Public Relations - BAJMC
Group 1: Cycle 1 - Fall 2017 - Summer 2019

Currently status is: Report Accepted
Change Plan Status

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR Group 1: Cycle 1 - Fall 2017 - Summer 2019

Mission Statement

The mission of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications is to improve and strengthen the societal roles of the professions of journalism and mass communications by:

- providing an undergraduate instruction within a liberal arts context that leads to a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications and prepares students for an increasingly multinational, multicultural professional work environment.
- providing graduate instruction, leading to master's and Ph.D. degrees, that prepares students for leadership and management roles in the journalism and mass communications professions and in the professorate.
- educating students, both majors and those in disciplines outside the School, about roles in the journalism and mass communications professions and in the professorate.
- educating students, both majors and those in disciplines outside the School, about the roles and functions of the mass media and of mass communications industries so that they can be informed consumers of information.
- adding to the body of knowledge for the professions and for the general public through research, scholarship and creative professional activity.
- providing service to journalism instruction at the middle and high school levels in South Carolina and the Southeast, and to journalism and mass communications professions in South Carolina and at the regional, national, and international levels through such activities as continuing education programs, workshops and constructive commentary on current media, advertising and public relations practices.

Goal 1.

Students should be prepared for an increasingly multinational and multicultural professional work environment in an evolving media landscape.

PR Curriculum Map

Curriculum

Courses in the curriculum are associated with specific learning outcomes, and cited throughout the report. See also attached Curriculum Map for SJMC Public Relations majors.

Learning Outcome 1.

Demonstrate the ability to conduct research, gather information, write clearly and correctly and present relevant news or persuasive information at a professional level.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 291, 303, 332, 439, 531, 533

Measures and Criteria

- Grammar Exam (direct measure): Students enrolled in JOUR 291, our introductory writing course that is required across majors, take a diagnostic grammar and writing exam twice during the course. The first administration of the exam takes place before concentrated teaching of grammar, spelling and style. The second administration of the exam takes place after this instruction and is a direct measure of accomplishment and learning. The SJMC faculty has not identified a standard of performance for scores

from incoming students because this information is used primarily as a baseline measure of what incoming students actually know. It is our expectation that the mean score for all students on the *post*-test should be at least 70%.

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students' performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation (direct measure): Using a shared rubric, industry professionals from advertising, public relations, multimedia journalism, broadcast journalism, visual communications and mass communications evaluate content generated in SJMC capstone courses, examining final projects and/or professional portfolios for professional standards in their respective fields. LO1, LO2 and LO5 are measured in this way. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Capstone Rubric LO1, LO2, LO5

Methods

- Diagnostic Grammar Exams are given by every faculty member in every JOUR 291 course. Pre/post data are submitted to the assessment team, synthesized and evaluated at the end of each academic year.
- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation: Each Fall, SJMC sequence heads provide a sample of senior-level student work for evaluation. The work was produced during the Spring semester of the preceding academic year. Industry practitioners on the SJMC Advisory Board evaluate that work to determine whether it meet industry standards in their respective fields. Each project is evaluated by at least two members of the board. Evaluators examine the work on eight standards that parallel LO1, LO2 and LO5. Each variable is measured on a Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Yes & No, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Once complete, responses are typed into an excel spreadsheet, then uploaded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis by the assessment team.
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results
The SJMC employs three direct measures to assess this learning outcome: A grammar assessment, a supervisor evaluation of student interns and an evaluation of senior capstone projects by industry professionals.

Grammar Assessment

In the 2017/2018 academic year, more than 400 students took the SJMC's grammar assessment, once at the start of their first required writing course (JOUR 291) and again towards the end. Nearly 600 took it during the following academic year. The SJMC faculty has not identified a standard of performance for scores from incoming students because this information is used primarily as a baseline measure of what incoming students actually know. It is our expectation that the mean score of the *post*-test should be at least 70%. Although mean scores rose for all students nearly 10% in 2017/2018 and just under 9% this past academic year, student scores did not reach expectations.

The mean score for public relations majors was approximately 69% in each of these two academic years, just slightly below our minimum desired score. On measure 1 (grammar assessment), the LO was not met.

