

Part II, Standard 9. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Executive Summary

- The Bellisario College has a comprehensive plan for assessment of student learning outcomes. The plan, which has been approved by the University, was updated in Spring 2018.
- The Bellisario College's goals for student learning are based on the ACEJMC values and competencies.
- The Bellisario College uses multiple direct and indirect measures in its analysis of data to assess curriculum and instruction. Student learning assessment in the College is conducted annually and managed by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education and the Coordinator for Undergraduate Education.
- Working professionals, including alumni, assist with student learning assessment by annually evaluating samples of student work and then meeting with the College's Assessment Advisory Committee to discuss their findings.
- The Bellisario College's students consistently excel in local, regional and national competitions.
- The Bellisario College uses various means to track its graduates in order to assess their professional experience and improve student instruction.

Please respond to each of the following instructions:

1. Provide a copy of the unit's written plan for assessment of student learning outcomes. This plan must include the dates of its adoption and of implementation of its components.

The College has had a comprehensive [Student Learning Assessment \(SLA\) Plan](#), which it periodically reviews and updates, for more than a decade. The plan's overarching goal is to improve curricula, instruction and learning. The plan, which has been reviewed and approved by the University's Office of Planning and Assessment, was last updated in Spring 2018.

2. Provide the unit's definition of goals for learning that students must achieve. If this definition is incorporated into the plan for assessment, a page reference will suffice.

The College's goals for student learning are taken from the professional values and competencies of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. They are included on page 1 of our Student Learning Assessment Plan.

3. Describe the collection and reporting of data from both direct and indirect assessment measures and how the unit used its analysis of the data to improve curriculum, instruction, etc. Provide copies of any end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available in a digital file.

Measures

Direct Measures

- Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work. Student work is assessed by faculty-led teams comprising working professionals, most of whom are alumni. The student work is a sample drawn from courses across the curriculum, mostly from senior-level courses. An assessment matrix matches professional values and competencies with appropriate courses for each program in the College.
- [Survey of Internship Supervisors](#). The survey asks internship supervisors to rate students directly on their mastery of the 12 ACEJMC professional values and competencies. The results are examined and measured against results from previous years.

Indirect Measures

- [Retention rates](#)
- [Graduation rates](#)
- Student performance in national competitions
- Alumni Survey results (when applicable)
- Student focus group results (when applicable)
- Senior exit survey

Assessment Process

Student learning assessment in the College is conducted annually and managed by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Education and the Coordinator for Undergraduate Education. The three phases in the process are summarized here. See the [SLA plan](#) for a more detailed explanation.

1. Preparation. Each year, the SLA plan is reviewed and revised using recommendations by reviewers and faculty members from the previous year's SLA.

2. Data Collection, Analysis and Report Preparation. The professional team evaluations of student work get underway and internship supervisors are surveyed. Data for the indirect measures are also collected. The annual report is produced and distributed to the dean, department heads and Alumni Board. Department heads are asked to provide ideas on how to respond to key findings.
3. Application of Findings. Results are used to improve the College's curricula, course development, teaching and learning. Examples of specific improvements to the curriculum include:
 - Developed new College minor, Digital Media Trends & Analytics.
 - Overhauled COMM 260W News Writing and Reporting to ensure consistency of instruction and content across sections.
 - Added international travel course, Advanced Documentary Abroad, to the Film major.
 - Retooled COMM 205 Gender, Minorities and the Media to give more attention to LGBTQ issues.
 - Added new required technology course with weekly lab sections to the Telecommunications major.
 - Added a new module in COMM 460 Reporting Methods on using the iPhone as a reporting tool.
 - Revised several courses in the Media Studies major to better emphasize use of theories in the presentation of images and information.
 - Retooled COMM 420 Research Methods in Advertising and Relations to offer individual sections instead of large lecture and lab sections.
 - Broadened the selection of clips shown in classes in the Film-Video major to include more diverse voices and perspectives
 - Added writing-intensive capstone courses to the Telecommunications major.
 - Added a discussion of ethics to more courses in the Film-Video major, including producing and documentary production.
 - Developed new Data Visualization course for the Journalism major.

See full assessment reports for additional improvements:

[SLA Reports 2014-2015](#)

[SLA Reports 2015-2016](#)

4. Describe the involvement of journalism and mass communication professionals, including alumni, in the assessment process.

