

## Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Actions taken by the school to correct the problem

### Key Points:

- **Based on the Site Team’s review, faculty rewrote the assessment plan for each sequence to include more professionals in the capstone performance review.**
- **The school created a file in digital and hard copy formats to include all actions addressing assessment, such as minutes of sequence and committee meetings and reports.**
- **The school conducted an alumni survey in spring 2016, immediately following the Site Team visit and revised the 2016-2020 Assessment Plan to include an annual alumni survey beginning in spring 2018.**

The faculty of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media are dedicated to their responsibility to improve learning outcomes for our students, and to developing an assessment process that produces meaningful data to guide this effort.

The school uses a cohort assessment process. The process was first implemented through the 2011-2015 Assessment Plan. The second implementation began in fall 2016 for the 2016-2020 Assessment Plan. Academic Year 2017-2018 is Year 2 of that plan.

*Both assessment plans can be found in **Supporting Documents** under **Assessment Documents**.*

#### 1. Insufficient engagement of professionals in the assessment process

The school recognizes the value of input from professionals in evaluating student performance, as well as the benefits to the program from building closer relationships with the professional community. Though professionals often speak to classes and student organizations, we acknowledge that their involvement in assessing student performance provides valuable guidance for the curriculum.

As sequences are responsible for establishing the direct and indirect measures used in the midpoint and capstone courses, sequence faculty rewrote their assessment plans to involve more professionals. Their discussions are documented in the minutes of sequence meetings. Summaries of sequence discussions are provided below. The Ad/PR and Broadcast sequences each intend to involve three professionals. The News/Editorial sequence used four professionals in an assessment conducted following the Site Team visit, and will make a policy decision this year for the next capstone evaluation in 2019-2020 (Year 4 of the Plan).

*Copies of all minutes are included in the **Supporting Documents** and are organized by year and sequence.*

- Ad/PR Minutes, September 20, 2016. Faculty will recruit six professionals from different firms or agencies to assess students’ midpoint and capstone assignments – three to assess the midpoint assignments and three for the capstone assignments – in the next round of assessment. These professionals will represent “a diversity of people who have a range of job functions.” Following the 2016 Site Team review, Ad/PR faculty engaged two additional

media planning professionals with experience in traditional, nontraditional and digital media to assess student work in the capstone course JOUR 4453 (Media Planning).

- Broadcast 2016-2017 Year-End Report, May 27, 2017. Faculty will recruit three professionals to assess student work in the capstone course. Faculty plan to use “a variety of professionals in this assessment, possibly including a reporter and a producer in addition to a news director.” Broadcast faculty are also considering whether to add the new Advanced News Producing course as a capstone option. They have used a professional to review student producing work in the past, but question whether the course provides the measure of overall student performance needed for a capstone assignment.
- News/Editorial Capstone Assessment Report, Spring 2016. Acknowledging the site team’s observations about utilizing professionals, the News/Editorial sequence engaged four Arkansas newspaper professionals in late spring 2016 to assess student performance in the capstone course JOUR 3023 (News Reporting II). The results of this assessment were discussed throughout fall 2016 and the professionals’ suggestions will be incorporated into the course.

According to the 2016-2020 Assessment Plan, the News/Ed faculty will conduct a midpoint assessment in 2017-2018 (Year 2); the next midpoint assessment for Ad/PR and Broadcast will be in 2018-2019 (Year 3). The next capstone assessment will be in 2019-2020 (Year 4). However, faculty in each sequence plan to engage professionals in reviewing student work on an annual basis.

## 2. Lack of sufficient documentation of actions taken to address curricular needs

The school creates and maintains digital and hard copy files of all documents relating to assessment produced by faculty committees and sequences. These include minutes from every meeting of faculty sequences and committees in which assessment is discussed, reports from sequences on assessment activities, and Assessment Committee reports on data gathered in each year of the plan. In addition to the Midpoint and Capstone evaluations, Assessment Committee reports address the Grammar Test, Assessment Survey, and First-Writing Assignment.

This section has two parts. Part 1 - “Assessment discussions and actions documented in reports and minutes for meetings of faculty, sequences and committees” is a compilation of documents described in the previous paragraph.

