Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

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<td>Program Assessed</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Journalism and Media Studies</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Greenspun College of Urban Affairs</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>Dec. 16, 2015</td>
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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
2015 Assessment Report
B.A. Degree
Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 16, 2015

Student Learning Outcomes

Our learning outcomes are taken from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC):

1. Analyze and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the rights to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;

2. Analyze the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping journalism, media, and communications organizations;

3. Analyze the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to journalism, media, and communications organizations;

4. Analyze concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;

5. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles in journalism, media, and communications organizations to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity;

6. Think critically, creatively, and independently;

7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to professional journalism, media, and communications organizations;

8. Craft and deliver effective messages in oral, written, and/or visual forms, as appropriate to the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work;

9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style, and grammar;

10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;

11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work;

12. Prepare collaborative projects appropriate for the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work.
Learning Outcomes Assessed in 2015

In 2015, we tested the ACEJMC learning outcomes related to UNLV’s Communication UULO:

8. Craft and deliver effective messages in oral, written, and/or visual forms, as appropriate to the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work;

9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style, and grammar;

11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work;

12. Prepare collaborative projects appropriate for the journalism, media, or communications profession in which they plan to work.

Assessment Methods

After evaluating assessment tools used by other journalism programs, we decided to use a multiple-choice test as a quantitative method. We modeled our approach on that taken by the School of Communications at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Whereas Elon assesses all learning outcomes each year with a 50-question test, we decided to assess from three to five ACEJMC outcomes per year using a test briefer than Elon’s.

During the spring 2015 semester, we developed a 20-question test focused on the ACEJMC learning outcomes listed above. We administered the test late in the spring 2015 semester, to measure knowledge at the end of a student’s studies, and then at the beginning of fall semester 2015, to measure knowledge at the beginning of a student’s studies. (We chose not to follow a single cohort.)

We use a variety of measures as well, which vary from year to year. They include the following:

- focus group data
- surveys of self-reported knowledge
- tests
- portfolios
- students’ reflections on their learning
- exit surveys
- grades and grading rubrics
- graduation rates
- employment
- evaluations by internship supervisors.
Quantitative Results and Program Response

**Overall:** On the 20-question test, students new to the major (the “before” group) on average answered 14.54 correctly, for a score of 72.74, whereas students finishing the program (the “after” group) on average answered 18.47 correctly, for a score of 92.35.

**Learning effectiveness by topic:**

- We found the strongest improvements
  - in identifying the style guide used by journalists
  - in distinguishing they’re/their and it’s/its.

- The weakest changes were
  - in identifying a type of quantitative research method
  - in distinguishing who/whom/that/which.

- The most frequently missed question for both before and after groups was the same; it required students to identify “alright” and “alot” as improper.

- Overall, the assessment results indicate that students are learning the grammar aspects of the Communication UULO at about the same rate as the other aspects of the UULO.

**Learning effectiveness by demographic group:** In the before group, we found that students with the lowest scores were disproportionately

- nonwhite
- first-generation college
- female

For reasons explained below, the after group was too small to elicit meaningful data on demographic subgroups.

**Responses:**

- The JMS faculty will discuss ways in which to enhance students’ learning overall and to reinforce learning on the most frequently missed questions in particular, but the assessment did not find any substantial disparity among subtopics.

- We will also explore ways in which to help nonwhite and first-generation college students. In our experience, female students perform at least as well as male students later in the program, so we are less concerned about that disparity in the test results.

Other Results and Program Response

**Student Survey:** A survey of JMS students found support for more skills classes, including social media and multimedia, and more classes taught by current media practitioners. The survey also found greater support for in-person classes than online ones.
Curriculum Revision: Partly in response to an external review, JMS is undertaking a wholesale revision of the undergraduate curriculum for implementation in fall 2016. Several proposed changes address issues raised in the student survey:

- The proposal for a revised curriculum will streamline the core, so that students can take more skills classes.
- The program is hiring additional part-time instructors starting in spring 2016, particularly media practitioners to teach skills classes.

We anticipate that these program changes will enhance learning effectiveness in the years to come, particularly in the Communication UULO.

Lessons: Assessment

It is easier to capture “before” students, who take large core classes during their first semester in the major, than “after” students, who enroll in a variety of required classes and electives. In 2015, we administered the test to 82 “before” students in JOUR 100 and 19 “after” students in JOUR 485. The gap will recur as we test other UULOs in the future, and we will consider how best to expand the “after” population.

Doing so would enable us to assess learning effectiveness for demographic subgroups. We could see, for example, whether first-generation students score below average at the end of the program.

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