Assessment Activities

a. Since October 2011, the journalism program no longer seeks accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. However, the program still adheres to the spirit of the council’s principles of accreditation (see http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/).

b. This assessment report covers the period September 2015-May 2017. It is important to note that during this period, the former Department of Journalism was evolving into the new Department of Communication and Media Studies, incorporating the journalism, communication studies, and marketing communications programs. As a result, we have been in continual discussions with our colleagues regarding merging elements of our curriculum and assessment strategies.

c. The journalism program has five learning outcomes for its majors:

1. Students will be able to critique the quality and ethics of journalism in any medium, in terms of basic professional standards.
2. Students will be able to produce high quality print, broadcast or online journalism.
3. Students will be able to critically analyze the basic aspects of the relationship between mass media and society, within historical or contemporary contexts.
4. Students will identify the role that diversity plays in every aspect of journalism.
5. Students will be able to recognize and adapt to the rapidly changing nature of the media environment.

Learning outcomes for journalism studies minors include all but Number 2 from the list above. As a result, journalism studies minors are not required to take most of the hands-on skills courses required of journalism majors. Instead, they focus on theoretical courses that provide a deep understanding of the journalism field without the experience of producing journalism.

During the period September 2015-May 2017 the program assessed most of these outcomes. However, because of changes to the curriculum and course availability, as well as re-evaluation of assessment measures, not all activities outlined in the assessment plan were undertaken.

Table 1 shows which learning outcomes were assessed at what point during the report cycle.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>LO1: Critique quality and ethics of journalism</th>
<th>LO2: Produce high-quality journalism</th>
<th>LO3: Analyze the relationship between mass media and society</th>
<th>LO4: Identify the role of diversity</th>
<th>LO5: Recognize and adapt to changing nature of media environment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 101 Introduction to Mass Communication</td>
<td>Essay on coverage of school shootings (Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final essay (Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017)</td>
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<td>JOUR 110 Principles and Ethics of Journalism</td>
<td>Pre-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td>Pre-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td>Pre-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 201 Information Gathering</td>
<td>Final project (Fall 2016)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 202/203 News Writing</td>
<td>News stories (Spring 2016)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JOUR 240 Introduction to Visual Communication</td>
<td>Adobe InDesign projects (Spring 2017)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visual analysis assignment (Spring 2017)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 340 Media Management for News Entrepreneurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final project (Fall 2015, Fall 2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 379 Internship in Journalism and Mass Communication</td>
<td>Supervisor evaluations and work products (Fall 2016, Spring 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOUR 406 News Service</td>
<td>Portfolio (Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JOUR 465 Mass Communication Law</td>
<td>Post-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td>Post-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
<td>Post-test (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Schedule of learning outcome assessments during report cycle.
d. Because the assessment plan did not call for it, during the report cycle the program did not engage in **assessment across different modes of delivery, locations, and course timeframes.**

e. The program's **internal stakeholders** include students, department faculty, and the College of Arts and Sciences. During the report cycle, engagement with students regarding assessment was limited. For example, they were informed that the pre- and post-tests, as well the portfolio assignment, were being gathered for assessment purposes, but they have not been informed of assessment results. Within the faculty, we have had ongoing discussions about how and when to gather assessment data. However, given the various changes in the department structure, we have not yet determined the most effective means for sharing this information.

f. The program’s **external stakeholders** include media professionals and organizations, alumni, and the campus community. The program's advisory board has not met since major revisions to the journalism curriculum in 2012, but we are considering reconvening this body in the near future. However, one indirect assessment measure that relies on external stakeholders are the news stories published through Falcon News Service as part of the coursework in JOUR 406. The fact that our students' print and broadcast stories are used by UWRF’s University Communications and Marketing office, as well as by area newspapers and radio stations, is an indication of the journalism program’s success.

g. In terms of **out-of-classroom experiences**, one learning outcome for journalism majors is the ability “to produce high quality print, broadcast or online journalism.”

While it is not required, journalism majors are strongly encouraged to get additional experience via internships. Internships provide journalism students with valuable work experience and result in professional contacts that contribute to a successful transition from college to careers. In recent years students have interned at KQGO-FM, Edina, Minn.; Red Wing Republican Eagle, Red Wing, Minn.; UWRF Sports Information; WKBT-TV (News 8), La Crosse, Wis.; Wisconsin Public Radio/WHLA-WLSU, La Crosse, Wis.; Bluff Country Newspaper Group, Preston, Minn.; Post-Bulletin Co., Rochester, Minn.; MLive Media Group, Bay City, Mich.; and Ludlow’s Island Resort, Cook, Minn. Their supervisors submit evaluations of the interns at the end of the term.

