Undergraduate Assessment of Student Learning Report  
Report for Academic Year: 2018-2019

A. Program Information
Department: A. Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Program: B.A. or B.S. in Mass Communication
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Program assessment website (Includes all outcomes and summary of your current report):
https://jmc.k-state.edu/about/assessment.html

B. Outcome Reporting
Include the following information for each outcome assessed this year:
(Note any non-assessed outcomes in the future plans area under Section C)

Assessment Method(s) (must include at least one direct measure)

JMC Assessment Exam: Student competencies in each of the 12 learning areas are demonstrated by senior performances on a 50-item assessment exam, administered in our senior-level capstone classes, MC 580 Storytelling Across Platforms and MC 581 Strategic Communications Campaigns, as part of a class requirement in the fall and spring semesters. We contrast senior scores with baseline data obtained from pre-majors, who took the same exam as part of a class requirement in MC 010 JMC Pre-Major Orientation, in order to gain an appreciation for how our curriculum potentially impacts students in our program.

Internship Evaluation: Last year, as our curriculum revision began requiring all JMC students to complete at least one, one-hour internship, we began using data collected from on-site evaluators as a direct assessment tool. We quickly discovered that not all 12 SLOs can be universally applied by students or reviewed by evaluators in the workplace setting, depending on the nature of the internship. We also realized that relaxed prerequisites for internships meant that an increasing number of students are interning before they have had the benefit of taking some classes that represent key knowledge areas, such as MC 466 Law of Mass Communication or MC 396 Research in Mass Communication, classes where particular knowledge bases could be represented in internship skills sets but are not prerequisite to the internship. In Fall 2018, the assessment committee conducted a focus group among three on-site evaluators, asking them which of the 12 ACEJMC criteria apply to the job setting. The respondents identified diversity (SLO 3), critical thinking (SLO 7), writing (SLO 9), editing and critical evaluation of work for accuracy and clarity (SLO 10), use of math and statistics (SLO 11), research (SLO 8), technology and production (SLO 12), and oral communication as skills they most commonly observe and consider to be important to the workplace. Evaluators simply fill out an online Qualtrics survey listing operationalized statements providing examples of skills in these learning areas and a Likert scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree,” with an option for “Not Observed” indicates observers’ evaluative response.

SLO 10 Evaluation: SLO 10 (‘which states that A.Q. Miller School students should be able to “critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness”’) is a difficult concept to measure through exams or evaluation of work produced in student projects. Therefore, we conduct special in-class assessment of students’ evaluative skills in MC 580 and MC 581, entailing professional observation of capstone class seniors who are engaged in a class activity of providing feedback on capstone assignments produced in past semesters. Industry professionals visit these classes and observe the classroom dynamics as students review and then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the projects they have critiqued. The evaluators use a rubric to guide their observations.
in the classroom exercise and then write a short report on what they have observed about our students’ evaluative skills.

**Oral Communication Skills Evaluation:** In addition to the basic competencies mandated by ACEJMC, Kansas State University has five SLOs mandated by the Kansas Board of Regents that units on campus are expected to emphasize and assess: knowledge, critical thinking, written/oral communication, diversity and academic/professional integrity. These SLOs dovetail nicely with the ACEJMC framework, except for the fact that oral communication is not specifically mentioned in the 12 assessment criteria. Oral communication skills are implicit in a student’s professional development in most media-related professions, so this year, the assessment committee began working on a procedure designed to help us understand the oral communication competency of our students, which included adding phrasing into SLO’s 8 and 9 to provide objectives that focus on oral communication, which, for the purview of our program, includes the ability to present information and ideas in an oral fashion, whether in a live or face-to-face setting, or through technological means. The skill is of obvious major importance to the broadcast side of the journalism curriculum, so we began with that aspect of our program. Although we have not taught a class in broadcast performance in many years, there is nonetheless much talent coaching that occurs for students participating in these two media outlets, so we began this new assessment procedure by collecting a random sample of senior announcers on KSDB-FM and senior students delivering news on KKSU-TV, and then recruited a small panel of program and news directors from area TV and radio stations to rate student work according to rubric developed by the committee. (Future assessment procedures will examine the oral and presentation skills of seniors in MC 581 Strategic Communication Campaigns.)

**Indirect Measures in our Basic Assessment Plan:**

We use two formal indirect measures: the annual Senior Satisfaction Survey and the Alumni Satisfaction Survey, both of which are administered annually by the University Assessment Office.

**Senior Satisfaction Survey:**

The Senior Survey had a response rate of roughly 30% percent, as only 21 of the School’s 71 graduating seniors participated in the overall survey. The survey was administered over Summer 2018, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 to those students who either applied or were approved for graduation in those semesters. This was below the College of Arts and Sciences response rate (36%) and the University at large (42%).