Part 2 - “Implementation of changes as reflected in syllabi and assignments” includes examples of course syllabi and specific assignments that address the curriculum issues identified in the 2011-2015 Assessment Plan process and in the Lemke Alumni Survey of Spring 2016. The survey was conducted immediately following the Site Team visit and is reported in more depth below in the response to “Failure to survey alumni in the assessment process during this review period.”

### **Part 1 - Assessment discussions and actions documented in reports and minutes for meetings of faculty, sequences and committees**

Reports and minutes from fall 2015 through spring 2017 which address assessment issues are cited below with brief annotations. This list includes only meetings and reports which addressed assessment.

*All cited materials are located in **Supporting Documents** and are organized by year, sequence and committee.*

A scan over the summaries of these meetings and reports provides an overview of how faculty progressed in their discussions of assessment results over a two-year period. They grappled with the data, proposed ideas for addressing problems and made proposals for solutions. The implementation of changes based on these discussions is documented in Part 2.

## **Spring 2015**

### *Ad/PR Sequence*

Ad/PR meeting minutes, February 19, 2015. Discussed plans to conduct assessments for Ad/PR courses PR Principles and Media Planning.

### *Assessment Committee*

Assessment Report, Lemke Department of Journalism, Spring 2015 (See Assessment Documents)

Assessment Committee minutes, November 13, 2015. (See 2015 Minutes Reports for the Assessment Committee information.) Discussion of adjustments to direct measures Grammar Test, Assessment Survey and Senior Exit Survey based on results of 2011-2015 Assessment Plan process.

## **Fall 2015**

### *Ad/PR Sequence*

Ad/PR meeting minutes, August 2015. Discussed assessment midpoint and capstone results, proposed changes and their implementation. Detailed reports on the midpoint and capstone evaluation results are attached to the minutes.

Ad/PR meeting minutes, November 2015. Discussed assessment results, including student writing and possible Curriculum Committee actions. Plan to hire an experienced professional as an adjunct who can assist with adopting assessment recommendations.

### *Assessment Committee*

“Closing the Loop” Plan, August 2015. Sequences reported on assessment results from the analysis of the first cohort assessment process (completed in spring 2015) and the proposals for curricular changes and their implementation. (See Assessment Documents)

### *Curriculum Committee*

Curriculum Committee email discussion, October 7, 2015. Shared information from other journalism programs with options for addressing changes in JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) based on assessment results.

Curriculum Committee meeting minutes, October 15, 2015. Discussed options for revising JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) based on assessment reports. Includes outlines of proposals brought forward from the News/Ed sequence.

Curriculum Committee meeting minutes, November 5, 2015. Voted to revise and present the News/Ed faculty recommendation to the full faculty concerning changes to JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism), based on assessment results.

Curriculum Committee proposals to full faculty, November 2015. Two proposals brought to the full faculty, one involves changes to JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) based on assessment.

#### *Faculty Meetings*

Faculty meeting minutes, August 2015. Sequences reminded to complete assessment reports. Discussed possible changes based on assessment data and reports.

Faculty meeting minutes, December 11, 2015. Approved Curriculum Committee recommendation, based on assessment, for a new approach to teaching JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism).

#### *News/Editorial Sequence*

News/Ed meeting minutes, September 16, 2015. Discussed proposals for curricular changes based on the cohort assessment analysis (spring 2015). Committee formed to address assessment concerns for JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) and writing competence.

News/Ed meeting minutes, November 12, 2015. Announcement of Curriculum Committee approval of News/Ed sequence recommendation to update JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) prompted by assessment.

### **Spring 2016**

#### *Ad/PR Sequence*

Ad/PR Reports on Capstone Course Reviews by Professionals. Ad/PR faculty recorded the results of reviews by three professionals of student work in the capstone course JOUR 4453, Media Planning and Strategy. (In Supporting Documents, see Assessment Documents, and the folder Assessment APR Capstone Reviews.)

#### *Assessment Committee*

Assessment Committee: Lemke Alumni Survey, Spring 2016. The survey itself and reports on the results. (See Assessment Documents)

Assessment Committee minutes, April 15, 2016. Discussed site team's finding of non-compliance on assessment. Proposed actions to address the finding and correct problems.

Addenda attached: Memos issued (April 26, 2016 and Spring 2016) to department's sequence heads asking them to address assessment issues.