Our students also are involved in student-run campus media organizations, especially radio station WRFW and the weekly newspaper, the **Student Voice**. Department faculty serve as advisers to these organizations. Membership in these organizations is open to all UWRF students, but journalism students usually take leadership roles. The quality of work produced by these media organizations is in part evaluated through annual contests sponsored by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation, and other professional groups.
h. During the report cycle, **no changes to learning outcomes were instituted**; however, we have modified the curriculum and the assessment methods.

Specifically, during the report cycle two courses, JOUR 304 News Practicum and JOUR 404 News Service, were combined into the new JOUR 406 News Service. The new course emphasizes advanced reporting and writing skills as students pursue coverage of campus and community affairs. Student journalists’ stories are published via the department’s Falcon News Service for use by campus and community media, which has become an indirect assessment measure. In addition, JOUR 204 Public Affairs Reporting was redesignated as JOUR 306 Public Affairs Reporting to provide a required advanced core course for third-year students.

Department faculty conducted ongoing discussions during the report cycle about program assessment, especially as the logic of inter-program curricular changes has become clearer in the face of diminished resources. One change instituted in assessment of the journalism program has been to eliminate a number of measures that focused on overly specific exam questions and to focus our review on consistent and potentially longitudinal measures. (The assessment plan adopted in September 2014 called for 30 different direct measures across 10 core courses — not counting the JOUR 110 and JOUR 465 pre- and post-test nor evaluations and artifacts generated by interns enrolled in JOUR 379. Several of these measures have lost saliency. In addition, the number of tenured and tenure-track journalism faculty since 2012 has decreased from four to two and the program no longer has an identified assessment coordinator. Thus, we need to determine how best to effectively gather and analyze assessment data.)

The journalism faculty is discussing modifying assessment measures in JOUR 101 Introduction to Mass Communication. Since the report cycle began, the course has come to more richly emphasize media ethics, requiring students to engage in two case studies that are much better measures for program evaluation.

The journalism faculty is discussing adding an assessment measure related to Learning Outcome 4 (the role of diversity) that would be captured in JOUR 315 Race, Class & News. At the same time, the faculty is considering modifying the curriculum to make JOUR 315 a required core course rather than an elective.

Rather than exam questions in JOUR 340 Media Management for News Entrepreneurs, we now assess students’ final projects, which involve preparation and presentation of a business plan for a news media venture.

i. **No changes to the program’s learning outcomes** were instituted during this report cycle.

j. This is the first report cycle for the journalism program under the new assessment process, thus there is **no prior assessment report**.
Assessment Activity Results

a. Results of direct assessments linked to learning outcomes are presented below.

Learning Outcome 1 (Critique quality and ethics of journalism): Assessment of this outcome draws from student work on JOUR 101 Introduction to Mass Communication and from results of pre- and post-tests in JOUR 110 Principles and Ethics of Journalism and in JOUR 465 Mass Communication Law. In JOUR 101, the assessment plan called for evaluation of an essay question regarding news coverage of school shootings. However, due to difficulties in coordination of instruction across multiple sections of the course, the essay question was not administered regularly. In addition, discussions among faculty revealed doubts about what the question was meant to assess, especially as the question remained unchanged and was posed without adequate preparation of students in what constituted best practices in news coverage. Thus, we are uncomfortable presenting partial data for this measure, but have instituted an improved set of assignments that rely on clearer preparation of students in the topic of media ethics.

The pre- and post-test administered in JOUR 110 and JOUR 465 generally reveals that, as expected, students’ knowledge of various terms and concepts related to journalism and mass communication improve over time for learning outcomes numbers 1 and 3-5. However, it must be noted that because the first assessment plan was adopted in September 2014, we do not yet have results that would suggest change over time for specific cohorts. In other words, students who were freshmen in fall 2014 would be seniors in fall 2018, which is outside the report cycle. In fall 2015, the range of pre-test scores among students enrolled in JOUR 110 was 36 percent to 80 percent correct, with a mean of 64 percent and a median of 67 percent. The range of post-test scores among journalism students was 63 percent to 93 percent correct, with a mean of 78 percent and a median of 80 percent. In fall 2016, the range of post-test scores among journalism majors and journalism studies minors was 83 percent to 93 percent correct, with a mean of 91 percent and a median of 93 percent.