**Alumni Satisfaction Survey:**

The Alumni Survey was administered to students who graduated in the summer of 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017. It was offered via email during September and October 2018. The survey, which was distributed by e-mail, suffered from a low response rate, as only 14 of 90 subjects completed the questionnaire—yielding a response rate (27.78%) was better than that of the overall University (19.64%) and roughly equal to the College or Arts and Sciences (22.46%).

Both senior and alumni surveys ascertained respondents’ evaluation of the A.Q. Miller School’s effectiveness in terms of impacting their learning in each of the 12 student learning objectives.

**Informal Indicators:**

Additionally, we review anecdotal feedback from the surveys, and we collect observations from our faculty and academic advisers about the perceived competencies of our seniors and the overall strengths and weaknesses of our curriculum and related services that affect student perceptions of our program.
SLO Assessment

SLO 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 to assemble and petition for redress of grievance.

Direct Assessment Data Summary:
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions pertaining to First Amendment and other media law applications.
- 11 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 26 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 34 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 27 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.

Indirect Assessment:
Roughly 95% of the senior respondents agreed with the statement, “I understand and can apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to the communications profession and as they apply to my sequence.” In the Alumni Satisfaction Survey, all respondents at least agreed somewhat that our curriculum gave them a better understanding of First Amendment issues and media legal issues (33% strongly agreed with that statement).

Reflection:
The exam performance here is of some concern, as SLO 1 ranked lowest among the scores of all subject areas. While 61 students met or exceeded expectations (62%), we would naturally like to see a higher number of students achieve proficiency (last year’s seniors, for example, fared better, as 82% were at the “meets or exceeds” level). Baseline freshmen scored .96% and the senior average was 1.82%, so our curriculum has had some impact, but the overall 2018-2019 senior performance in this area is very lacking. Media Law is a core class, and legal principles are taught in many classes at many levels, which means that students routinely apply basic legal principles to course work.

We do note here that we would normally have another assessment of Media Law skills available to us, as legal applications are normally assessed in the review of senior projects, and law has been a focus on internship assessments in the past (a reorganization of internship assessment procedures dropped this SLO, since this is so rarely a workplace skill for most internships).

It is often difficult for a single exam with a limited number of questions to tell us much about skill levels in any area of our curriculum, but beyond that, student skills are often found to vary, depending on their propensity to take classes that apply certain aspects of media law. For example. Copyright law is stressed in most creative classes, while reporting classes focus on libel and privacy regulations, and students interested in broadcasting may have a heavy amount of FCC law. Depending on a student’s choice of classes, it is thus possible to have much variation in a student’s level of competency in applying legal concepts. It will be incumbent on the search committee to find another way to measure competency in SLO 1.

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

Direct Assessment Data Summary:
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions pertaining to media history and the evolution of the profession.
- 3 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 19 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 30 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 46 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.

**Indirect Assessment:** Seniors were asked their degree of agreement with the question, “I understand the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communication,” to which there was 95% agreement. Alumni similarly responded that our curriculum gave them a good understanding of the roots of the profession and its professional standards.

**Reflection:** This is typically a learning area where students do not fare well, but this year’s seniors had an overall better performance on the assessment exam. Last year, for example, 49% of the students met or exceeded expectations, but this year, 78% of the students (N=76) scored that well. It must be pointed out that the assessment exam was built into this year’s capstone classes, so we had a higher number of students actually taking the exam (98 this year, as opposed to 76 last year), which affects interpretation of annual comparisons. It is entirely possible that our seniors felt more compelled to take the exam seriously since it was a course requirement.

Interestingly enough, the baseline freshman group had a composite average of 2.26, while the seniors had an average of 2.37, so for this particular year, historical questions fared better overall at the baseline level as well as with the senior group. As mentioned above, the fact that our exam is built into MC 010 and MC 580/MC 581 can be a factor, since requiring the exam may mean mean that students at both levels simply applied themselves better. We do conclude that faculty members paid heed to last year’s assessment results and made a greater effort to emphasize historical concepts in their classes, so this may be a direct reflection on our efforts to “close the loop” in this area. But we cannot be sure unless we see repeated improved performances, and it must be noted that history is still seventh of the 12 SLOs (last year, it was 9th in terms of exam performance). History, like law, is difficult to apply to our other direct means of assessment. At present, the realignment of our internship criteria has meant that we dropped this SLO from our criteria. We are still working to find other ways to directly measure history as a learning objective in our program.

**SLO 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.**

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions relating to diversity issues.
- 0 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 4 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 15 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 46 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their understanding and application of diversity in the workplace and were evaluated by supervisors on the basis of this survey item: “**Intern shows understanding and appreciation for diversity in the workplace.**”
  - 22 supervisors indicated “strongly agree” while 19 supervisors indicated “agree.”
  - Only three supervisors indicated “neither agree nor disagree.”

