

**SCSU JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT
PROGRAM REVIEW
Oct. 22, 2008**

1. The Journalism Department's Mission Supports the University's Mission.

The university's mission, as stated in the strategic plan for 2007-2012, is to provide "academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good."

The SCSU Journalism Department's mission supports the university's mission by providing a foundation of academic excellence in journalism theory and practice that will produce professional journalists who will work ethically, fairly and accurately to provide news and information from which citizens in a diverse, democratic society can make informed decisions.

2. The Journalism Department has Clearly Stated Program Goals and Objectives.

The goal of the Journalism Department is two-fold:

- Produce graduates with the skills of the professional journalist who will:
 1. Apply clear critical thinking and writing in the forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
 2. Understand and apply First Amendment principles as well as law and ethics appropriate to professional journalistic practice.
 3. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
 4. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.
 5. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professional journalists in shaping American society.

- Produce graduates with knowledge management, communication and writing skills that will:
 1. Prepare them for a myriad of fields ranging from law, business, education, government, public relations and the arts.
 2. Make them knowledgeable, participatory citizens in a diverse democracy.

3. The Journalism Department has Clearly Stated Program-Level Expected Student Outcomes and Methods for Measurement.

Learning Outcomes

Journalism Department learning outcomes were derived primarily from the professional values and competencies presented in the Curriculum and Instruction section of the Accrediting Council of Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, known as ACEJMC. Though the Journalism Department is not accredited, it is the goal at some future point to seek accreditation and the ACEJMC standards are in line with the foundation we have established within the Journalism Department.

A. Journalism Majors:

Students majoring in journalism should have the following competencies upon graduation:

1. Knowledge and practical application of the full range of journalistic reporting, researching, interviewing, editing and writing.
2. Practical experience in a news media company through an internship.
3. Understanding of First Amendment principles, law, ethics and their application to professional journalistic practice.
4. Understanding the history and role of professional journalists in shaping American society.
5. Ability to effectively cover the diversity of groups in a global society.
6. Understanding of journalism concepts and theory in the use and presentation of images and information.
7. Knowledge of journalism ethics and its application in the pursuit of truth.
8. Ability to conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
9. Ability to write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
10. Capacity to critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
11. Knowledge of basic numerical and statistical concepts, as well as an understanding of how to attribute sources, both human and physical, into stories.
12. Ability to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

B. Journalism Minors:

Students minoring in journalism should have the following competencies upon graduation:

1. Knowledge of the basics of reporting and writing.
2. Understanding of First Amendment principles, law, ethics and their application to professional journalistic practice.
3. Ability to write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

4. Knowledge of basic numerical and statistical concepts, as well as an understanding of how to attribute sources, both human and physical, into stories.
5. Knowledge of journalism ethics and its application in the pursuit of truth.
6. Knowledge of the specific areas that the student focused on – example: photojournalism, magazine writing.

C. Nonjournalism Students:

Students taking journalism's General Education course (JRN 101 The Media: Freedom and Power):

1. Knowledge and understanding of the First Amendment, including an ability to cite the five First Amendment theories.
2. Knowledge of the historic background of press freedom and freedom of expression in relation to government.
3. Understanding of the role and duty of the press in relation to government.
4. Awareness of the conflicts between government and the press in war and peace.
5. Knowledge of the major court cases involving press freedom and government.
6. Understanding of the role and effect of advertising and corporate ownership on freedom of expression.
7. Familiarity with the many freedom of expression vs. privacy and inflammatory speech issues pertaining to the internet.
8. Ability to write and present oral presentations so as to effectively express thoughts and ideas within society, and effectively engage in critical discussion.
9. Knowledge of the structure and culture of news and information, and how journalists gather information, approach sources, conduct interviews, and ask and respond to questions.

Methods and/or Measurement used to Document the Quality of Student Performance in the Undergraduate Major

▪ **Measurement tool**

The Journalism Department will use a direct measure of assessment to gauge the performance of its students as provided by the individual supervisor of each journalism student's internship, as well as the student's self-assessment of the internship.

- **Internship as a Benchmark for Measuring Journalism Student's Learning**

Writing is an essential element to every aspect of journalism, whether it is broadcast news, print, online journalism, public relations or any other related fields that require written and oral communications. While the Journalism Department uses the classroom to instruct and assess students' learning in a particular area, all understand that it is the transference and application of that knowledge into relevant experience in the workplace that is the true measure of the quality of their learning experience.

