Program Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>B.A.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Greenspun College of Urban Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Kevin Stoker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
<td>Stephen Bates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>Dec. 20, 2017</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Stephen Bates</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stephen.bates@unlv.edu">stephen.bates@unlv.edu</a></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.
2017 Assessment Report
B.A. Degree
Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dec. 20, 2017
Assessment Coordinator:
Stephen Bates, stephen.bates@unlv.edu

Introduction
Under a new Director, Kevin Stoker Ph.D., the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) is revamping the undergraduate program. We are streamlining degree requirements, revising courses to enhance and showcase their relevance, and emphasizing narrative and storytelling across much of the curriculum. Accordingly, our assessment methods and measures are likely to change in the next few years.

Student Learning Outcomes
Our undergraduate 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.

Core Competencies (Draft)

See appendix.

Learning Outcome Assessed in 2017

In 2017, we tested the ACEJMC Learning Outcome that overlaps with UNLV’s Inquiry and Critical Thinking UULO:

6. Think critically, creatively, and independently

It also overlaps in part with the first of our draft Core Competencies:

1. Understand and think critically about how the media influence our lives, communities and cultures, and how we as creators can ethically make media that make a difference.

We employed a multiple-choice test of critical thinking, which touched on most of the outcomes listed for UNLV’s Inquiry and Critical UULO, particularly

3. Use quantitative and qualitative methods, including the ability to recognize assumptions, draw inferences, make deductions, and interpret information to analyze problems in context, and then draw conclusions.

4. Recognize the complexity of problems, and identify different perspectives from which problems and questions can be viewed.

5. Evaluate and report on conclusions, including discussing the basis for and strength of findings, and identify areas where further inquiry is needed.

6. Identify, analyze, and evaluate reasoning, and construct and defend reasonable arguments and explanations.

We tested the same Learning Outcome in 2016. We were interested in charting any changes in the results, even as we modify our program in ways that will entail major revisions in our assessment measures and methods in the years to come.
Assessment Methods

We again decided to use a multiple-choice test as a quantitative method. In 2016, we initially explored professionally designed tests of critical thinking, but Lindsay Couzens, the assistant director of academic assessment, told us that UNLV does not have licenses for any such tests. Of fee-based tests, she recommended against the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP); and she said the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) is skewed toward the physical sciences.

Accordingly, we developed a 20-question test of critical thinking in-house and administered it in several classes. We chose not to follow a single cohort. Because UNLV students advance at different rates, we also did not distinguish between first- and second-semester students in a given year.

In addition to the quantitative measure, we use a variety of other measures as well, which vary from year to year, including focus group data, surveys of self-reported knowledge, tests, portfolios, students’ reflections on their learning, senior exit surveys, grades and grading rubrics, graduation rates, employment, and evaluations by internship supervisors.

This year, we conducted a focus group to complement quantitative assessment results and, more broadly, to get feedback on the program.

Quantitative Results and Program Response

On the 20-question test of critical thinking, students achieved the following average scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N 2017</th>
<th>Average 2017</th>
<th>Average 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16</td>
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Freshmen, juniors, and seniors scored higher in 2017 than in 2016. Sophomores scored slightly lower. In 2017 as in 2016, sophomores scored lower than freshmen. The number of respondents was higher in 2016 than in 2017.

We manually extracted data on parents’ education levels for the largest of the groups to take the survey, the juniors. We found that first-generation students averaged 15.5; students with one parent who attended college averaged 15.9; and students with two parents who attended college averaged 16.6. (The survey asks if parents attended, not if they graduated.) We note that juniors with two college-educated parents do as well on the survey as seniors, whereas first-generation juniors do about as well as freshmen. These results may indicate an area of concern, particularly if first-generation students disproportionately drop out of college before reaching their junior year; we currently lack data on drop-outs.

We will discuss the assessment findings in faculty meetings as we work to refine and apply the list of Core Competencies and the other revisions to the JMS program.
**Focus Group Results**

Director Kevin Stoker interviewed eight seniors before their graduation in December 2017. Students said they appreciate the faculty’s accessibility, teaching effectiveness, industry experience, and local and national contacts. Professors have helped some students get their work published. Students also value the variety of classes and the hands-on opportunities to use production equipment.

As for challenges, students spoke of difficulty getting into some classes, because of course caps or scheduling conflicts; a need for up-to-date editing software that matches industry standards; a desire for more online classes; and an interest in more opportunities to write about entertainment, sports, and other passions.

**Lessons**

Under a new Director, the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies is reevaluating much of the program, including credit-hour requirements, distribution requirements, course offerings, and online classes. Such changes are appropriate in a program that seeks to train students for media jobs that themselves are rapidly changing.

As a result of the foregoing, the benchmarks of assessment in 2016 and 2017 probably will be superseded in 2018. Nevertheless, we note several conclusions:

1. We need to find ways to administer the test to larger numbers of students without having some individuals take it more than once. Accomplishing this represents a challenge, because of the varied paths that students take to complete their degrees in Journalism and Media Studies.

2. Our quantitative assessment focused solely on critical thinking. The pertinent Core Competency, in its current draft, addresses professional ethics as well as critical thinking. We need to consider whether to assess the two together, and, if so, how to do so.

3. The Core Competencies need to be linked to ACEJMC Learning Outcomes as well as UNLV UULOs.

4. As noted in 2016, we recommend that UNLV develop or purchase professionally designed tests of critical thinking. In light of the emphasis that UNLV is putting on assessment, the best tools ought to be made available.

5. Along the same lines, it would be helpful to have access to a more sophisticated technology than Scantron cards. The Scantron readers mark incorrect answers but (we understand) cannot produce more granular data. In our survey, we ask questions about race, sex, age, GPA, parents’ education, and program area within the JMS major, but we are unable to compare different demographic subgroups other than by hand-sorting cards.

6. The JMS faculty will collaborate on how best to assess the new Core Competencies. Integrating assessment from the start, rather than trying to jury-rig it onto an existing program, should make for a more effective methodology and more robust and useful results in the years to come.
Core Competencies (Draft)

A major task during the 2017-2018 academic year is developing a list of Core Competencies, to stand as a lodestar for the undergraduate program. The list is a work in progress. We expect to continue refining it during the remainder of this school year, and we will revisit it periodically for further adjustments thereafter. The current draft reads as follows:

1. Understand and \textit{think critically} about how the media influence our lives, communities and cultures, and how we can responsibly and ethically create media that make a difference.

2. Appreciate media conventions, standards, and history, including the \textit{role of the First Amendment} in protecting and promoting free speech and an independent and responsible press.

3. Develop abilities in \textit{research}—the gathering, evaluating, and verification of information—and \textit{storytelling}—the writing, organizing, and packaging of information in the public interest.

4. Provide a \textit{professional education} that prepares students for diverse careers in journalism and strategic media and communication.

5. Cultivate an \textit{entrepreneurial mindset} that helps students adapt to innovation and change in the media industries and professions.