**Indirect Assessment:** The Senior Satisfaction Survey asked respondents their degree of agreement with the statement “I understand the importance of media respecting diversity among audience members in
terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity in domestic society,” to which 100% of respondents agreed. Alumni respondents generally agreed that their time at K-State gave them a broader understanding of diversity issues, as 67% strongly agreed that the JMC curriculum had helped them understand the importance of diversity in a media education, while 34% either somewhat agreed or agreed.

**Reflection:**
Every class we teach addresses the subject of diversity in terms of lectures, class discussions and assignments, in such ways as helping students understand the differences in audiences, the importance of proper portrayal and inclusion of various socio-economic groups in media and strategic communication content, and helping students understand the role of media in providing the communications conduit that promotes better cultural understanding. Therefore, it is not surprising that this was our highest scoring SLO (it usually is). Certainly, students enter K-State with a respectable understanding of this subject area, as the freshman baseline average score of 2.59 was the highest of the 12 SLOs, which indicates that Millennials and Gen Z'ers have already grown up in a more culturally sensitive environment, but it can be concluded that our curriculum does enhance learning in this area, as the seniors registered a 3.01 average diversity score on the exam. To the extent that application of this SLO are observable in the workplace, the performance of our students seems to back up that diversity education is strong in our program.

**SLO 4: Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.**

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions relating to global diversity and intercultural communication.
- 2 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 28 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 30 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 38 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.

**Indirect Assessment:** Seniors were asked their degree of agreement with this question: “I have a greater appreciation for serving international audiences and cultures as a mass communications professional.” Roughly 90% of respondents agreed, while alumni generally responded that they became aware of international and intercultural issues through our curriculum (33% strongly agreed, while the remainder of respondents—58%—registered some form of agreement).

**Reflection:**
The A.Q. Miller School offers a class in global mass communication, and we have offered sponsored study abroad opportunities for the past several years. Additionally, many classes, especially in the strategic communication sequence, offer international and intercultural education for our students, including a senior-level public relations course. Overall, this SLO ranks 11th in terms of students who met or exceeded expectations (N=68), which may not be a direct reflection on our curriculum as much as it is a lack of emphasis by instructors in classes where this is a germane topic. This year, faculty members discussed this issue based on last year’s assessment, where students ranked higher (7th place with 76% meeting or exceeding expectations). We conducted a special presentation for faculty, illustrating ways in which SLO 4 can be better emphasized in classroom learning, including ideas for case studies relating to international and intercultural communication, lecture topics illustrating the omnipresence of internationally themed stories in the news, how international policies impact the Kansas economy and how marketers must understand and be sensitive to intercultural issues in strategic messaging. The baseline freshman average exam score of 1.69 is contrasted with the senior average of 2.20 indicates a less interest in this subject, which can likely be improved if faculty make a conscious effort to adopt more international/intercultural issues in the design of their courses.
This SLO is no longer a part of our internship assessment, and we did not do an assessment of student capstone work this year, so future assessments should help tell this story more adequately. But we do expect faculty members to do a better job of including this SLO in class content and we can perhaps increase student performance in this area.

**SLO 5: Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.**

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered questions based on mass communication theory and a set of questions based on concepts related to design and presentation of images. In all, six questions were on the exam, three for each category.
- For visual/design theories:
  - 1 student failed to meet expectations (no questions answered correctly).
  - 15 students met minimum expectations (one question answered correctly).
  - 50 students met expectations (answered two questions correctly).
  - 32 students met desired proficiency level (answered all three questions correctly).
- For mass communication theory:
  - 21 students failed to meet expectations (no questions answered correctly).
  - 31 students met minimum expectations (one question answered correctly).
  - 29 students met expectations (answered two questions correctly).
  - 17 students met desired proficiency level (answered all three questions correctly).

**Indirect Assessment:** Seniors were asked: “I understand theoretical concepts and can apply them to the presentation of images and information in the communications professions.” Roughly 77% of respondents agreed, while alumni responded that theory was less of an impactful SLO for them, as only 17% strongly agreed, 67% agreed and eight percent somewhat agreed (one responded disagreed with the statement).

**Reflection:**
Each class we teach is structured around some elements of mass communication theory, while our production-oriented classes are laden with design principles and concepts. This results in an SLO that has always been problematic to analyze because of its “double barreled” meanings and past assessments have thus been mostly inconclusive.

This year we began attempts to split the concept and include six items on the exam, three questions dealing with mass comm theory and three questions covering design principles. As we expected, the number of students meeting and exceeding expectations was much higher for design theories (N=72), as 32 students met the A.Q. Miller School’s proficiency level. That compares to a proficiency level of only 17 students for mass communication theory. Clearly, visual communication is a stronger element in our program than are standard theories of mass communication. It should also be pointed out that the capstone classes are where exposure to design concepts are certainly stressed and applied as students do higher-level journalism (primarily reporting) and/or strategic communication work for their final projects. The higher assessment scores, at least from a design standpoint, may be more due to a recency effect resulting from fresh exposure to those concepts.

