there was a substantial disconnect between the course design and assessment design therein.

Another reviewer found this competency to be represented as unsatisfactory, stating that some of the assignments would have benefitted more from more thorough research and development of ideas beyond the students' personal beliefs in their work (in the case of the powerpoint assignments/assessment, in particular). This reviewer in turn felt the outcomes reflected a bias, suggesting the students were not as capable of producing a balanced outcome in their work. This reviewer, however, was quick to point out that this assessment did not stem from any perceptible biases to be found in the design, implementation, or expected outcomes of the assignment framework emanating for the instructor. In conclusion, the reviewers generally felt the design of the assignments, their implementation, and ultimately, their assessment in relation to this competency should be more rigorously considered and engaged.

Learning Objective: Professional Ethics

Conclusions: Overall, the reviewers rated the students' work as competent or above, demonstrating that they have a good theoretical understanding of professional ethical principles. One reviewer pointed out that the Gender, Diversity and Media course in particular covers ethical principles quite well and explicitly, with the very existence of this course demonstrating our program's goal to offer students a particular class that focuses on ethical considerations (e.g. examining the complex problems with the representations of marginalized communities inherently raises questions about truth, accuracy and fairness (especially as it relates to marginalized individuals' lived experiences)). Nonetheless, the third reviewer pointed out that it is somewhat difficult to gauge if and how students understand this competency in praxis (e.g. they understand how to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and that these are important goals to pursue in action).

Learning Objective: Research

Conclusions: the evaluation for student work related to the research competency was ranked as competent or above. However, once again, one reviewer noted that the three courses evaluated seem to be more teaching/learning-oriented rather than research-oriented and asked why classes with more of a research component (media effects, critical studies) were not included in the sample. Nonetheless, all reviewers concluded that the student work reviewed reflected, to a great extent, their ability to conduct research at a qualified level.

Formal Conclusions and Recommendations:

As a whole, the external reviewers agreed that the Media Studies Department is fundamentally meeting or exceeding the expectations related to how we teach and assess instruction and outcomes related to the core competencies reviewed above. The one competency reviewed as unsatisfactory was ultimately qualified by the reviewer in conversation as a potentially student-centered concern (i.e a poor choice of examples on our part, in light of the fact that the reviewer thought the assignment was in fact well-designed).

Nonetheless, room for improvements exist and it is hoped by the reviewers that through a systematic review of their assessments -- collectively as a faculty and individually, as instructors committed to refining our pedagogical efficacy -- that the Department of Media Studies will find useful insights which can both help improve their pedagogical mission and invigorate their commitment to do so.

TO: Ford Risley, Associate Dean
FROM: Marcia W. DiStaso, Associate Professor
SUBJECT: Public Relations Evaluation for 2016-2017
DATE: May 20, 2016

Four reviewers evaluated student assignment samples from public relations classes during the spring 2016 semester in the College of Communications at Pennsylvania State University. The reviewers included Alyson Joyce, Seneca Resources Corporation; Meredith Topalanchik, CooperKatz & Company; Natalie Buyny, Tierney; and Marcia DiStaso, Associate Professor in the Department of Advertising/Public Relations at Penn State.

This assessment examined the following four learning outcomes:

Ethics

Critical Evaluation

The student assignments reviewed came from the three public relations courses taught in the Department of Advertising/Public Relations:

- COMM 473 – Public Relations Problems (campaigns)
- COMM 372 – Digital Public Relations
- COMM 417 – Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations

A total of seven samples were evaluated to determine the demonstration of the two learning outcomes listed above. Each assignment sample was reviewed and then all seven were considered when assessing the learning outcomes. For example, each reviewer read all the seven assignments. Then ranked each of the two outcomes. The following assessments were used for the critical evaluation outcome: “Critical evaluation is strongly demonstrated,” “Critical evaluation is demonstrated,” or “Critical evaluation is not demonstrated.” The following assessments were used for the ethics outcome: “Awareness of, addressing, or evaluating ethics is strongly demonstrated,” “Awareness of, addressing, or evaluating ethics is demonstrated,” or “Awareness of, addressing, or evaluating ethics is not demonstrated.” Then provided comments or notes on the assignments and/or the review sheet. The faculty reviewer then met and discussed the materials with the two alumni reviewers (the third alumni reviewer sent her assessment by email and that was included in the discussion). The following evaluation overview is the outcome from these discussions.

The tools reviewed included:

- 2 Digital PR Client Assignments – In this assignment, students worked with clients from around State College to assess their social media and website and provide recommendations for new digital tools.
- 3 Ethics Reflections – These pose a challenge for the students to critically consider and evaluate.
- 2 Take-Home Final Exams – For this exam, students are asked to create an ethics orientation seminar for new employees.