On one specific question related to ethics, 52.4 percent of the fall 2015 pre-test cohort (11 of 21 students) correctly identified utilitarianism as the default ethical principle commonly used by journalists. Surprisingly, just 41.6 percent (5 of 12 students) of the fall 2015 post-test cohort responded correctly. We would have expected much better results from the juniors and seniors enrolled in JOUR 465. When asked about a journalist’s most important consideration when reporting a story, 90.5 percent of that semester’s pre-test cohort (19 of 21 students) correctly identified accuracy, compared to 100 percent (12 of 12 students) of the post-test cohort. However, since these results do not compare a single cohort at two different points in time, we cannot draw any conclusions from this measure regarding students’ ability to critique the quality and ethics of journalism.

Learning Outcome 2 (Produce high-quality journalism): The success of the journalism program in teaching students to produce high-quality journalism is measured by their output in a series of skills-based courses. Particularly in JOUR 406 News Service, which is required of journalism majors, students are required to assemble a portfolio at the end of the course that showcases their best work during
the semester. In fall 2015 (10 portfolios collected), the median score was 88 percent; spring 2016 (9 portfolios), a median of 88 percent; fall 2016, (6 portfolios), a median of 96.5 percent; and spring 2017 (7 portfolios), a median of 92 percent.

JOUR 201 Information Gathering focuses on the skills necessary to collect the information that forms a news story. Assignments require students to gather and analyze information from a variety of sources including guest speakers in and outside of class, City of River Falls police ride-alongs, and local property tax data. In fall 2015, 10 students produced assignments with a median score of 88 percent. Fall 2016, with 11 students, resulted in a median score of 85 percent. Due to low enrollment in fall 2017, the course was not offered.

Either JOUR 202 Print News Writing or JOUR 203 Broadcast News Writing is required for all majors. Historically they have been offered every spring. In 2016 the Print News Writing class was canceled due to low enrollment. Students in Broadcast News Writing produced weekly radio broadcasts in which they rewrote short network news stories. Additionally, they researched, reported and produced longer more complex audio news stories plus a single long-form, in-depth radio news story with multiple sources. Combining the results of all the stories produced a median score of 88 percent. In fall 2016, due to projected low enrollment, the faculty experimented with combining print and broadcast news writing into a single, special topics class. Both news writing professors assessed the results as less than effective, concluding that all the material taught in two separate courses could not successfully be included in a single course. The students did not get as much experience writing in either style as those enrolled in the single subject classes. It was difficult to compare the classes due to the difference in the traditional structure vs. the combined course. Trend data are not available as neither news writing course was offered in spring 2017 due to low enrollment.

JOUR 240 Introduction to Visual Communication is required of all journalism students. A series of three projects assess students’ increasing skills with Adobe InDesign software as well as their ability to apply theoretical principles learned in the course. No trend data are available for the report cycle as the course was only offered once, in spring 2017. Combined results of projects involving design of a brochure, a newsletter, and the front page of a newspaper — work that involved increasing degrees of difficulty — show a median score of 95 percent. However, from in-class observation of individual projects, it becomes clear that students need additional instruction on the relationship between theoretical and practical concepts. For example, some students struggled in resolving the relative importance of news events with the practical application of design skills.

**Learning Outcome 3 (Analyze relationship between mass media and society):** Assessment of this outcome draws from student work on JOUR 240 Introduction to Visual Communication and from results of pre- and post-tests in JOUR 110 Principles and Ethics of Journalism and in JOUR 465 Mass Communication Law.

For a discussion of the limitations of the pre- and post-test, refer to the Learning Outcome 1 section above. As noted earlier, for this assessment period we did not have pre- and post-data for the same cohort in two different points. However, responses on the fall 2015 pre- and post-tests show marked variation between
beginning and advanced students. For example, just 28.6 percent of the pre-test cohort (6 of 21 students) correctly responded that prior restraint is extremely difficult for the government to justify. Of the post-test cohort, 83.3 percent (10 of 12 students) answered correctly. To a question regarding the American movie industry, 76.2 percent (16 of 21) of the pre-test cohort answered correctly, compared to 83.3 percent (10 of 12 students) of the post-test cohort.

