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
M.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
In the master’s program at the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies (JMS), admissions in 2017 doubled over 2016, along with non-degree seeking students who plan to apply for graduate status.

In July, Kevin Stoker Ph.D. became Director of JMS. Dr. Stoker was previously senior associate dean of the College of Media and Communication at Texas Tech University.

Under Dr. Stoker, we are now working on refining and realigning the graduate program in two directions. Each will present new opportunities and challenges to the assessment process.

First, our existing master’s program will shift from theory to storytelling, which has greater direct relevance to the practice of journalism. We anticipate that more students will produce nontraditional, creative theses. Such a thesis can be a work of narrative in text, video, audio, photos, or some combination, probably backed by a scholarly paper that explains the development of the creative work.

We have reduced the number of credit hours from 37 to 30 to enable students to finish in three semesters (with summer courses). We are also considering a requirement that students submit their works to competitions.

Second, we are exploring an additional master’s program on Digital and Social Media. Like the storytelling master’s, the approach here would be professional rather than theoretical. Some of the coursework would most likely be online.

Student Learning Outcomes
In the master’s program in Journalism and Media Studies, students are expected to

1. Develop a grounding in mass communication theory.
2. Achieve competencies in research methodologies relevant to the field.
3. Develop critical thinking necessary for careers in higher education or management in the media industries.

4. Balance the discipline’s varied traditions in theoretical, historical, and applied research, with particular attention to the shifting media landscape.

The four outcomes align with UNLV’s three graduate-level requirements as follows:

1. Develop a grounding in mass communication theory.
   
   *the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.*

2. Achieve competencies in research methodologies relevant to the field.
   
   *student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.*

3. Develop critical thinking necessary for careers in higher education or management in the media industries.
   
   *activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.*

4. Balance the discipline’s varied traditions in theoretical, historical, and applied research, with particular attention to the shifting media landscape.
   
   *student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.*
   
   *the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.*

**Learning Outcomes Assessed in 2017**

Because the learning outcomes are intertwined, we assess all four annually.

**Assessment Method**

We evaluate each thesis in terms of the four learning outcomes:

1. Develop a grounding in mass communication theory.

2. Achieve competencies in research methodologies relevant to the field.

3. Develop critical thinking necessary for careers in higher education or management in the media industries.

4. Balance the discipline’s varied traditions in theoretical, historical, and applied research, with particular attention to the shifting media landscape.

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

- graduation rates
- graduates’ acceptances into leading doctoral programs
- graduates’ employment
• presentations at academic conferences
• prizes
• tests
• grading rubrics
• focus group data
• surveys of self-reported knowledge
• students’ reflections on their learning
• exit surveys

Because our program is small—generally 15 to 30 students—any measures of learning outcomes are likely to fluctuate from year to year.

Results

Thesis Results: Each student’s thesis must meet all four benchmarks. The student works closely with the thesis chair on refining the topic and preparing the prospectus. The thesis committee evaluates the prospectus, which serves as a mid-program review for the student. The student then works closely with the chair while writing the thesis, which frequently requires multiple drafts. The chair distributes the draft thesis to the rest of the committee and schedules a defense only when he or she believes that the draft satisfies all four criteria. If others on the committee disagree, the student must revise the draft before final acceptance. Accordingly, all graduate students satisfy the four learning outcomes by the time they complete their degrees.

Graduation Rate: Students who enroll in our M.A. program generally graduate on time; those with GA assistantships are more likely to do so. The JMS Graduate Student Handbook stipulates a degree program of two full calendar years. Over 90 percent of JMS graduate students have met that goal in the past three years.

Acceptances into Doctoral Programs: In 2015, graduates of our M.A. program enrolled in two prestigious doctoral programs: Cornell University (Jason Holley) and the University of Maryland (Denitsa Yotova).

Employment: One of our graduates, Matthew Ward, joined the faculty of Texas A&M, Kingsville, in 2015. Several others accepted excellent positions in the communications field, including Sullivan Charles as marketing director at a Las Vegas advertising agency and Sara Montes de Oca as news producer for a DC-based broadcasting organization. Among other recent graduates, Lindsey Jo Hand is a full-time professor at American Military University/American Public University; Jennifer Liese works in government affairs at an energy company in Washington, DC; and Valeria Gurr, recently an assistant research analyst at the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research, was just accepted into the UNLV Public Policy doctoral program.

Presentations at Academic Conferences: Three students presented papers at the Far West Popular Culture Conference in 2017: Sallyann Ficarrotta, Deuvall Dorsey, and Karintha Tervalon.
**Prizes:** JMS graduate students have participated in the Grad Rebel Slams in the last two years, finishing at the semifinalist level.

**Tests:** For students admitted and attending between 2012 and 2016, mean GRE scores were 149.4 verbal, 145.6 quantitative, and 3.7 analytical. According to the Educational Testing Service, those scores put our students at slightly below average for verbal, average for analytical, but in the bottom quarter for quantitative. To complete the M.A. program, students must master quantitative reasoning, particularly in the course on research methods. In light of the relatively low quantitative GRE scores, our high graduation rate indicates effective learning.

**Other:** Downloads of graduate students’ research from Digital Scholarship@UNLV provide another indication of learning effectiveness. For the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs in October 2017, the three most-downloaded works in the GCUA Eighth Annual Graduate Research Symposium were written or co-written by JMS graduate students: “How Science Is Visually Portrayed in the Media: An Examination of ‘Science Times,’” “The Role of Self Concept in Consumer Behavior,” and “Walt Disney and the Propaganda Complex: Government Funded Animation and Hollywood Complicity During WWII.”

**Program Response**

JMS is in the process of hiring two new faculty members, one at the assistant level and the other at either the assistant or associate level. They will be actively engaged in advising graduate students and directing theses. Recently, JMS also hired a visiting lecturer with a doctorate as well as extensive experience in journalism. In 2017, he received Associate Graduate Faculty Status to serve on thesis committees. In addition, a staff member with audio and storytelling expertise earned his doctorate in 2017 and has also received Associate Graduate Faculty Status to serve on thesis committees. These faculty resources will help us expand and enhance the JMS M.A. program. Finally, we are exploring options for collaborating with other units on a Ph.D. program.