Assessment

Overall, the four reviewers felt the two outcomes were demonstrated in the student assignments provided. Most importantly, the alumni reviewers indicated that the assignments prepared the students for the “real world,” and to “hit the ground running” in their internships and post-graduation jobs. One reviewer commented that students with these skills are who she wants to hire while another said that “this is what all public relations professionals need to know,” and the third said that she wished she could have taken classes that had the digital focus while she was at Penn State.

All four reviewers felt that Critical Evaluation was strongly demonstrated. This was especially clear in the digital packets that showed full digital reports for clients. Each of the examples were dynamic collections of extensive public relations assessment and recommendations. The digital assignments allowed the students to demonstrate a strong assessment of their client’s use of social media and their website along with a strong review of what the client does, who their competitors are and who their audience is. The critical evaluation included in the reports was extensive and actionable.

All four reviewers felt that Ethics was also strongly demonstrated. The reviewers felt that the exams provided showed a strong understanding of ethical decision making. The assignments from the campaigns course showed a lower level of critical evaluation but did meet demonstrate a good grasp of ethics.

Overall, the reviewers agreed that the student samples demonstrated critical evaluation and ethics.

Plans for Improvement

The evaluation will be shared with the public relations faculty in an effort to improve professor and student efforts supporting the two outcomes. The reviewers specifically suggested the students should have a strong digital understanding. It was also recommended that client based work be continued since that provides students a strong connection to what they will be expected to do upon graduation in public relations positions.

DATE: May 2, 2017

FROM: Benjamin W. Cramer, Department of Telecommunications

TO: Ford Risley, Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education, College of Communications

CC: Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

RE: Department of Telecommunications Student Learning Assessment, Spring 2017

REVIEWERS: Jared Romesburg, Patrick Mairs, Greg Guise (informal)

Various courses taught by the Department of Telecommunications touch upon all twelve of the ACEJMC Values and Competencies. As part of the Department and College's ongoing assessment program, samples of student work are examined periodically by a committee made up of faculty and industry professionals to assess whether students are demonstrating competency in the established Learning Objectives.

In Spring 2017, the Department worked with selected alumni to conduct an assessment of four Learning Objectives that are modeled on the ACEJMC Values and Competencies: Free Speech, History, Ethics, and Research Methods. Jared Romesburg and Patrick Mairs provided comments in writing. Romesburg and Greg Guise contributed additional comments in person at the Alumni event on March 19.

***** Learning Objective: Free Speech**

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the 2016-17 academic year were collected from two upper level Telecommunications courses: *COMM 404: Telecommunications Law* and *COMM 489w: Advanced Telecommunications Topics (International Law section)*. We used three criteria to gauge student performance in this Learning Objective: argument structure, framing and composition, and analysis of free speech ideals. Each was assessed on a scale of very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

Summary: The reviewers were generally satisfied with the students' appreciation for the American ideal of free speech. There were some comments on how some students were unable to consider why other countries have different ideals, though the students have a strong appreciation for other cultures, as is typical for college students in general. Students were praised for being familiar with particular free speech theories like the Marketplace of Ideas and the Safety Valve theory, though the reviewers called for some more understanding of the dark side of free speech, such as libel or suppression of dissent.

***** Learning Objective: History**

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the 2016-17 academic year were collected from two upper level Telecommunications courses: *COMM 404: Telecommunications Law* and *COMM 489w: Advanced Telecommunications Topics (International Law section)*. We used three criteria to gauge student performance in this Learning Objective: argument structure, framing and composition, and legal analysis. Each was assessed on a scale of very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

Summary: As the Department teaches the history of telecommunications, the reviewers would like some more focus on how history contributes to current trends in the industry. Meanwhile, students were praised for finding historical events that are worthy of discussion, but students usually neglected to do deeper research into the causes and effects of those events. Reviewers also noted that some students are good at considering various viewpoints in this area, but others are not.

*** Learning Objective: Ethics

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the 2016-17 academic year were collected from two upper level Telecommunications courses: *COMM 404: Telecommunications Law* and *COMM 489w: Advanced Telecommunications Topics (International Law section)*. We used three criteria to gauge student performance in this Learning Objective: argument structure, framing and composition, and legal analysis. Each was assessed on a scale of very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

Summary: The reviewers were generally pleased with the students' ability to discuss ethical issues, and to consider various viewpoints on solutions to ethical problems. However, reviewers would like to see students do deeper research on why an ethical issue is worthy of concern in the first place. For example, the Digital Divide is a common source of ethical discussion in telecommunications, and students are naturally critical of the fact that some people do not have access to services. However, students often fail to consider how such a problem truly affects a disadvantaged person's life, who is responsible, who can practically implement a solution. So student work in the Ethics area is typically strong but lacking the final step from social concern to practical solutions.