Working professionals, most of whom are alumni of the College, are recruited to help conduct the annual assessment of student work. The chair of the Curriculum Assessment Committee of the Alumni Society Board, the associate dean and the College's coordinator for undergraduate education collaborate to recruit 15 to 20 professionals. These professionals are trained and placed on teams led by a faculty member from each program. After each team's findings are written into an annual SLA report, a summary is provided to the Alumni Society Board. The SLA Plan provides further details on the role of professionals in student learning assessment.

5. List in a digital file the major awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years. Limit to five a year.

The College's students have won numerous awards in local, regional and national competitions. See a partial list of [student performance in regional or national competitions](#) for each of the past six years.

6. In a digital file, list by specialty each member of the graduating class of 2015 and those graduates' current jobs. If practical, please give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list. Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the profession and to improve curriculum and instruction.

A list of the [jobs held by the graduating class of 2015](#) has been compiled as part of this standard. A sample of the positions includes:

Account Executive, Ogilvy & Mather
Staff Writer, *Scranton Times-Tribune*
Copywriter, Bayard Advertising
Producer, Weather Channel
Executive Assistant, Paramount Pictures
Digital Sales Manager, CondeNast
Community Relations Coordinator, Philadelphia Eagles
News Associate, Associated Press
Media Relations Manager, Golin
Digital Content Coordinator, PGA Tour
Production Coordinator, Discovery Channel

Sports Writer, *York Daily Record*
Brand Marketing Specialist, Nike
Content Associate, ESPN
Publicity Assistant, Fox Searchlight Pictures
Account Manager, Snapchat
Writer, CNN
Social Media Coordinator, Disney Parks & Resorts
Production Assistant, C-SPAN
Product Designer, Facebook
Associate Producer, Sirius XM Radio
Videographer, WPSU
Cyber Network Specialist, U.S. Marine Corps
Staff Writer, *Centre DailyTimes*
Account Manager, Pandora

The College tracks graduates to determine the extent to which its objectives are realized in the following ways:

- The 931 graduates for the class of 2015 — Spring, Summer and Fall — were surveyed via an in-house online form in spring and summer 2018 to determine their jobs after graduation. Information was gathered the following ways, each accompanied by a link to the online survey: two e-mail solicitations to graduates' personal email accounts, three weeks apart; multiple requests for participation via the College's Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts; online research of graduates' personal LinkedIn accounts; and individual communications with graduates by the College's director of alumni relations (housed in the Development Office). Of the 931 2015 alumni, 761 (82 percent) were located via the aforementioned means.
- The College's alumni records are updated through multiple avenues: alumni update their information directly to the University via telephone, email and online forms; alumni who belong to the College's LinkedIn groups update their information online; the College updates its contact information for alumni at events held on- and off-campus; and alumni stay in contact with the College's director of alumni relations. Alumni may also submit updates directly via an online form on the College's website: <https://bellisario.psu.edu/alumni/submit-note>. Alumni updates are published in *The Communicator* and online.
- Alumni records are maintained in the University's comprehensive AWA system, a secure database operated and updated by the Penn State Alumni Association. The Association

has records of its 160,000-plus dues-paying members and records of more than 600,000 living Penn State alumni. The protected database allows the internal Penn State user the capability of viewing and maintaining constituent information, such as biography; degree and graduation year; address, contact information, email address(es) and telephone number(s); family information; giving history; alumni membership data; participation in clubs, organizations and student activities while at Penn State; awards and honors; participation in University and College programs, activities and events; and any contact with University development officers.

- The College's Development Office and the Office for Internships and Career Placement maintain six LinkedIn groups. In total, those accounts include alumni, students and other key contacts, and total more than 17,900. The LinkedIn groups and accounts, maintained by College staff, are critical and effective for maintaining up-to-date professional records for all participating graduates.

- The College's Alumni Society Board of Directors and the Advancement Council both meet twice a year, and the College's Advertising/Public Relations Alumni Network Board meets once a year. The John Curley Center for Sports Journalism Council meets every other year. Board members meet with students, alumni and faculty members to discuss the program's academic objectives and curriculum. The Alumni Society Board and the Ad/PR Network Board also take part in an annual Student Learning Assessment, in conjunction with faculty, to provide input on curriculum and instruction.

- The College encourages alumni involvement immediately following graduation through participation in student seminars, jobs fair and on-campus and regional alumni events. In 2018, the Development Office held 25 such events on- and off-campus, with 1,315 total participants.