#### *News/Editorial Sequence*

News/Ed Capstone Assessment Report, Spring 2016. Results of reviews of News/Ed student performance in the capstone JOUR 3023 (News II) course by four news professionals. Added by sequence faculty following the site team's finding of non-compliance in assessment.

### **Fall 2016**

#### *Ad/PR Sequence*

Ad/PR meeting minutes, September 20, 2016. Discussed revisions of midpoint and capstone rubrics based on recommendations from Lemke Alumni Survey (spring 2016), to address diversity, media roles, research, use of numbers and data interpretation. Faculty reported on specific adjustments made to their courses.

#### *Assessment Committee*

Assessment Committee. The committee implemented the new Cohort Analysis Assessment Plan for 2016-2020. The new student cohort of those entering the program in fall 2016 took their first journalism courses. The plan specifies that in Year 1 the new student cohort is to be given the Grammar Test in JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) and the Assessment Survey in JOUR 1023 (Media and Society), and students in JOUR 1023 also submit a brief writing assignment for evaluation. Faculty administered those measures and UA Testing Services scored them. The cohort will be given both tests again in Year 4 and the results compared with those from the tests in Year 1. Their writing evaluation scores will be compared to scores from the Journalism Writing Requirement in Year 4. (See Assessment Plan, 2016-2020 located under Assessment Documents.)

#### *Broadcast Sequence*

Broadcast meeting minutes, September 14, 2016. Discussed results of the Lemke Alumni Survey (spring 2016) and course changes based on assessment, including specific changes implemented in the capstone course Television II and the introduction of the new course in News Production.

Broadcast meeting minutes, November 2016. Discussed packages and the rubric used to assess students in the capstone course Television II. Discussed possibly including the News Producing course as a capstone course.

#### *News/Editorial Sequence*

News/Ed meeting minutes, September 20, 2016. Discussed the Lemke Alumni Survey (spring 2016). Faculty asked to follow up with written plans to address issues in their courses involving number literacy, visual training, history, diversity, role of media and research. The Addendum to the minutes includes faculty responses on the coverage of these issues in their courses.

### **Spring 2017**

#### *Ad/PR Sequence*

Ad/PR meeting minutes, March 7, 2017. Revised the assessment form used for the capstone assignment in the capstone courses Media Planning and Account Planning.

Ad/PR Year-End Report, June, 2017. Documents actions to address assessment results with specifics on changes in courses.

#### *Broadcast Sequence*

Broadcast Year-End Report, May 2017. Provides list of the broadcast courses with the assessment-based changes that have already been implemented in them and changes that will be implemented in fall 2017.

#### *Curriculum Committee*

Curriculum Committee Report, Spring 2017. Addressed changes suggested for JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) based on assessment.

#### *Faculty Meetings*

Faculty meeting minutes, May 5, 2017. Assessment report presented and discussed. Sequences asked for reports on implementation of curricular changes based on assessment: includes Assessment Report on 2016-2017, Accreditation Revisit Report

### **Part 2 - Implementation of changes as reflected in syllabi and assignments**

The school's faculty introduced curricular changes based on assessment and the alumni survey during 2016 and 2017. The evidence of this implementation is provided here through examples of course syllabi and assignments which are annotated to indicate how they address specific issues. The spring 2017 sequence year-end reports are included for their overview of that implementation.

The faculty noted there was some repetition of curriculum issues raised in the assessment process and in the alumni survey. A few issues were specific to a sequence, but most extended across the program. This list begins with issues that arose repeatedly and thus were considered most critical:

- Writing – including correct grammar, spelling and punctuation; organization and clarity. Writing in correct broadcast style and news style.
- Research skills – including use of databases, the Internet, library resources, legal resources.
- Critical thinking and analysis.
- Numeric literacy and use of basic statistical concepts in reporting.
- Tools and technology for specific fields – for example, using natural sound in audio. Also, multimedia; working with visual images (across the program) and graphics (particularly in broadcast).
- Digital – writing for digital posting; writing for mobile devices; podcasting, etc.
- Conceptual knowledge areas such as global press freedom; journalism history, especially a diversity focus on the role of women and minorities; media roles in society.