*** Learning Objective: Research Methods

Data Collection: Samples of student work from the 2016-17 academic year were collected from one upper level Telecommunications course: *COMM 484A: Wireless Devices and Global Markets*. We used three criteria to gauge student performance in this Learning Objective: campaign concept, market opportunities, and industry challenges. Each was assessed on a scale of very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

Summary: Only Patrick Mairs delivered comments on the student samples that were supplied for this category. Mairs praised the research techniques and quantity of data compiled by the students during the assignments, but found the overall results to be somewhat lacking in conclusions for a corporate audience. When creating hypothetical market reports, students should imagine that they are working in a company with people of

different skill sets, so reports should be tailored so everyone receives a proper introduction to the most important concepts, especially how a new technology works.

***** General Comments**

During the Alumni event, Romesburg and Guise discussed the current state of the local news industry, which was largely off-topic for this Assessment process, but some unique ideas came through that might be beneficial for the College as a whole.

Since modern telecom technologies make content available immediately, for news the audience should be convinced that it is worth waiting for a later treatment that has been professionally constructed by experienced editors and journalists. Guise mentioned that education on the topic of media consolidation should include the management ramifications, as post-consolidation media managers are usually more risk-averse and profit-oriented. The reviewers would also like students to come forward with non-conformist or out-of-the-box (Guise's terms) for new media business models, like monetizing content other than sports and finding new sources of revenue as advertising becomes less lucrative.

DATE: May 6, 2017

FROM: Frank Dardis, Associate Professor of Advertising

TO: Ford Risley, Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education, College of Communications

CC: Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

RE: Department of Strategic Communications Student Learning Assessment Spring 2017: Research and Information, Ethics

Background

The Department of Strategic Communications has nine learning objectives for its undergraduate curriculum. As part of the department and college's ongoing assessment program, samples of student work are examined periodically by a committee made up of faculty and industry professionals to assess whether students are demonstrating competency in the established learning objectives. In Spring 2017, the department conducted an assessment of two ACEJMC learning objectives: Research and Information, and Ethics. Four people (three industry professionals and one faculty member) discussed student work on April 13, 2017: Monica Miller, Sr. Director, Operations, CoxAutomotive Media Solutions; Brenna Thorpe, Strategic Communications Senior Consultant, Booz Allen Hamilton; Kathy Andrusisin, Communications Specialist, Penn State College of the Liberal Arts; and Frank Dardis, Associate Professor, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, and Lead faculty of the Department of Strategic Communications. Evaluation of each objective is discussed below.

Data Collection

Student work samples were comprised of the following:

- Reaction Paper samples from COMM 428A – Principles of Strategic Communications (required course)
- Methods, Results, and Implications Paper samples from COMM 428D – Research and Analytics (required course)
- Social Media Strategy samples from COMM 428E – Social Media Strategies (required course)

After reading all of the samples, we evaluated the presence of the two ACEJMC criteria as reflected within the student work using categories of “Excellent” (Outcome is strongly demonstrated), “Satisfactory” (Outcome is demonstrated), and “Unsatisfactory” (Outcome is not demonstrated).

Results

Learning Objective #3: The student will be able to describe qualitative and quantitative research methods; evaluate information from primary and secondary sources; and collect, synthesize, and analyze data to provide insight with empirical underpinnings. (ACEJMC Value: Research and Information)

Summary: This outcome was well evidenced in the student work, with three reviewers scoring the outcome as “Excellent” and one reviewer as “Satisfactory.” Reviewers believed that students demonstrated a strong grasp of research methods, statistics, and analysis. Reviewers cited excellent work in some projects, and described "a number of opportunities for a variety of quantitative and qualitative data of real-world experiences." Two reviewers believed that while these skills were strong, students could have provided better insight, recommendations, and applications of the information because, after all, that's what's most important in the final outcome anyway. The faculty member explained that this likely occurred and/or was explained in other parts of the larger student project, which was not included in its entirety. Reviewers believed that this might be considered for future reviews, as long as the amount of "extra" content does not become too onerous for what specific outcome is trying to be assessed. On a separate note, all reviewers believed that the use of citations within the student work needed improvement.

Learning Objective #8: The student will be able to apply ethical principles to contemporary issues and activities in strategic communication. (ACEJMC Value: Ethics)

Summary: This skill also was well evidenced in the student work, with all four reviewers rating it as “Satisfactory.” Reviewers appreciated that student work showed consciousness and satisfactory level of ethics and ethical principles. The professional reviewers emphasized that restructuring the exercise into assuming that the student's company has taken on a client, and then subsequently, how could the student help the client overcome its image problem through ethical strategic communications, strategies, tactics, etc. All industry professionals believed that this approach and context would provide a much better, more realistic level of the ethical decisions and applications that students would face in the real world.