Obviously, the comparatively diminished performance in answering communication theory based questions is something that faculty members should take note of. While answering only a small number of exam items is not conclusive about the adequacy of education in any area, this finding does lead to more faculty discussion about how to incorporate more communication theory into our classes. SLO 5 did not benefit from other direct assessment this year, and future assessments must find another way to ascertain...
student performance on SLO 5 in general, and in particular, we must examine our effectiveness in teaching theory from the standpoint of mass communication theoretical concepts.

**SLO 6:** Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions pertaining to media ethics and principles relating to social responsibility.
- 2 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 4 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 18 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 74 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- I understand theoretical concepts and can apply them to the presentation of images and information in the communications professions.

**Indirect Assessment:** The Senior Satisfaction Survey asked: “I know how to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.” Students unanimously agreed (100%) with the statement. Alumni responses registered similar agreement, as all respondents agreed to some extend with the statement (67% strongly agreed).

**Reflection:**
The A.Q. Miller School only features one dedicated class to media ethics (which is not a required class), but every class in the school has sections relating to the ethical conduct and professional standards for media practitioners. Students receive a healthy dose of media and social responsibility issues and student assessment exam performances in this area are typically high. Last year, for example, 87% of our students met or exceeded expectations in this category. This year, 94% (N=92) met or exceeded expectations and 74 (76%) were at the desired proficiency level.

Ethics is clearly a strong component of student learning in the A.Q. Miller School. This year, we had no other direct measures, as we did not assess senior capstone projects. Ethics was also removed as a criterion from internships evaluations, as those skills are often not observable in most workplace situations, but also for the reason that further study among onsite evaluators revealed that their understanding of “ethics” meant students’ work ethic and had nothing to do with social responsibility issues. Certainly, we must develop another measure of student competency in this area to supplant the ethics exam.

**SLO 7:** Think critically, creatively and independently.

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions applying critical thinking skills.
- 1 student failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 5 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 22 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 70 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their critical thinking skills, as workplace evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “Intern shows the ability to think for himself/herself and solves problems, makes decisions based on facts, has good judgment and gets feedback as appropriate.”

- 24 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 16 evaluators indicated “agree.”
- 4 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.

**Indirect Assessment:** The surveys separated the concepts of critical thinking and creative/independent reasoning as a way to help respondents better answer survey questions relating to their evaluation of the curriculum. For critical thinking, all alumni (58% strongly agreed) and 62% of seniors agreed that the JMC curriculum had helped them think more critically about issues. In terms of creative and independent thought, 100% of seniors and all alumni (58% strongly agreed) felt that the curriculum had enhanced their skills.

**Reflection:**
Critical thinking is a key component of assessment in terms of ACEJMC standards and the Kansas Board of Regents. Our on-site internship evaluators continually talk about critical thinking as an important expectation for college students, and they often make comments in this area. Critical thinking is, of course, a hard SLO to measure, but the assessment exam does have a bank of questions that were borrowed from other universities seeking to assess this important component. Seniors did well overall in this area, as 92 students (93%) met or exceeded expectations, with 70 of those students (71%) achieving the desired level of proficiency. Seniors (2.94) did fare better than the baseline freshmen group (2.22 average).

A.Q. Miller School faculty members routinely mention critical thinking as a hallmark of a college education, and they realize the importance of a challenging curriculum in preparing our students for careers in media-related professions.

**SLO 8: Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communication professions for which they work.**

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a variety of questions applying research methods and concepts.
- 2 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 2 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 22 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 72 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their observed research skills in the workplace, and evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “The intern shows curiosity in all aspects of the profession and is able to complete basic research projects to aid the company in accomplishing its goals.”
- 25 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 14 evaluators indicated “agree.”
- 4 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.
- 1 evaluator disagreed.

**Indirect Assessment:** Most alumni (84% in general agreement) and all seniors registered some level of agreement with the statement, “I can evaluate information and conduct research using methods appropriate to the communications profession and to my chosen sequence area.” One alum disagreed and one alum strongly disagreed.
Reflection:
Research holds an increasingly important place in communications-related professions. In this SLO, our students performed admirably, perhaps a reflection of our faculty’s dedication to teaching research principles in MC 396 Mass Communications Research and MC 316 Data Journalism. In both classes, our faculty members have taught the relevance of research in reporting and in audience analysis and campaign design. The freshman baseline group had a 2.07 average on the assessment exam, while seniors had a 2.94 average, with 72 students meeting the proficiency level. In terms of interns, 25 evaluators strongly agreed that students had the skills to handle basic research and complete projects, again a reflection of effective classroom teaching. Research, in fact, was our second highest SLO on the exam (last year, it ranked eighth). While we realize that there may have been a recency effect here, as capstone students conduct applied research for converged news stories and strategic campaigns, which likely provides an effective refresher exercise for calling on research skills. But the fact remains that this learning objective benefits from faculty efforts to effectively cover a skill area that is, at face value, abstract and daunting if not approached properly.