Some of these are persistent problems – such as writing, research and critical thinking skills – others require attention in specific courses. Courses were changed to address these problems. Some courses added topics; others were redesigned to incorporate skills throughout the semester. Attention to issues is documented in this sample of both syllabi and in assignments. The annotation for each course includes the specific issues it addresses.

Most important to note is the “Reflections” requirement added to the lab for JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) in spring 2017. When assessment results corroborated faculty members’ continuing concern about students’ writing skills, the News/Editorial faculty, who primarily teach JOUR 1033, proposed several strategies to deal with the problem. As a result, the “Reflections” requirement was added to the JOUR 1033 lab. The responses so far are promising. Ray Minor, a longtime lecturer in JOUR 1033, said that he could detect improvements in students’ writing throughout the spring semester.

*The syllabi and assignments can be found in the **Supporting Documents, Additional** where they are organized by **APR Documents, Broadcast Documents and News Ed Documents**.*

#### Ad/PR Year-End Report, June 2017.

- The sequence added external evaluations/reviewers of student work in various courses as well as in the Midpoint and Capstone assessments. The report provides specific information on reviewers used in six courses.
- The sequence revised courses “to incorporate diversity and the media, and media roles and responsibilities, and to emphasize research and systematic evaluation and analysis of information in assignments,” and in use of numbers.

Following are examples of assignments from Ad/PR courses that implement the changes in research and systematic evaluation and analysis of information. Increasing attention to diversity issues is addressed in the Revisit Report section on Diversity.

JOUR 3723, Advertising Principles.

JOUR 3723 Syllabus, Spring 2017.

Addresses diversity, digital, visual images, research, numbers, database tools, writing competency, critical thinking, advertising and society

JOUR 3723 Assignment 1. Client/Product Analysis for Caprisun. Addresses research, critical thinking, numbers

JOUR 3723 Assignment 3. Developing a Media Plan or Buy. Addresses research, numbers, critical thinking, writing competency

JOUR 405V, Portfolio Development

JOUR 405V Syllabus. New course developed to address need for more emphasis on digital skills. Addresses digital portfolio production, writing competency

JOUR 4473, Account Planning

JOUR 4473 Syllabus. New course to address research, writing and data analysis skills and developing messages for diverse cultures.

JOUR 4483, Issues in Advertising & Public Relations

JOUR 4883 Syllabus. New course designed to address diversity issues in American culture with respect to the professional practice of advertising and public relations. Also addresses advertising in society, research, critical thinking and analysis.

#### Broadcast Year-End Report, May 2017

- In the next capstone course evaluation (in Year 4 of the Assessment Plan), the sequence will use three outside evaluators for the capstone course JOUR 4873 (TV II). A variety of professionals will be involved such as a reporter, a producer and a news director. Examples are provided in Supporting Documents under “Broadcast Documents.”
- The sequence added two new courses – news producing (as of fall 2015), and sports broadcasting – requested funds to purchase additional lighting kits, added a word exercise in one course to increase vocabulary skills and increased emphasis on diversity in all broadcast news courses.

JOUR 2453, Sports TV Production

JOUR 2453 Syllabus. New course addresses students’ skills in using natural sound to enhance a story. Also addresses diversity (see Assignment: National Sound Pieces) and digital.

JOUR 3163, Sports Journalism

JOUR 3163 Assignment: Writing a Sports Feature. Addresses research, tools and technology, diversity.

JOUR 3163 Assignment: Beat Reporting. Addresses tools and technology, diversity, digital

JOUR 4893, Television News Producing

JOUR 4893 Syllabus. New course to emphasize writing skills, working on deadline and using graphics to present news. Also addresses broadcast writing style, diverse audiences, analysis

#### News/Editorial Implementation Actions, 2016-2017

- The sequence responded to the Accreditation Site Team report in spring 2016 by engaging four newspaper professionals (a mix of reporters and editors) to assess student work in the 2016 capstone course JOUR 3023 (News Reporting II). (See News/Ed Capstone Assessment Report, Spring 2016.)
- The sequence revised JOUR 1033 (Fundamentals of Journalism) for the 2016-2017 academic year and hired a data journalism specialist faculty member who created JOUR 405V, a course in data journalism. Syllabi are included in Supporting Documents under “NE Documents.”