Overall, reviewers believed that the two above competencies were demonstrated at an adequate ("good, representative") level for where students are at professionally, but that taking it to the next step of stronger insight and recommendations would demonstrate excellent work. Reviewers also appreciated the wide scope and diversity of student entries and projects as it relates to illustrating a foundation for work within the industry.



Date: June 28, 2018

From: Ford Risley, Associate Dean 

To: Marie Hardin, Dean

CC: Bellisario College of Communications Department Heads and Associate Head
Russ Eshleman, Matt Jackson, Anthony Olorunnisola, Fuyuan Shen, Maura Shea
Bellisario College of Communications Assessment Team Leaders 2016-2017
Rod Bingaman, Ben Cramer, Frank Dardis

Re: Response to the Student Learning Assessment Report for 2016-2017

Each department head received the College's annual report on student learning assessment. The report summarized efforts during the 2016-2017 academic year to meet our learning goals. The report concluded that all majors are meeting the learning goals and it noted areas for improvement across the College.

Each department head responded to the report, consulting with faculty where appropriate, and provided plans for improving curriculum as well as suggestions for improving the assessment process. Their comments are summarized below and their full reports are attached to this summary.

Response to the Student Learning Assessment Report

Advertising

Based on the feedback in the report, the department plans to re-double its efforts to make sure that faculty address ethical issues in each course. Although the department is not able to require an ethics course, it plans to offer COMM 417 (Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations) more regularly as an elective. The department also plans to emphasize the presentation of research through visual tools. COMM 420 (Research Methods) will be taught entirely in small sections and the visual presentation of information will be emphasized.

Film-Video

The faculty in Film-Video have created a new course, COMM 333 (History of Filmmaking for Filmmakers), to address the need for more instruction in history. The course was offered for the first time in Spring 2018. To address the need for more research, the faculty will require students to reference sources for content and style in the films studied in various courses.

Journalism

The department has added a news Sports Data course to improve the skills of students to conduct research and evaluate information. The faculty will continue to require students in various course to do the journalistic equivalent of research — ferreting out statistical

information and interviewing sources to provide information that is critical to telling stories. The department has always emphasized freedom of the press in COMM 403 (Mass Media Law), and ethical practices in COMM 409 (Mass Media Ethics), both of which are required courses in the major. The attacks on an independent press by the current presidential administration make these courses even more important.

Media Studies

The faculty was glad to see COMM 205 (Gender, Diversity and the Media) lauded as a means to teach ethical practices. They plan to emphasize ethics in other courses, as well. Faculty members do not believe that the samples provided to reviewers provided a clear picture of students' understanding of the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. They will use different student work in the future. Likewise, the faculty do not believe the student work showed the understanding that students have of history from their classes. They will use different student work in the future.

Public Relations

The response of the Public Relations faculty was integrated with that of the Advertising curriculum and many of the revisions planned for Public Relations were the same as for Advertising. An emphasis on ethics will be addressed in both advertising and public relations. COMM 417 addresses ethics in both advertising and public relations. Public relations students are taking advantage of the new Digital Media Trends and Analysis (DMTA) minor.

Telecommunications

To address the subject of freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the department requires all students to take one of three law courses: COMM 403 (Law of Mass Comm), COMM 404 (Telecommunications Law) or COMM 492 (Internet Law). To provide better instruction in history, the faculty plan to go beyond studying the past and better show how it shapes current practices. To improve the ability of students to generate solutions to ethical issue, the department has launched an initiative to include a discussion of ethics in every Telecommunications course. The department plans to expand its research and evaluation content throughout the curriculum.

Suggestions for Improvement of Assessment

This was the third year in which members of the College's Alumni Society Board reviewed student work individually and then met for a face-to-face with department representatives. The system is providing effective feedback on the learning objectives and assessment team leaders enjoy hearing directly from reviewers. Assessment team leaders sought to provide better samples of student work for this cycle – and that was the case in several instances. However, this is an issue that still needs attention.

The Pennsylvania State University
Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications

To: Ford Risley, Associate Dean
Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

From: Fuyuan Shen, Head, Department of Advertising and Public Relations

Date: June 10, 2018

Subject: Responses to the 2016-17 Assessment Report

I appreciate the assessment teams' positive reviews of our department's programs, curriculum and our students' performance in the assessment areas. The report has identified several areas where we need to make improvement. Below are my responses to the recommendations and suggestions by the assessment teams.