JOUR 240 is a required course for journalism majors and also is popular among students in related communication fields. The course stresses both theoretical and practical aspects of visual communication. The specific artifact captured for assessment is an assignment that calls on students to evaluate examples of visual communication using acquired knowledge about semiotic analysis and visual ethics and aesthetics. During spring 2017, this was accomplished through four discussion posts administered through Desire2Learn. The posts focused on photography, magazine advertisements, newspaper front pages, and music videos. Cumulative scores averaged 89 percent, with a range of 59 percent to 100 percent. The lowest scores were the result of students failing to meet assignment deadlines. While on the whole satisfactory, the real value of this measure will be revealed only when compared to other cohorts during the next assessment period.

**Learning Outcome 4** (Identify role of diversity): In terms of direct measures, the program’s assessment of this learning outcomes is the weakest. Only one multiple choice question on the pre- and post-test asks about diversity. As such, results indicate only that between JOUR 110 and JOUR 465 students learn about the efforts of American newsrooms to increase diversity, but not why diversity is an important value in American journalism. The faculty, as noted elsewhere in this report, is discussing adding JOUR 315 Race, Class & News to the list of required courses in the major and minor, as well as collecting data that would allow a clearer evaluation of this learning outcome.

**Learning Outcome 5** (Recognize and adapt to changing nature of media environment): Data about the program’s success in this area come from pre- and post-test as well as from final projects prepared by students JOUR 340 Media Management for News Entrepreneurs.

With the aforementioned limitations of the pre- and post-test in mind, we saw few differences between the fall 2015 pre-test and post-test cohorts on questions related to the changing nature of journalism. However, to a question about funding models for journalism, 71.4 percent (15 of 21 students) of the pre-test cohort responded correctly, compared to just 58.3 percent (7 of 12 students) of the post-test cohort. We would have expected the reverse, particularly given that many of the post-test students were enrolled in JOUR 340 Media Management for News Entrepreneurs.

During the report cycle, JOUR 340 was taught only during fall 2015. The JOUR 340 final project involves preparation and presentation of a business plan for a news media business. The project requires students to expand their understanding of what “doing journalism” means as well as to consider existing and emerging platforms where their work might be performed. Students typically perform well on the final written project (scores of 95 percent or better) and on the oral presentation (90 percent or better), but this is after intensive in-class coaching to
tease out and critically evaluate ideas, as well as preparation of students in how to
address an audience.

b. Because the assessment plan did not call for it, during the report cycle the program
did not have assessment results by modes of delivery, locations, and course
timeframes.

c. **Out-of-class experiences** considered in this report cycle focused on evaluations by
internship supervisors.

One of the open-ended questions on the internship supervisor evaluations is, “What
do you think are the intern’s strengths?” The following are representative answers
provided by professionals in radio, communications, newspapers and social media:

- [He is] smart, intelligent thinker. [He] works well with others, demonstrates
  professional attitude always. Strong ability in writing as well as production
  setup. Very knowledgeable in field. Able to carry/hold a conversation with
  fans/listeners intelligently.
- He has a strong writing style and is thorough and accurate in his work. He
  adheres to deadlines well, took direction well and was eager to please. He
  followed AP style guidelines also.
- [He] contributed good ideas to our weekly editorial discussions; he wasn’t afraid
  to raise questions from his perspective; he had a great attitude and livened up
  the place with his presence; he jumped right in to assist with the technical work
  of recording/editing shows and adapted to our routine quickly; he delivered
  what he promised on time; he’s eager to learn.
- He has an excellent sense of what stories are important and interesting to our
  local viewers. He is well organized, and handles people well.
- He is very strong in the creative side of things. He does a great job with our
  media blasts and graphics as well as our preseason videos. He has a natural
  talent for that and has brought life to our social media outlets with his work. He
  has been very dependable and has picked up the skills and programs that we use
  in sports information.
- [She] is driven, talented and a fast learner. She asks many questions but they all
  serve to provide her with a better understanding of the situation at hand and
  how she can improve.
- Writing, editing and graphic design appeared [to be his] most prevalent
  [strength]. [He] has a strong work ethic and follows through. He also took
  criticism well and used it to make his project stronger.
- [He] juggles multiple assignments well, knowing when to work on each one.
  Information from various sources open comes across the news desk at the same.
  [His] No. 1 strength [is] a sense of curiosity. Followed by the understanding that
  stories are stronger with multiple sources.