#### JOUR 2013, News Reporting I

JOUR 2013 Syllabus. Addresses writing competency, writing for mobile devices, digital reporting techniques, research (commercial databases), diversity of communities and sources, critical thinking and analysis, social media (Twitter), video (technology), multimedia

#### JOUR 3013, Editing

JOUR 3013 Syllabus. Addresses writing skills, critical thinking, diversity issues, research.

#### JOUR 3023, News Reporting II

JOUR 3023 Syllabus. Addresses writing skills, organization, writing across platforms, diverse audiences and viewpoints, media in society

#### JOUR 405V, Database Journalism

JOUR 405V Syllabus. New course first offered in fall 2016 addresses skills in research, numeric literacy, data visualization and analytic reasoning.

#### Journalism Courses for all Sequences

#### JOUR 1023, Media and Society (required)

JOUR 1023 Syllabus. Introductory course for journalism majors. Addresses history and role of media in US culture/society, diversity, media globalization, new technologies; social media used as support for the course and is covered as a topic; critical thinking and analysis, research.

#### JOUR 1033, Fundamentals of Journalism (required)

JOUR 1033 Lecture Syllabus.

Based on the results of assessment, the syllabus was revised to include coverage of writing in various forms of media (print, broadcast, digital), using sensitivity in language when covering diversity issues, use of numbers in reporting. Also, significant attention is given to writing competency through emphasis on correct grammar and style, the AP Stylebook, word choice, and story organization; also, social media.

JOUR 1033 Lab Syllabus (beginning in spring 2017)

Assessment results led specifically to the “Reflections” requirement in the 1033 lab beginning in spring 2017. Students are required to “reflect” on instructors’ feedback on their writing and make revisions. The assignment is highlighted on page 2 of the syllabus (See **Supporting Documents, Additional**, JOUR All Sequence courses, JOUR 1033 LAB syllabus).

JOUR 3633, Media Law (required)

JOUR 3633 Syllabus. Addresses media’s role in society, free speech, societal diversity, critical thinking and analysis, writing skills, research.

JOUR 4333, Media Ethics (required)

JOUR 4333 Syllabus. Addresses media role in society, research, critical thinking and analysis, diversity.

JOUR 405V, Minorities in the Media (elective)

JOUR 405V Syllabus. Introduced in fall 2017. Addresses the need to incorporate diversity issues throughout the curriculum. “Surveys the impact, influence and social implications of mass media messages on misrepresented minorities.” Niketa Reed, the new clinical assistant professor for diversity, teaches the course.

### 3. Failure to survey alumni in the assessment process during this review period

The school took steps to address the issue of an annual alumni survey by conducting a survey within three weeks of the 2016 Site Team visit. In addition, the Assessment Committee adjusted the Assessment Plan to continue this practice each year. The original Assessment Plan written in 2010 for the 2011-2015 cohort had included a survey of alumni every four years with the first one scheduled for spring 2018.

The spring 2016 Lemke Alumni Survey was sent online to 529 alumni from 2011-2015, and drew a 14 percent rate of return. The survey design was adapted with permission from an Elon University survey and was based on the 12 ACEJMC competencies. The UofA Alumni Association provided the alumni list and address information.

*The information on the spring 2016 Alumni Survey is located in **Supporting Documents** in the folder **Assessment Documents** under **Assessment Lemke Survey Results**. It includes a copy of the Lemke Assessment Survey and a folder with two versions of the survey results, one abbreviated 3-page report provided faculty and a more detailed 8-page version for department records.*

The survey identified issues with course content and gaps in the school’s coverage of skills and knowledge, with some points overlapping observations made in the 2016 Accrediting Site Team review. These issues included numbers skills, training in digital media and with journalism tools and technologies such as multimedia and video. Sequences addressed survey results along with their curriculum adjustments based on assessment.

*Sequence discussions and plans are recorded in minutes and reports located in **Supporting Documents** and filed by year under **Ad/PR, Broadcast and News.Ed**.*

The Assessment Committee also revised the school’s new Cohort Assessment Plan for 2016-2020 to include annual alumni surveys. Annual surveys will cover graduates from two years prior to the current year and will begin in spring 2018 with graduates from spring 2016. As directed in the 2011-

2015 Cohort Assessment Plan, the spring 2018 survey will also cover the 2011 cohort who graduated in 2015. This plan will build a collection of data based on surveys of graduates from 2011 to 2016 and on into the future.