- 1. The reviewers were very positive about our students' demonstrated competency in understanding and applying ethical principles. They concluded that students showed a very strong understanding of the importance of ethics, and demonstrated the ability to apply them in professional situations. However, some have suggested that an ethics course should be required in the major.*

Response: Ethics is an important part of our curriculum. We will make sure that all our faculty members discuss and address ethical issues in all our classes. While we are not able to offer a required class in ethics at this point, we do have plans to offer *COMM 417 Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations* as an elective. Dr. Denise Bortree has already offered to teach that class for us. We hope to offer COMM 417 on a regular basis whenever our resources allow. In addition, we will encourage faculty members to utilize the ethics teaching modules created by the Page Center for all the relevant classes. I believe these efforts will allow us to include the teaching of ethics as an essential part of our classes.

- 2. The reviews suggested that our students demonstrated the ability to use qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect, synthesize, and analyze data. However, the assessment report also noted that improvement is needed in a couple of areas. For example, students need to improve the use of graphs, charts, and visuals in communicating research results. In some assignments, there is "inadequate or missing labels, typos, and lack of explanation to help reader understand key takeaways."*

Response: This is an excellent feedback. We will continue to make efforts to improve the presentation of research information in research classes. We will start by making sure that all instructors understand the importance of using visual tools in presenting data and other research-based insights. Starting this fall, we will teach COMM 420 as small lab sections. We hope this new curricular change will enhance the quality of learning in these research

classes and as a result, improve the quality of students' work. Our plan is to communicate to each instructor the importance of presenting information visually, and to make sure student projects are professionally done and free of errors.

- 3. Focus groups with advertising and public relations students suggested that our students continue to be interested in learning about digital media, and that we need to teach more contents related to digital media and advertising.*

Response: We recognize the importance of digital media and analytics for our students. The department worked with other units to launch the Digital Media Trends and Analysis (DMTA) minor in 2016 in order to meet the growing interests in digital advertising among our students. Dr. Lee Ahern has done a great job serving as the minor's coordinator. Since its launch, this multidisciplinary minor has been very popular among our advertising and public relations students. Some of the participants in the focus groups had not been able to take classes in the minor before they graduated. Going forward, I do not expect this to be a major concern among our students.

- 4. Reviewers were also positive about our online degree program in Strategic Communications. They believed that students demonstrated a strong grasp of research methods, statistics, and analysis. They also concluded that students' work demonstrated their competency in applying ethical principles in decision making. However, reviewers suggested that citation within our students work need improvement. They also suggested that we restructure our ethics-related exercises to make them more realistic and reflect the need to help the client overcome its image problem through ethical strategic communications and strategies.*

Response: The department will share these recommendations with relevant instructors for our online classes. We will make sure that students demonstrate high quality in their assignments for the research class. We will ask our instructors to continue to emphasize the importance of ethics, and teach ethics and ethical decision-making in a way that can prepare students well for their professional jobs.

Date: June 22, 2018

From: Anthony Olorunnisola, Department Head Film/Video & Media Studies
Maura Shea, Associate Department Head Film/Video & Media Studies

To: Ford Risley, Associate Dean
Julie Evak, Coordinator of Undergraduate Education

In Re: Film-Video & Media Studies' Response to SLA report 2016-17 AND Focus Group
Discussion by Major

A: Response to the Evaluation of Film-Video Courses

The assessment report details the review of four Learning Objectives drawn from the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies.

1 – Freedom of Speech/Press + Demonstration of an understanding of History

Two of aforementioned competences, Freedom of Speech and Press and Demonstration of an understanding of History, were not specifically evaluated. As stated in the report, freedom of speech is an implicit component of the creation process that is germane to all Film-Video work.

As well and during previous years' reviews, the assessment of the presence of History was measured as a part of a Media Studies course (COMM 250: Film Theory & History) that film students are required to take.

Action Item:

However and in response to previous SLA reports, the Department developed a new course [COMM 333: History of Filmmaking for Filmmakers] in order to pointedly locate History within the Film/Video curriculum. This course was offered for the first time during spring 2018. In the short- and long-term, we anticipate that samples of students' work that emanate from this course will be assessed and that our compliance with the History component will increase significantly.

2 – Understanding of Professional Ethical Principles / Research Conduct and Information Evaluation

The evaluation of the work of film-video students with respect to aforementioned two learning objectives was overall very positive. In neither category was students' work judged unsatisfactory. In particular, professional ethics was rated excellent. Reviewers assess Research Conduct to be satisfactory.

Action Item:

One actionable item concerning the research objective would be to encourage students to have more specific references and citations in support of the visual and technical styles used in creative work. This suggestion involves both the research and the history objective. There are overlapping consequences across the board of our response to the SLA report. In the process of strengthening students' knowledge of cinematic history for various genres and modes, we will encourage them to reference and draw inspiration from a broader body of work. Going forward, we will emphasize the need for specific reference sources for both content and style.