SLO 9: Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

Direct Assessment Data Summary:
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered several questions relating to proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.
- 3 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 17 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 41 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 37 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their observable writing skills, as workplace evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “Intern shows a mastery of clear and correct writing style.”
- 25 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 14 evaluators indicated “agree.”
- 5 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.

Indirect Assessment: For this SLO, the Assessment Committee again asked more direct questions about the A.Q. Miller School curriculum’s effectiveness in teaching writing. The first question simply asked respondents’ agreement with the statement “I am a better writer,” to which all senior respondents and 92% of alumni (42% strongly agreed) registered agreement. The second question asks respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement “I can use correct grammar in the form and styles appropriate to the communications profession,” and 91% of alumni and 100% of seniors agreed with that item.

Reflection:
This SLO represents an area of concern. While writing skills are always under close scrutiny in a communications program, this year’s performance was again lackluster, and student performances on the assessment exam are again disappointing. Last year, SLO 9 ranked sixth (78%), and this year, it ranked 7th in terms of the number of students who met or exceeded expectations, with only 37 students hitting the proficiency level. Regardless, as reflected through indirect assessment, seniors feel more confident in their writing abilities.

This fall, with the institution of our new curriculum that features “refresher” writing classes at the 100-level, we have attempted to provide upfront instruction intended to illustrate writing as a basic media skill and provide background tools to help students succeed in 200-level writing classes (grammar, spelling,
punctuation, AP style and the various formats of media writing). We will attempt to measure the effects of MC 130, 131 and 132 in our writing classes this fall, and we will seek to make adjustments as needed, all in an effort to enhance senior level writing skills in three years. Faculty members have also discussed the fact that writing standards need to be standardized in the program, a way of enforcing standards as students progress through the program. We instituted an upper level strategic communications writing class on our curriculum this year in hopes that we can enhance writing competency among our graduates in that sequence. All of these are measures we are taking to correct this problem.

SLO 10: Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Direct Assessment Data Summary:

- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a several questions relating to critically evaluating writing and editing copy.
- 1 student failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 22 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 40 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 35 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their observable writing skills, as workplace evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “Intern is able to evaluate and edit his/her own work as well as the work of his/her peers for quality and correctness.”
- 18 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 23 evaluators indicated “agree.”
- 3 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.
- 98 seniors were involved in the following classroom exercise in MC 580 and MC 581: Industry professionals, mostly A.Q. Miller School Advisory Council members, observed students as they critiqued capstone projects from past semesters, but instead of reviewing the projects, the industry professionals observed the students in their critiquing role and made notes on how the students reviewed the work. Journalism professionals were given rubrics that asked them to evaluate the following criteria: storytelling, production, editing and writing proficiency and critical analysis, plus anything else they observed about our students’ abilities to critically review the competencies of peer skills. Strategic Communication professionals examined and recorded their perceptions of student proficiencies in understanding the background of the cases being reviewed, their ability to discuss goals/objectives/strategies/tactics, editing and writing proficiency and the ability to critically analyze the work, plus anything else reviewers observed about student skills.

Indirect Assessment: Respondents also answered two questions relating to this learning objective. The first pertained to being able to evaluate the work of others for grammatical correctness and styles appropriate to the profession and sequence area, who which all 95% of seniors and 90% of alumni registered some degree of agreement. The second question asked agreement on the statement “I can critically evaluate my own work and that of others for accuracy, fairness and clarity,” to which 83% of alumni and 95% of seniors found at least some agreement.

Reflection:

On first observation, exam scores and internship evaluations seem to reflect less ability to apply critical evaluation skills in an academic or workplace setting, as 35 seniors achieved the program’s proficiency level on the assessment exam, and internship evaluators were in mild agreement that students displayed
such skills in the workplace (only 18 strongly agreed with that premise). It should be noted that this is a skill that is difficult for intern evaluators to observe unless interns are actually in a position to edit copy.

In terms of the classroom observation, professional reviewers observed that students showed a good understanding of research methods, and they even recommended strategies and tactics in most cases. Students generally showed competence in analyzing the writing in the project reports being reviewed in class; in fact, there was more attention devoted to writing than the actual strategic campaign ideas expressed in the report. Overall, students seemed to show good analytical ability and good use of professional terminology and concepts. The negative comment from the reviewers: Too few students commented and discussion often seemed to be dominated by only a few people.

Overall, we learned that A.Q. Miller School students have good backgrounds in visual storytelling and data visualization. Writing skills, based on these critiques, vary. Reviewers concluded that our students seem to have senior-level of understanding of content and strategy when analyzing work for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness. An unexpected reviewer criticism was the perceived harshness of the student critiques; that is, failure to find positives in the work they reviewed.