The focus of the journalism program is to prepare students to work in some aspect
of the journalism field. Responses from internship supervisors confirm that UWRF
journalism interns reflect well on the program. These interns demonstrate the basic
knowledge and skills supervisors expect. The result for the students is valuable
experience that frequently leads to employment upon graduation.
d. **Indirect student assessment** during the report cycle included exit surveys completed by graduating seniors and self-evaluations by interns.

Self-evaluation by those participating in internships indicates that they found their internships interesting, challenging but rewarding. All are required to submit a self-reflective paper upon completing the internship. Among the extensive comments provided in those papers are the following:

- Although the skills I gained through my class time at UWRF are invaluable, having the ability to apply those skills and be immersed into a setting where those skills are stretched early on is necessary to ensuring a successful career in broadcast journalism.
- Cultural diversity is an interesting topic at News 8 and I imagine it’s the same at many stations across the country. The newsroom has been almost all white until very recently when we hired...a recent graduate from the University of Minnesota who identifies as Middle Eastern...This has been a wonderful thing for the station as it has opened some cultural doors...and allowed us to widen our view a bit.
- The experience has also helped me judge other TV stations for when I would like to get a different job. I know what to look for when it comes to a quality station.
- During this time, I have learned so much more than I ever thought I could. I thought I knew a lot about how newspapers work and what it takes to be a journalist, but I had no idea. It takes firsthand experience to really know what something is like, and I am so glad I was able to get that experience...at the *Rochester Post-Bulletin*.
- Although I know I’ll never stop learning, I learned more during my internship than I could possibly write because I learned how to be a journalist.
- I learned on my first day...when I was given two hours to cover a relatively important story. I had never had to collect information, interview multiple people and write up a story in that short of time. Although it was stressful and the topic...complicated, I was able to get it done in time.
- My internship at the *Rochester Post-Bulletin* has been one of the best experiences of my life and an important starting point in my journalism career.
- I focused my internship on the gathering of information, preparing questions, engineering the show and then finally editing it. Focusing on this helped me learn the news value of every issue and how to get the best possible information for the story. For those looking for a great introduction into how journalism is done at a real-life news station, this is the perfect internship and I highly suggest it. The staff is extremely friendly, the skills are useful, and you are thrown right into the fire.
- During this internship I accomplished a lot. I clicked the shutter more than I ever have in my life. This is a shooter’s internship. Even though a lot of my assignments were small or sports games, it got me taking a lot of pictures of many different types of things...really good experience for me.
- If I could do something over I would’ve done this internship sooner and tried to do it for a whole year... [This] experience has solidified my goals if anything. I think I want to go to grad school for photojournalism I love this job and think that I’d like [it] even more if I got to work in a bigger city with a more diverse group of colleagues and more diverse news going on.
• My experience in this department has change my goals for the better. It helped me focus on what I need to improve on and figure out what I do well. Anyone could do the bare minimum, but to really have this internship work for you, you need to put in the work that people don’t ask of you.

Graduating journalism majors completed exit surveys in the spring of 2015, 2016 and 2017. Senior exit surveys polled graduates on their perceptions of how well they matched the expected outcomes of the journalism program. Journalism’s lower enrollments were reflected by an N of 7 for 2015, an N of 4 for 2016 and an N of 5 for 2017. The scores were high with the majority of the group indicating that they STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE or SLIGHTLY AGREE for all five outcomes but the sample sizes, as described, were limited. See the table on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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<td>Students will be able to critique the quality and ethics of journalism in any medium, in terms of basic professional standards</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Students will be able to identify the role that diversity plays in every aspect of journalism.</td>
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<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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e. The program did not perform an indirect alumni assessment during the report cycle.

f. Indirect professional assessment during the report cycle included the results of annual contests sponsored by professional trade organizations in Wisconsin as well as use of Falcon News Service stories by media organizations other than WRFW and the Student Voice.

In JOUR 406, student journalists cover the campus and community, producing print and broadcast stories that are made available to media organizations through the Falcon News Service via a website and email marketing. Stories are reviewed by a faculty member before distribution. During spring 2016, area media organizations used FNS stories at least 24 times; during fall 2016, at least 41 times; and during spring 2017, at least 13 times. The decrease in the success rate is in part attributed to changes in personnel at the River Falls Journal and in UWRF’s University Communications and Marketing office (the primary professional “clients” of FNS), resulting in FNS having to rebuild relationships with these media organizations. Regardless, the fact that our students’ news stories are being used by area media is a positive indicator of the quality of their work.