3 – Focus Group Discussion with F/V Students

Students in F/V appreciate the amalgamation of skills that the program adds to students' experiences. Examples include strong work ethic, hands-on experience, good time management, preparation for the job market and so on. Students see substantial values

added to their education via learning objectives pertinent to aforementioned SLA process: understanding freedom of speech / press; professional ethical principles and exposure to diversity of people and experiences.

It is, however, unclear that students understand the place of Film History and Film Theory as crucial dimensions of a program that is practice focused. A variant of this gap in awareness is the expressed desire for exposure to items that the program is not designed to offer. Examples include students' desire to learn how to write and/or produce for TV; the desire to have exposure to training in animation, etc. FGD Coordinator in this case converted the process into an educational one via provision of clarifications and redirects.

Action Items: The Department Head and Associate Department Head will convene a special meeting of the faculty in F/V where this extensive FGD result will be tabled for discussion. This meeting – to be held very early during the fall semester – will draw attention to the areas of strength and weakness that have been thrown up by this process. The meeting will encourage faculty to continue to reinforce values that students adjudge as strengths and will discuss ways of improving and executing actionable items that emanate from observed weaknesses. One obvious actionable item is the need for more students' and faculty interface via advising.

B: Response to the Evaluation of Media Studies Courses

Learning Objective 1: Understand and apply the principles and laws of Freedom of Speech and Press ... as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems:

Assessors find that the courses presented [COMM 205; COMM 410; COMM 419] were minimally compliant. They find that listed courses lacked needed detail. This learning objective was “not expressly present in assignment instructions though students' work reflected general consciousness of the competency”. One reviewer noted, “selection of classes / assignments ... did not best reflect the ways in which Media Studies students engage this concept”.

Response: We concur with assessors' conclusion and rationale. It is useful to state that the content of representative courses [COMM 205; COMM 410; COMM 419] typically include aforementioned learning objective. Nonetheless, said courses do not have exclusive preserve over the parameters of the objective.

Action Plan: We will make pointed effort to ensure that reviewers are presented with courses that better showcase this learning objective. Current Departmental representatives to the Assessment Advisory Committee will ensure that the purposive sampling method is employed to rectify this avoidable outcome.

Learning Objective 2: Demonstrate an understanding of History – Assessors were most critical of the inadequacy of History content in representative courses and adjudged them partly competent / unsatisfactory. One reviewer noted that one of the courses presented [COMM 410] used multiple choice as its assessment method. As such and by nature, multiple choice did not offer access to direct association between learning objective and assignment. Same reviewer noted that writing assignments should be more effective in reflecting students' engagement with the critical thinking / objectives outlined in the syllabus. A second reviewer who found the courses unsatisfactory provided a circuitous and intractable rationale.

Response: We concur with assessors' conclusion that History can be better showcased amongst courses presented to reviewers. We also concur that a course section in which

multiple choice is the method of assessment would not be the better sample to present as an indication of fulfillment of this learning objective.

Action Plan: We will purposefully select Departmental courses that can more competently showcase the presence of History in our curriculum. A number of courses on the curriculum rise to the top naturally, given the inclusion of history in their title and course description. Examples include COMM 250 and COMM 333.

Learning Objective 3: Understanding of Professional Ethical Principles... – Assessors adjudged representative courses as competent or above. They applauded evidence of “good theoretical understanding of professional ethical principles. They singled out COMM 205 [Gender, Diversity & Media] as a course that covers this learning objective quite well and explicitly. They noted that the presence of this course on the College’s list of offers underscores pedagogical preference for ethical considerations – especially, attention to the complex issues pertinent to the representation of the marginalized communities. A third reviewer noted, nonetheless, that it is “somewhat difficult to gauge if and how students understand this competency in praxis (e.g., do they understand how to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and that these are important goals to pursue in action?).”

Response: We concur with assessors observations as noted in foregoing paragraphs. Especially and with reference to the difficulty of determining the extent to which students will carry awareness to locations of praxis, a test of students’ levels of competence is better observed in locations of practice.

Action Plan: We will continue to employ COMM 205 as a location for conversations about the engagement and/or disengagement of the marginalized from the mass media. The need to continue to create awareness about issues pertinent to professional ethics has become more impending in the globalized cultures of the 21st century. Our task includes ensuring that the presence of professional ethics in our curriculum spreads beyond COMM 205 to other courses. Given the extent to which practice can enhance students’ transformation, we will determine and include samples of course work that underscore ethical behavior in praxis among representative coursework presented to assessors.

Learning Objective: Research 4 – Assessors adjudged representative courses as competent or above. Reviewers noted that the three courses under evaluation have comparably little research component than, for instance, courses that present ready materials for the purpose of evaluation.

