



# SOJC ASSESSMENT PLAN

*Adopted 2014. Reviewed by the faculty on a regular basis as part of the assessment process.*

## MISSION/GOALS

The mission of the University of Oregon is as follows:

*The University of Oregon is a comprehensive public research university committed to exceptional teaching, discovery, and service. We work at a human scale to generate big ideas. As a community of scholars, we help individuals question critically, think logically, reason effectively, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically.*

The School of Journalism and Communication is one of six professional units supporting the University of Oregon's vibrant liberal arts tradition and position as an Association of American Universities research institution. Through a focus on ethics, innovation, and action, the SOJC works to achieve and sustain excellence in research and creative work, in undergraduate and graduate teaching, and in service to professional, civic, and educational communities near and far. The SOJC's mission statement is as follows:

*The School of Journalism and Communication (SOJC) is a community of scholars and professionals dedicated to freedom of expression and public service. By integrating theory and practice, we prepare students to become professional communicators, critical thinkers and responsible citizens in a global society.*

All SOJC courses, graduate and undergraduate, are subject to the guidelines of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), which accredits the University of Oregon. The advertising, journalism, and public relations undergraduate majors within the SOJC are accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) as well.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Undergraduate Majors Accredited by ACEJMC

In line with the School's mission and ACEJMC curricular guidelines, 11 student learning outcomes guide our assessment measures for the undergraduate advertising, journalism, and public relations majors. The 11 outcomes are based on the ACEJMC professional values and competencies (see Appendix A), while recognizing that each specialty may require specific knowledge in one or more of the 11 areas specified.

All SOJC graduates of the advertising, journalism, and public relations majors should be able to:

1. Understand the range of freedom of expression around the world and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech to their profession/field.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how professionals and institutions shaped communications relevant to their profession/field.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in domestic and global society and its impact as relevant to their profession/field.

4. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the use and presentation of images and information and apply them to their profession/field.
5. Understand and apply ethical principles appropriate to their profession/field.
6. Think critically, creatively and independently.
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to their profession/field.
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate to their profession/field.
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness.
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate to their profession/field, including verbal and visual presentation as apt.

### **Undergraduate Media Studies Major**

*The media studies major is subject to NWCCU guidelines only, although it oversees the required context courses for undergraduate students in the advertising, journalism, and public relations majors.*

The undergraduate media studies major has as its goal to produce students who display purposeful, reflective judgment concerning what to believe or what to do, especially as relates to the media and to communication as a whole. The media studies faculty has delineated 11 core competencies, similar to those of ACEJMC, but has recast them to reflect the sequence goal.

By the time they graduate, all graduates of the media studies major should:

1. Understand and be able to apply the principles of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent and to monitor and criticize power—both political and corporate.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of the media and of communications in general in affecting and shaping society.
3. Understand the political, economic, and cultural significance of the media.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
5. Understand concepts and be able to apply theories to the use and misuse of images and information.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, fairness, and diversity.
7. Think critically, creatively, and independently.
8. Conduct research and evaluation information.
9. Write correctly and clearly.
10. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accurateness and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness.
11. Understand and be able to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts as well as the potential for abuse of such concepts.

## CURRICULUM MAP

To lay the foundation for assessment as an ongoing process, and because the curriculum is built in many cases on a set of optional courses, the curriculum is mapped yearly onto the appropriate student learning goals to ensure that graduates receive instruction in all specified areas in each program of study. Students who take only the minimum required coursework in the SOJC should still receive ample learning opportunities to master all goals, competencies, and values. We expect these students to graduate with at least a basic mastery of all specified learning outcomes.

Students are strongly advised to go beyond the minimum, however, and to take advantage of optional courses and workshops, internship opportunities, conferences, and extracurricular offerings, as apt. Our expectation is that by taking advantage of these opportunities, students will receive greater reinforcement on almost all competencies and therefore should demonstrate a greater level of mastery.

The results of the curriculum mapping exercise are shared with faculty and inform curriculum planning by the appropriate SOJC committees (the Graduate Affairs Committee and the Undergraduate Affairs Committee), including course development and teaching strategies.