The major thing we learned from this procedure was not so much about student knowledge, but about the procedure itself. Both sets of reviewers noted the lack of student participation, which somewhat decreased the effectiveness of this exercise. Reviewers suggested that in the future, we might have students individually critique the work at home and then do a group discussion in class, a technique that might encourage more thoughtful in-class discussion of the work under review. This will be a change in procedure that we include in the 2019-2020 assessment.

SLO 11: Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

**Direct Assessment Data Summary:**
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered several questions relating to statistical and applied concepts in mathematics.
- 2 students failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 18 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 49 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 29 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their observable writing skills, as workplace evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “Intern demonstrates an understanding of applicable numbers, statistics and data.”
- 16 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 14 evaluators indicated “agree.”
- 14 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.

**Indirect Assessment:** Senior respondents were asked their degree of agreement with the statement “I can apply basic numerical and statistical concepts” as a result of their JMC classes, and 86% agreed with this statement. Alumni were very mixed about our program’s impact on their statistical and mathematical reasoning abilities, as only 17% strongly agreed, 33% agreed and 33% only somewhat agreed (16% disagreed).

**Reflection:**
As noted last year, anecdotal evidence from faculty and students indicates that most students do not consider themselves to be proficient in math (which is often cited as one reason for gravitating to media-related curricula. Yet, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations in this category, our students did comparatively better than last year. At that time, only 24 students met the
proficiency level (in sum, 50 students met or exceeded expectations). This year, 78 students met or exceeded expectations (29 were at the proficiency level). This indicates that more effective teaching in our mandated research classes may be fostering a greater appreciation for statistics and numerical data.

Faculty members this year discussed ways in which data and statistics can be more effectively included in reporting classes, and, as in the case of teaching basic research methods, most faculty understand that they need to make an extra effort in helping students understand these concepts. As the above evaluation of our interns reflects, this knowledge base is especially important in the workplace. Internship evaluators expect students to be able to apply and use data on the job. This was the inspiration for a new course inaugurated in the Spring 2019 semester, MC 589 Media Audiences, a conceptual elective that teaches about ratings and analytics, and forces students to apply such material when constructing sales presentations, creating media content or developing audience-building promotions.

SLO 12: Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Direct Assessment Data Summary:
- 98 seniors completed the JMC Assessment Exam in MC 580 and MC 581 and answered a several questions relating to production and technological concepts.
- 1 student failed to meet minimum expectations (answering no questions correctly).
- 9 students are classified at the “developing” level (answering one question correctly).
- 19 students met the bare minimum level of expectations (two correct).
- 69 achieved the desired level of proficiency, answering at least three items correctly.
- 44 upper-level students completed professional internships and were evaluated partially on the basis of their observable writing skills, as workplace evaluators responded to this item in the internship evaluation form: “Intern shows an understanding of the latest media technology and demonstrates an ability to use it to create quality media products.”
  - 28 supervisors indicated “strongly agree,” while 12 evaluators indicated “agree.”
  - 3 supervisors neither agreed or disagreed.
  - 1 supervisor disagreed.

Indirect Assessment: Roughly 61% of the senior respondents agreed with this statement. Some students were critical of the quality of equipment we use in basic classes, with such comments as “the entry-level cameras that I have access to…are nice learning tools, but would not be accepted in the professional environment,” or they complained about the teaching methods, “While I found a few of the professors to be helpful and encouraging, it seems like I did most of the learning by myself.” In terms of the alumni satisfaction survey, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that the A.Q. Miller School positively impacted their production skills, while 58% agreed (two respondents responded negatively).

Reflection:
Employers increasingly require students to have expertise in the latest software, technology and production principles. Production and writing skills are the two learning areas most commonly noted by internship evaluators as necessary background for college graduates, and feedback from alumni consistently points to growing employer expectations of technology awareness and proficiency in its use.

Our faculty has had a heightened awareness of the importance of production grounding, and this year’s assessment reflects those efforts. A total of 68 students achieved proficiency on the exam (compared with 48 last year) and, in sum, 88 students met or exceeded expectations this year. Most of our 44 interns showed proficiency in production and technology, indicating that our faculty members are helping our students achieve a good working knowledge of workplace production proficiencies.
Fall 2018 saw the introduction of six 100-level production foundation classes and we anticipate early exposure to software and basic production concepts as freshmen will yield even greater competency in this area as student articulate through our program. Future assessments need to measure the contribution of these courses to our curricular efforts to further strengthen production skills.

Special Oral Communication Assessment: The Kansas Board of Regents specifies five SLOs for program assessment, one of which is “Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.” While writing is routinely assessed in the A.Q. Miller School, we have not had a mechanism for assessing student oral communication skills. That attempt was made this year.