Response: We concur with the reviewers’ assessment that the Department has a lineup of courses that would better qualify than those presented. We believe that their overall vote in this regard was generous and was based more on some assessors’ first-hand awareness of the content of courses in Media Studies than on the actual courses presented.

Action Plan: Two courses on the Media Studies curriculum – COMM 304 [Research Methods] and COMM 413W [Media and the Public: Writing Intensive] – should provide better evidence of research activity than the convenience sample presented. Besides, there are sections of representative courses where students are required to carry out research as a dimension of course work. Next representative to the Curriculum Committee should consult with the faculty prior to selecting representative courses.

Focus Group Discussion with Media Studies' Students

Graduating students in Media Studies provided information that underscore the values that a host of courses and professors added to their education. Identified values include those measured in foregoing SLA process and report – free expression / free press; professional ethics; research etc.

Students took good advantage of this open forum to express desire for a degree / major that provides a clear path / direction to post-graduation career in the professions. They expressed need for a Digital Media course. They wished for the availability of internship experiences targeted toward Media Studies students. There also appeared to be a gross misunderstanding of the fact that Media Studies is not as practical a major as AD/PR, Journalism, and/or Film Video.

Nonetheless, there is need for us to assist our students with “brand” differentiation. There also appears to be a crucial need for additional advising oversight to be carried out by faculty.

Action Items: A slightly edited copy of this FGD report [to exclude instances where pointed criticisms were directed at particular faculty members] will be shared with Media Studies faculty. Report will be circulated ahead of a first meeting of the faculty and will occupy a crucial portion of the agenda. We will discuss areas of strength that have been identified and hold candid conversation about reported weaknesses. The objective will be to co-determine ways of improving students’ understanding of this major. It should also be vital to identify ways in which we can increase level of faculty advising – for the same purpose.

TO: Ford Risley, associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education
Julie Evak, coordinator for undergraduate education

FROM: Russ Eshleman, assistant teaching professor
and head Department of Journalism

JUNE 1, 2018

RE: Response to 2016-2017 Student Learning Assessment Report

The four alumni members and one faculty member of the Journalism evaluation committee determined that the combination of curriculum and student work was worthy of an “excellent” rating on three ACEJMC learning objectives: (1) applying the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press; (2) understanding and applying ethical principles in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; and (3) conducting research and evaluating information. The committee deemed materials evaluating the fourth objective — understanding the history and role of communications professionals — between “satisfactory” and “excellent.”

Interestingly, the presidential election of 2016 as well as the subsequent political divisiveness of the country and attacks on the independent press have caused Journalism instructors to place even more emphasis on all four of these learning objectives. President Donald Trump’s almost daily attacks on the press have caused instructors, virtually across the board, to devote additional time in their courses to emphasize the critical importance of each of these objectives.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS: Beyond simple memorization of laws and concepts, instructors are using stories torn from the news each day to show how the President is attempting to demean critical, independent evaluation of his words and deeds. Not only have individual Journalism classes taken on the red herring of “fake news,” but the Journalism Department has participated in several independent community and professional functions in which the “fake news” issue has been dissected. The learning objective has taken on renewed importance in classes ranging from the gen-ed American Journalism to theory classes such as Media Law and News Media Ethics.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES: The committee noted the “variety” of work already evaluated as a positive in assessing the objective. Since that evaluation, the learning objective has played an even larger role in many Journalism courses. In News Media Ethics, for example, instructors have underscored the importance of accuracy in journalism, particularly in the face of the president’s criticism of the press.

On a different front, because of changes in both the political and social climates, instructors are spending increased class time on assignments dealing with immigration and refugees — a greater look at the subject of diversity. Likewise, the #metoo movement has made for greater discussions of sex and gender issues. This past winter, the Journalism Department brought in an expert speaker on the issue of violence against women. The speaker talked to more than 100 News Media Ethics and print/digital reporting students specifically about language that is appropriate to use in news stories about rape.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH: Instructors are continuing to require students to do the journalistic equivalent of research — ferreting out statistical information and interviewing sources to provide information that is critical to telling stories. Two classes have come into being, for example, dealing with data — a Data Visualization class and a Sports Data class. In both, students are learning how to retrieve public information and then present it journalistically in a clear and compelling fashion.

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY AND THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS: The curriculum continues to offer a Media History course as well as teach important historic events within other courses. As noted in the committee’s summary, the department understands the importance of this learning objective, but it also believes this objective should not play a larger role in courses at the expense of other more important theories and skills.

SUMMARY: With it’s ratings of “excellent,” the committee already endorsed the curriculum as to the four learning objectives. As noted above, since the report, the department and individual instructors have placed even more emphasis on these objectives — thanks in no small part to the political atmosphere that is causing the press in America to reevaluate itself.