## MEASURES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment takes place at the programmatic level, with additional course-level measures performed on an ad hoc basis to remedy specific weaknesses or take advantage of opportunities identified by programmatic measures. In keeping with best practices, the SOJC uses both direct and indirect programmatic assessment measures and seeks scholarly and professional input throughout the process. Direct measures are annual portfolio reviews and an ongoing survey of internship supervisors. Indirect measures are annual student exit surveys, annual appraisals of student awards and other recognized achievements, and an alumni survey conducted every three years. Each is discussed in more depth below.

### Direct Measures

#### Portfolio Assessment:

For undergraduate students in the advertising, journalism, or public relations majors, portfolio reviews are conducted by faculty and professional teams with at least one faculty member and one professional on each team. Professionals are recruited through professional societies and alumni contacts. Portfolio reviews for students in the media studies major are conducted by faculty, as befits the goal and purpose of this major.

The portfolios reviewed are those of students completing their courses of study within the SOJC in any given academic year. In public relations and media studies, each student's portfolio is reviewed. In advertising and journalism, a random sample of portfolios is reviewed, the number determined by the number of graduates each year to ensure a valid sample. The advertising, journalism, and public relations portfolios encompass a range of work in a variety of formats, such as print and audio clips, videos, infographics, design layouts, feature stories, research papers, and strategic plans and campaigns. The forms used for evaluation are based on the 11 core competencies and administered via an online survey. Media studies portfolios typically contain more research papers and are evaluated using somewhat different measures.

#### Internship Supervisor Survey:

Although students are not required to take an internship for credit, approximately 25 percent of SOJC students enroll in J404 each year. While surveying internship supervisors does not provide a generalizable assessment measure in the way that portfolio assessment does, it provides another tool and professional perspective by which to measure student mastery of the 11 core competencies. The link to the online assessment form is sent to the supervisor at the end of the term during which the student interned, and data are collated and analyzed annually.

## **Indirect Measures**

### **Exit Surveys:**

Each spring a link to an online exit survey is sent to any student who has or will be graduating that academic year. Prizes are offered as incentives, and in recent years the response rate has hovered around 60 percent. Students are asked to rate their educational experience at the SOJC, including how they perceive their progress on the eleven core competencies.

### **Student Awards and Recognitions:**

SOJC students compete in a number of professional competitions, including, but not limited to, AAF, Bateman, Hearst, Dow Jones, and Emmies. Additionally, students are eligible for academic honors, such as Phi Beta Kappa and Latin honors. Performance in all award and recognition categories is used to assess student achievement, with performance in professional competitions used to indirectly assess mastery of ACEJMC competencies.

### **Alumni Surveys:**

Alumni surveys are a valuable indirect measure by which to assess the effectiveness of our programs as well as a way to keep in touch with our alumni base. We survey our alumni every three academic years.

## **Ad Hoc Measures**

Ad hoc assessment measures may take place at the course level as necessary to remedy identified weaknesses or target opportunities for strengthening student learning. Such measures may include student pre- and post-test measures, focus groups with students and instructors, and class observations and review by professionals, faculty members, and support staff from the campus Teaching Effectiveness Program.

Other ad hoc measures, such as focus groups and interviews with the SOJC's undergraduate student advisory board, the Graduate Teaching Fellows, and the Journalism Advisory Council, take place as warranted to obtain qualitative feedback to lend depth to the quantitative findings.

## **TIMELINE, OVERSIGHT, AND APPLICATION OF FINDINGS**

Assessment is an ongoing process, and it is crucial to ensure that results are clearly and regularly reported in order to drive curricular development and change in a thoughtful, data-based manner. Because the University of Oregon operates on the term system, the timeline is structured around the four terms that constitute each academic year.

The SOJC has experienced steady and fast-paced growth, which has led to changes in the administrative structure to better meet the needs of diverse constituencies. Consequently, in fall 2014 the dean created an assessment director position, staffed by a senior faculty member, to oversee assessment of undergraduate and graduate programs.

The assessment director is responsible for gathering assessment data, analyzing it, and reporting the results to administration and faculty each year. The reports inform faculty discussion, which in turn is taken into consideration by the Undergraduate Affairs Committee (UAC) and the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC), which present any resulting curriculum motions to the faculty for a vote.

The Assessment Accountability Chart and Timetable below provides the accountability chart and timetable for assessment procedures and demonstrates how assessment and curricular development inform each other.

## **ACEJMC Professional Values & Competencies**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.