In 2016, the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association recognized UWRF students with first place awards in long-form storytelling and radio public affairs.

Also in 2016 and 2017, student journalists working for the Student Voice earned
awards in the Better Newspaper Contest sponsored by the Wisconsin College Media Association, a subset of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation. In 2016, the Student Voice won second place for best editorial. In 2017, the newspaper won four awards: third place in sports reporting; honorable mention for general reporting; and second and third places for best editorial.

The awards to both campus media organizations are evidence that media professionals in Wisconsin place high value on the work of our student journalists.

**Action Plans**

a. In general, the faculty is satisfied with how the performance of our students is meeting program expectations.

b. However, in terms of learning outcomes, the faculty believes improvement in Learning Outcome 4 (Students will identify the role that diversity plays in every aspect of journalism) will be accomplished by making JOUR 315 Race, Class & News a required course rather than a directed elective. The course is an intense exposure to diversity issues in journalism and news media, unlike the limited exposure offered in other courses in our program. By requiring the course, we expect improvement in what our students learn about these issues.

c. **Comparability of learning regardless of modes of delivery, location, or course duration** is an aspect of assessment the department and the program faculty are discussing. Most of the program’s core courses remain as face-to-face offerings during a regular semester and do not require consideration of comparability. However, some courses are being offered in alternative formats. For example, we have made major strides in aligning the lessons and assignments in JOUR 101 Introduction to Mass Communication, a course that is offered in both face-to-face and online modes in both regular semesters and in abbreviated summer or winter sessions. Faculty teaching the course have collaborated in developing assignments and in guaranteeing that course calendars are synchronized. The program also has identified one tenured faculty member as the coordinator for the course.

d. In terms of **out-of-classroom learning experiences**, the program will continue to encourage active involvement in student media and internships, on and off campus.

e. For **indirect student assessment**, because the for-credit internships our students pursue are so different from one internship to the next, the program will continue to rely on the existing evaluation. The program will review and modify the graduating senior survey to elicit more data beyond students’ responses to questions about the five learning outcomes.

f. As noted above, no **indirect alumni assessment** was performed during the assessment period. The program is developing a new alumni survey which it would expect to administer during the 2018-2019 academic year, and also is discussing reinstituting an advisory board composed of alumni and other external stakeholders who could provide a sounding board for curricular changes.
g. To improve **indirect professional assessment**, the advisory board noted above would include media professionals, some of whom also would be alumni of our program. Meeting regularly, the board will provide insights into how our program may satisfy the needs of the industry.

h. Program faculty understand the need to **maintain and enhance the process for assessment**. However, we have been challenged by diminished resources (tenured and tenure-track positions have been reduced by 50 percent over the past decade), while the need to be nimble with our curriculum as the field of journalism continues to change has required rethinking our course offerings and strengthening their rigor. This has created a certain tension. Do we assess first and then modify the curriculum, or do we modify the curriculum first and then assess it? Our designated assessment coordinator retired, and the faculty line was lost to the department, meaning the responsibilities of assessment now fall on the two remaining faculty members in the journalism program. Within the expanded Department of Communication and Media Studies, we are discussing how best to coordinate our offerings across journalism, communication studies, and marketing communications to best serve the interests of students. These discussions have bearing not only on the journalism curriculum, but also on programmatic and departmental assessment plans.
### Action plan summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOUR 315 becomes required course</td>
<td>Programmatic change approved by April 2019</td>
<td>Approval by department by October 2018, followed by submission to college and university committees</td>
<td>Confirm completion in May 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand graduating senior survey</td>
<td>Complete by end of November 2018 to administer to 2018-19 graduating seniors</td>
<td>Present expanded survey to department faculty in October 2018</td>
<td>Administer expanded survey in December 2018 and May 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinstate advisory board</td>
<td>Convene meeting in March 2019</td>
<td>Develop list of professionals and invite membership in November 2019, schedule meeting for March 2019</td>
<td>Assemble minutes of advisory board meeting and distribute to faculty and advisory board members for review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Completed by March 2019 in time for advisory board meeting</td>
<td>Develop questions in September 2018, create contact list of alumni, and distribute survey in January 2019</td>
<td>Compile results and present to advisory board in March 2019</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Attachments