One additional note: Very few comments from a student focus group in March 2017 about the Journalism curriculum dealt specifically with these four learning objectives. The biggest takeaway from the student comments is that the College should find a way to deliver technical skills to students — such as using a camera and editing video — earlier in their academic careers. Students said many of their peers, especially those who are transfers from other campuses, do not learn those skills until their junior or senior years.

A way to address that concern, as one student suggested, may be the development of one-credit classes that can be taken in the freshman or sophomore years. With those skills learned earlier, students will be prepared better for their higher-level professional courses.

Department of Telecommunications
Response to 2016-17 Student Learning Assessment Report
Submitted June 8, 2018
Matt Jackson, Department Head

The College of Communications' Student Learning Assessment (SLA) Report for the 2016-2017 academic year evaluated the Telecommunications curriculum on four of the twelve professional values and competencies established by ACEJMC. An assessment team made up of three industry professionals and one Telecommunications faculty member evaluated samples of student work from a subset of Telecommunications courses to determine if evidence existed for student awareness, understanding, and application of those four values and competencies. The Telecommunications learning objectives that were evaluated in this cycle were:

- (1) Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech,
- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications,
- (3) Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity, and
- (4) Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

The Telecommunications curriculum includes 25 courses that cover a wide range of topics and industries, from the traditional broadcast industry to the rapidly growing wireless telephone industry. Student work from only three of these 25 courses was included in this assessment, thus providing a very narrow range of student learning for evaluation. Moreover, even within the courses used for this assessment, only a sample of student work was examined from just a few of the assignments included in each course. The members of the assessment team independently rated all the assignments submitted for review.

(1) Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech:

The reviewers praised the students' demonstration of free speech theories but noted that based on the assignments reviewed, students seemed less well versed in topics like libel and suppression of dissent. In the focus group discussion, a clear theme was the extensive coverage of free speech issues in a wide variety of Telecommunications courses. Students noted that free speech was discussed from multiple perspectives throughout the curriculum. One student observed that when taking a senior level course in a different major, the students in that major had much less knowledge about free speech than Telecommunications students.

Recommendation: The Telecommunications curriculum already places heavy emphasis on free speech and law and policy issues. All students are required to take a law course that includes discussion of this learning objective. The department offers three different courses that emphasize this issue and it is also included in many other departmental

offerings. The recent restructuring of the curriculum appears to have helped improve coverage of this learning objective.

(2) Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications:

The reviewers noted students had learned telecommunications history but were less adept at applying those historical lessons to current issues. During the focus group discussion, students varied in their perception of how the history of the field relates to current issues.

Recommendation: Many Telecommunications courses include historical examples of how changing technologies and social practices have shaped the industry. The department also offers a stand-alone history course. Renewed emphasis can be placed on not just reviewing history but showing how it shapes current practices. The department has also begun to bring in more industry professionals for guest lectures to help students see the role of professionals in shaping communications.

(3) Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity:

The reviewers noted that the curriculum provides students with a solid grounding in recognizing and understanding ethical issues—but that a weakness is in students' ability to generate solutions to these issues. During the focus group discussion, students noted that individual faculty often emphasized ethics in their classroom discussions.

Recommendation: The department has already launched an initiative to include a discussion of ethics in every Telecommunications course, which special emphasis is required capstone courses. The department also has a standalone ethics course. Ethics is an area worthy of continued emphasis and reinforcement. Current issues in communications always have an ethical component, whether it be behavioral marketing, data privacy, or impact of hate speech on social media. The department will continue to emphasize ethics and look for more opportunities for students to creatively explore solutions to ethical dilemmas.

(4) Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work:

The assessment committee praised the depth of research and data collected by students but found the analysis to be weak. During the focus group, students generally praised the research preparation they gained from their courses.

Recommendation: The Telecommunications department is working to expand its research and evaluation content throughout the curriculum. All majors are required to take a statistics or microeconomics research course. The department recently added a

Digital Media metrics course which focuses on audience analysis and new metrics like Google analytics. Renewed emphasis is being placed on incorporating research into capstone courses. The department also has a longstanding entrepreneurship course that requires students to research and develop business plans.

Summary: The 2016-17 Student Learning Assessment report and new student focus group report provide data to help improve the Telecommunications curriculum. While the report and focus group discussion found broad agreement that the department is achieving its learning objectives, we continue to tweak the curriculum to improve learning outcomes. The department continues to revise its curriculum and courses and add new courses to address emerging issues. We recently added a digital media metrics course to improve research skills and we have strived to incorporate ethics (as well as diversity and global awareness) into all of our courses. The addition of the annual focus group with graduating seniors provides a useful additional data point to help us evaluate our curriculum.