Journalism majors in the Bachelor of Science program (who comprise well over 95 percent of all journalism majors) must complete 300 hours at an internship as a graduation requirement. The goal is to measure the effectiveness of journalism students' learning, and as such, the effectiveness of the courses and instruction they are being provided in the classroom. This will enable the department to consistently measure from semester to semester and year to year the effectiveness of its overall program. It will also enable the department to identify specific courses and areas of instruction that are fulfilling their goals and courses that may need refocusing, retooling or eliminating. It will enable the department to determine what new courses need to be introduced to ensure Southern's journalism students receive the most current and effective instruction and equipment to make them successful prior to and after graduation.

- **Past Measurements of Students' Internship Experience**

While the Journalism Department has always sought the evaluation of students' performance from the supervisors at companies for which they worked, for years it was an unstructured process that involved talking to the supervisors and having them provide their grade for the student, and then talking to the students and getting their assessment. In the spring 2005

semester, the Journalism Department implemented two redesigned internship evaluation forms – one was for the students; the other, for the companies that accepted them. Both evaluation forms provided greater structure and measurable results that could be manually tallied.

- **New Proposed Measurement Tool and Criteria**

While the previous direct measurement was a step in the right direction, the Journalism Department is launching a new assessment initiative that will provide a greater, more focused measurement featuring specific feedback on key areas of students' learning and performance. It will accomplish this by identifying the key learning goals of journalism students' classroom learning and measuring the effectiveness of that learning based on their performance in a required internship – the closest experience they will have to a competitive workplace before graduation.

The previous evaluations asked supervisors and students how prepared the student was for the internship, how the supervisor would rate the student's performance, the intern's strengths and weaknesses, and the grade the supervisor would give the intern. The new proposed assessment will ask specific questions relating to reporting, research, interviewing and writing ability for news related fields, and specific questions relating to public relations.

It will also have open-ended areas for supervisors to specifically address students' strengths and weaknesses so as enable the Journalism Department to gauge what areas it is doing well in teaching and areas it needs to improve. It will also have an area in the questionnaire asking supervisors and students to indicate what they would like to see students know and be proficient in. This will keep the Journalism Department abreast of the latest trends and wish lists from companies in the field so that the department can continue to provide its students with the most

up-to-date instruction in an ever-changing market. For instance, the Journalism Department knows, from several internship supervisors, of the need for students to be knowledgeable and skilled in the area of online journalism, the department will be able to add a course to provide instruction in this area to its students. (Note: The Journalism Department has already made arrangements for the Spring 2009 semester to hire an adjunct instructor and offer a special topics course called Online Journalism.).

▪ **Assessment Instruments and Methodologies**

As previously noted, the tool of assessment will involve direct measurement of students' learning as provided by the individual supervisor of each student's respective internship. These will include supervisors at TV stations, radio stations, newspapers, magazines, online news media, book publishing companies, public relations companies and other companies that may be nonmedia-related but nevertheless use the writing and other journalism skills that students in Southern's journalism program receive.

This assessment proposal would also include feedback from students through self-evaluation.

This plan will employ qualitative and quantitative assessments from evaluation forms that both intern supervisors and interns will receive.

The assessment work plan entails the following:

1. Design assessment evaluation forms geared to address specific learning areas that internship supervisors and student interns can provide accurate information on.
2. Supervisor: The goal would be to gather from intern supervisors their thoughts and perceptions of how well their particular intern (the Southern journalism student) performed based on the key identified performance areas.

3. Student: The goal would be to ascertain from students their thoughts and perceptions of how well their classroom learning experience prepared them for their internship.
4. The evaluation forms would be administered in the form of a questionnaire sent via e-mail. (See attached supervisor and student questionnaires at the end of this Program Review). It would employ an electronic measuring tool, such as Snap online questionnaire. Supervisors and instructors would be directed to click onto the site, enter their name and other information before completing the evaluation.
5. As internships are an ongoing area of learning, tallies would be open from semester to semester, as well as during the summer months.

▪ **Analysis Process**

1. Upon receipt of the electronic survey results, the Journalism Department would analyze the survey results, providing both quantitative and qualitative summaries.
2. Write a narrative of the results.
3. Present the information to full- and part-time faculty in the Journalism Department at the department's semester meeting and determine how best to apply the results to classroom instruction.
4. Present the information to the dean of SCILS to indicate areas of department needs for equipment or other elements of instruction (such as additional faculty) to enhance students' learning.
5. Further assess how the SCSU Journalism Department could move forward to seek accreditation from the Accrediting Council of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications, also known as ACEJMC.

- **Schedule for Implementation**

The two assessment forms are being designed for the current Fall 2008 semester. Forms would be e-mailed to both intern supervisors and student interns. Following that, the next send-out of assessment forms would be in May 2009 for students completing spring semester internships. The assessments would be ongoing from semester to semester, as well as during the summer months.