

Annual Academic Assessment Report
School of Journalism and Strategic Media

May 15, 2025

1. Results of analysis of assessment of student learning outcomes:

a. Identified Weaknesses in Student Learning and Planned Curriculum Changes

- **Core:**

Math Literacy - Based on student feedback and assessment data, we will be adding math literacy modules to the core curriculum beginning in the 2024-25 academic year. Students expressed a need for more support in applying numerical and statistical concepts relevant to journalism and strategic media. This feedback was gathered through course evaluations, direct comments, and performance on assignments requiring quantitative reasoning. In response, the curriculum will now include dedicated instruction and practice in interpreting data, calculating percentages and ratios, and understanding basic statistics as they apply to media professions. This change is designed to ensure all students are better equipped to meet ACEJMC competencies for numerical literacy and to address gaps identified in both student preparedness and learning outcomes.

Assessment Sequence - Instructors implemented a structured sequence of assessments: an opening quiz on journalistic knowledge to establish a baseline, a mid-point writing assignment requiring interviews and story construction, and a capstone writing assignment. These assessments are managed by course instructors, who also analyze results and monitor both direct (quizzes, assignments) and indirect (self-reflection, peer review) measures.

- **Broadcast Concentration:**

Assessment revealed that students scored lower on final assessments. The current curriculum may not provide adequate, broadcast-specific instruction in shooting and editing; in the initial Video Production course, faculty are concerned that students are learning skills more aligned with Ad/PR and Multimedia rather than broadcast newsroom needs. Faculty will try to redesign some content in broadcast courses to increase repetition and reinforcement of key skills. Faculty will also assess possible needs for new equipment.

- **ADPR Concentration:**

Midpoint assessment of ADPR Principles and Advertising Principles courses highlighted the need for improved writing, research, and professional communication skills. New assignments in Crisis PR, Social Media Planning, and Account Planning now incorporate AI tools, primary research, and industry certifications. Scaffolded campaign projects and increased client engagement were added to strengthen professional readiness.

- **Multimedia Storytelling & Production (MULT):**

As a new concentration, MULT's assessment protocols are in early implementation. Initial, midpoint, and capstone assessments are now established, with a focus on project-based learning and industry-standard production techniques. No significant weaknesses identified yet; assessment data from the first cohort will inform future changes.

- b. Effectiveness of Assessment Approaches and Planned Adjustments

- **Core:** The assessment process for core courses was strengthened in 2024-25 with a structured sequence of opening, midpoint, and capstone assessments. Instructors administered a diagnostic quiz at the start of each course to establish a baseline in journalistic knowledge, followed by a mid-semester writing assignment requiring interviews and story construction, and concluding with a capstone writing project. This approach provided both direct (quizzes, assignments) and indirect (self-reflection, peer review) measures of student learning, enabling instructors to identify students needing targeted support early in the semester.
- **Broadcast:** Professional assessors were engaged for capstone courses. The need for more direct, broadcast-specific assessment and faculty involvement was identified. Plans include expanding the use of outside professionals and refining assessment rubrics.
- **ADPR:** Final reports from key courses were saved and reviewed for mid-point assessment. The program continues to refine assessment rubrics and procedures, especially regarding professional values and competencies.
- **MULT:** Assessment procedures are being implemented for the first time for the 2024-25 cohort. No outside professionals used yet, but future involvement is anticipated as the program matures.

- c. Rubrics and Assignments Addressing ACEJMC Principles and GELO

- In JOUR 49801, students completed research-supported and reflective essays addressing ethical and inclusivity issues in their career focus. Scores showed 79% of students scored 4/4, 19% scored 3/4, and 2% scored 2/4 on combined assignments.
- ADPR and MULT have incorporated new assignments focusing on primary research, campaign development, and real-world client interaction, directly supporting ACEJMC competencies.

2. Degree/Certificate and Curriculum Changes:

Broadcast

- **Instructional Focus:** Added emphasis on math skills, audio basics, and election coverage in reporting and producing courses.

ADPR

- Assignment Innovation: Integration of AI, expanded client interaction, and scaffolded campaign projects in core courses.
- Certification: Required completion of HubSpot “Social Media Marketing” Certification in Social Media Planning.

MULT

- Project-Based Learning: Advanced Storytelling course now includes PSA, music video, product advertisement, and short narrative film projects.
- Studio Expansion: Increased use of Studio B for advanced production and podcasting.

Microcertificates

- Strategic Media Skills: 9-hour online microcertificate for strategic communication, digital tools, and media performance.
- Writing for Modern Mass Media: 9-hour online microcertificate for writing skills across platforms, grammar, and audience engagement.

3. Changes to the assessment process made or planned:

- The assessment process for the MULT concentration was finalized in Fall 2023 and is now fully implemented for students entering under the 2024-25 catalog.
- **First-year assessment:** Data is now collected from MULT students in JOUR 10303 Media Writing as the initial assessment point.
- **Midpoint assessment:** Student performance is assessed in JOUR 20003 Storytelling for Today’s Media.
- **Capstone assessment:** Closing assessment data is gathered in JOUR 48803 Advanced Multimedia Storytelling, which has been revamped and renamed for the 2024-25 catalog to better align with industry standards and program learning outcomes.

Revised Journalism Concentration:

- The revised Journalism concentration now uses the same first-year assessment data as the former News-Editorial concentration for the initial assessment.
- **Midpoint assessment:** JOUR 20103 News Reporting I serves as the new midpoint assessment course.
- **Capstone assessment:** The final assignment in JOUR 31203 Enterprise Journalism and/or the most commonly taken 40000-level In-Depth Reporting Requirement courses is used for capstone assessment.
- **Additional assessment:** JOUR 30203 and JOUR 45003 may also be assessed if enough students enroll, allowing for comparison with the previous concentration structure.
- **Ongoing review:** The assessment team monitors the effectiveness of these protocols and documents any needed changes after each cycle, ensuring the process remains responsive to student needs and program goals.