Data Summary:

- 13 Senior-level students who had on-air experience on KSDB-FM (6 seniors were evaluated) or KKSU-TV (7 seniors were evaluated) were randomly selected for inclusion in this evaluation. Their work on air was distributed to professional decision-makers in the industry, who evaluated the announcing samples using ten criteria relating to standards in broadcast performance, on a scale ranging from “superior” to “unacceptable” in the professional field: clarity, energy, voice quality, “easy to follow,” projection, delivery rate, ability to hold consumer’s interest, grammar, the ability to avoid filler (use of the word “uh,” or “like”), and the overall quality of the performance.

- Each category was given a numerical value (5 for “Superior,” 4 for “Good” and downward) and evaluations were averaged in each category, divided by radio and television communication. For this inaugural procedure, we set a score of 3.0 as the minimum level of expectation, with a score of 3.75 as exceeding expectations (the desired proficiency level), which matches the expected skill level of the industry.

- Among the 13 students evaluated:
  - Among the six seniors who announce on KSDB-FM, two did not meet expectations, four met or exceeded expectations (two of which were at the proficiency level).
  - Among the seven students on KKSU-TV, none were below acceptability, and met expectations (not at proficiency).

Reflection:

As a first-time evaluation of the oral communication of the graduating seniors, the assessment committee sees there is certainly room for growth, but there is also a good base in a number of areas. While elements of the delivery were strong when compared to professionals, most of the areas in need of improvement are in technique and in preparation. Instructors in classes which use oral communication should focus on the background knowledge and comfortability before students get to a live mic or camera. By doing so, they will put the students in a better position to succeed.

Additionally, both evaluators were encouraging in the evaluations for the students to continue to get repetitions to get better. The more the student is able to take the pressures of the live format, the more comfortable he or she will be. That will improve oral communication for those going into these fields.

Future Assessment

In future evaluations, strategic communications students will be included, being evaluated for presentation of marketing plans and strategies and pitch meetings. This will help us to determine the effectiveness of our strategic communications instruction with regards to oral presentation. Additionally, we hope to broaden the base of evaluators with the possible addition of an “evaluation day” when we will bring in professionals to cross-evaluate talent as a one-day event. The hope is to get a large breadth of feedback from professionals about the skill level of our students.
C. Program Self Review

Faculty Review of Annual Assessment Data and Process

We have presented assessment results to faculty in two ways: 1) making the report available to our faculty members; and 2) presenting assessment results at a faculty meeting and discussing ways to make our curriculum and classes more effective in terms of all learning objectives, but especially the ones where our students seem to be displaying less competency. These meetings 1) highlight the ways in which we assess our curriculum and related student services, 2) present the findings, 3) discuss the strengths of our efforts and 4) discuss the areas where we need to strengthen our efforts. Many faculty members comment that this is the best way to understand what material we should better emphasize in classes, and we discuss methods or resources for introducing the such material. This year, we updated our assessment plan to highlight changes in procedures we have made over the past two years, which gave us an excellent chance to educate faculty on the entire assessment process.

Program Improvements

Curriculum. This academic year marked the introduction of a new curriculum in the A.Q. Miller School that was founded on past assessment results that yielded common areas of concern in terms of student skills in key areas such as writing and production, and our faculty discussed the fact that our curriculum had not advanced with trends in the industry. After two years of planning, a new curriculum designed to improve student competencies and meet industry expectations has been launched. Currently, most assessment on the new classes is connected with such basic issues such as staffing, scheduling and matriculation, but in 2019, we hope to collect data on the contribution of the basic entry-level writing and production classes in building those skill areas.

Assessment last year revealed that our students were low in terms of their understanding of basic math and statistical applications. We introduced a trial class, MC 589 Media Audiences, which familiarizes students with basic audience measurement data (newspaper circulation audits, Nielsen ratings and basic analytics) and we are introducing analytics in other appropriate classes.

The 2017-2018 procedure revealed that students are weak in their understanding of international/intercultural communication and related issues. After discussion of assessment results, some faculty members have added lectures and assignments that contribute to this knowledge base.

Procedures. The assessment procedure itself continues to undergo changes, as covered below. This year, we made a major change by requiring students in senior-level capstone courses to take the JMC assessment exam (this had been voluntary in past years) and mandating participation in the senior satisfaction survey in the spring semester.

Overall, the committee made many changes in assessment procedures this year. In addition to requiring the exam and survey participation in capstone classes, we

- Moved the assessment exam from MC 110 Mass Communication in Society to MC 010 Pre-Major Orientation in order to get a more exact idea of what freshmen in our discipline already know about material relating to our 12 learning objectives without the benefit of our curriculum (MC 110 also contained upperclassmen from other majors and their advanced educational backgrounds likely skewed some of the data).
- Changed the exam composition from random selection of questions in SLO categories to standardizing questions for all participants to allow for more accurate comparisons of student competencies.
- Switched our exam from Canvas to Qualtrics to allow for easier exam composition and administration.
• Changed internship assessment procedures to allow for more applicable SLOs to be observed by internship evaluators.
• Developed two sets of exam questions for SLO 5 to determine student proficiency with communication theories and design theories.

Future Plans

• We must develop ways to assess the effectiveness of the JMC Writing Academy and the 100-level Production foundation classes by doing some form of exam in the 200-level writing classes and the 300-level production courses.
• Change the format of the in-class observations for SLO 10 to effectively “flip the class,” having students review projects beforehand to promote better discussion.
• This year, we will continue to develop our assessment of oral communication and presentation procedures, as we work to evaluate those skills for strategic communication majors in the MC 581 capstone during the 2019-2020 academic year.
• Additionally, for oral communication we hope to broaden the base of evaluators with the possible addition of an “evaluation day” when we will bring in professionals to cross-evaluate talent as a one-day event. The hope is to get a large breadth of feedback from professionals about the skill level of our students.
• An unanticipated result of changing the internship assessment procedures is the fact that too many of our SLOs were rendered with only one direct assessment procedure. We must develop ways of incorporating senior level assessment of law, history, ethics, global/intercultural communication and theory into other formats for additional direct observation and/or measurement.
• As usual, we will continue to have faculty discussions about improving student scores in some areas, and we will seek to adjust classes and curriculum accordingly in an effort to shore up weaker performing SLOs.
• Our assessment plan does not require professional review of student projects annually; rather, we assess capstone work every other year, and this was a year when we did not do such assessment. As we have changed other procedures, this left some areas of instruction without a second direct measure. Therefore, we will work to solidify development of procedures to supplement the JMC Assessment Exam, providing a second direct measure for those areas that do not lend themselves to a more direct analysis of student skills. Committee discussion about other direct measurement of subjects like, law, history and theory are underway and will be applied in the near future.

Summary of this Report

The major findings of our 2017-2018 program assessment in the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications revealed both strengths and weaknesses in our program, which are summarized below.

Strengths:
The assessment exam is the only instrument we have that measures individual student competencies in all learning objectives, and in that regard, we have developed a list of the top six SLO performances in terms of the percentages of students who met or exceeded expectations. Those learning objectives are:

SLO 3: Domestic Diversity (96%)
SLO 8: Research (95%)
SLO 6: Ethics (94%)
SLO 7: Critical Thinking (93%)
SLO 12: Technology/Production (89%)
**SLO 5: Visual Theory (84%)**
Improvements:
Student performances in the second tier of learning objectives are ranked as follows:

* SLO 9: Writing (80%)
* SLO 11: Math/Statistics (80%)
 SLO 2: History (78%)
 SLO 10: Critical Evaluation (77%)
 SLO 4: Global/Intercultural Diversity (70%)
 SLO 1: First Amendment/Media Law (63%)
** SLO 5: Communication Theory (47%)

*NOTE: SLO 9 and SLO 11 had an identical percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations, but SLO 9 had a higher number of students who exceeded expectations, which is our program’s our proficiency level (N=37) than SLO 11 (N=29).

**NOTE: This reflects our separation of SLO 5 into mass communication theory and visual production theories.

Oral Communication:
Additionally, broadcasting students were assessed on oral communication skills, and 11 of 13 were found to meet programmatic expectations, with two students working for KSDB-FM found to be at a proficiency level. These scores are enlightening, although we must work to improve our assessment procedures in this area.

Analysis:
Our biggest growth area is in the field of research and math/statistics. While the assessment is mostly based on a multiple-choice exam, we nonetheless see a big improvement in this field, undoubtedly reflecting a change in instructors in research methods and resultant improvement in the teaching of this material. We can see that our students continue to show appreciation for diversity issues in mass communication, another strength of our program, undoubtedly due to the fact that diversity content is covered in all classes. The continued strength of production/technology scores also is reflective of improved instruction and more modern applications of new media platforms and techniques. The fact that writing ranks so low is, of course, an issue in a program like ours, and it will be important for us to assess the impact that 100-level writing classes are having on refreshing freshman writing skills. It will be important for faculty to realize that we must be strong in all 12 learning objectives, something that is stressed in faculty meetings and brainstorming sessions, where we discuss ways in which we can enhance student competencies. Overall, we must continue to find multiple ways to ascertain skill levels in all areas of assessment, a major weakness of our procedures this year. Our intention, as stated in our plan, is to conduct two direct assessments of each SLO, and a change in procedures rendered five SLOs with only one measure. This, of course, must change.
A one paragraph summary that is reported on your program website and details student achievement of your program’s learning outcomes and programmatic efforts to improve. During the Board of Regents Program Review, this will be the 8-year summary you will include in your Program Review Report (PRR).