Table LO1a: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **% (N)**	**2016/2017** **% (N)**	**2017/2018** **% (N)**	**2018/2019** **% (N)**
Grammar (Pre-test, all students)	66 (216)	61 (214)	58.7 (423)	59.04 (575)
Grammar (Post-test, all students)	74 (222)	68 (207)	68.38 (412)	67.88 (556)
(Percentage Change)	**↑ 8 %**	**↑ 7 %**	**↑ 9.68 %**	**↑ 8.84 %**
(Public Relations)	72 (99)	66 (71)	68.83 (139)	68.43 (158)

Supervisor Evaluation (Internships)

A second direct measure used to assess LO1 is the student internship evaluation. It is the faculty's expectation that student scores meet or exceed 4.0 on a five-point scale. In the 2017/2018 academic year, 137 SJMC students completed internships for credit and were evaluated by their supervisors on this variable. Another 133 supervisors evaluated students in 2018/2019. The mean scores for all SJMC majors combined were well above minimum standards and there were no significant differences by major. PR majors scored 4.74 and 4.66, respectively. On measure 2 (internship evaluation), the LO was met.

Table LO1b: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **X (N)**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Internship Evaluations – All	4.50 (133)	4.73 (89)	4.72 (137)	4.68 (133)
(Public Relations)	4.61 (61)	4.75 (52)	4.74 (85)	4.66 (67)

Senior Capstone Projects

For the SJMC's third direct measure, industry professionals evaluate content generated by students in SJMC capstone courses. Using a shared rubric (see attached), practitioners examine final projects and/or professional portfolios to determine whether the work meets

professional standards in their respective fields. It is the faculty's expectation that student scores meet or exceed 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Each semester, ten projects are randomly selected from each of our six majors for inclusion in the analysis. On occasion, when group projects are involved, that number is lower. Each project is evaluated holistically by at least two separate professionals, leading to 75 separate project evaluations in 2017/2018 and 107 in 2018/2019.

In 2018, PR majors met expectations, achieving a mean score of 4.16 on this measure. Number fell below expectations in 2018, however. While students demonstrated an ability to gather information/conduct research, they fell short when it came "writes clearly" and "presents relevant information at a professional level." As Table LO1c reflects, the mean score for these variables, when combined into an aggregate score, was 3.82, below expectations (X=4.17 and X=4.11 respectively). Therefore, on measure LO1c (capstone projects), the LO was met in the first year but not met in the most recent year evaluated.

Table LO1c: Method of Assessment	**2016/2017 X (N)**	**2017/2018 X (N)**	**2018/2019 X % (N)**			
Senior Capstone Projects	**LO1 - Combined**	**LO1 - Combined**	**LO1 - Combined**	**Gathers Info/Research**	**Writes clearly**	**Presents Info at prof. level**
Average - All Students	4.03 (61)	3.8 (75)	3.94 (107)	4.16 (103)	3.83 (106)	3.85 (104)
(Public Relations)	4.132 (16)	4.16 (16)	3.82 (29)	4.17 (29)	3.48 (29)	3.79 (29)

Use of Results

The SJMC is highly satisfied with the performance of our PR students as demonstrated by internship supervisor evaluations. Trend data show they generally perform well on capstone projects as well, when their senior-level work is evaluated by industry practitioners. In 2018/2019, however, they performed below expectations. The SJMC assessment team believes the Capstone Project Evaluation adds valuable information to our examination of learning outcomes. In addition to quantitative findings included in this report, practitioners also make qualitative remarks on these projects, which we now regularly provide to faculty members in the sequence to guide further curriculum decisions.

The PR major has grown significantly in recent years. It is the largest major in the school of journalism. Unlike other majors, students in this academic field are required to take a second writing course to help develop their writing skills. In the past academic year, the faculty has been stretched quite thin and is not always able to offer PR-versions of this advanced writing course. Students have, instead, been allowed to substitute courses from other majors to satisfy this additional writing requirement. It is unclear whether this lack of specialized attention is the cause of the most recent lower scores on this particular variable. Results will be shared with the sequence head as well as members of that major's faculty to review and discuss amongst themselves.

Continued attention must also be paid to student performance on the diagnostic grammar exam. Sophomore-level students struggle mightily in this area. For three academic cycles, our

students' scores have hovered just below minimum faculty expectations. New in this academic cycle, we asked students if they had transferred into the program. On average, their performance was lower (64%) than the non-transfer students (70%). We plan to dig further into this and future data to determine whether more concentrated academic support is needed for this important student sub-group (transfer students).

Although grammar is not the sole measure of good writing, it is a critical component. And, while the JOUR 291 course is not a grammar course per se (it is designed instead to expose students to professional writing styles in print, broadcast, and public relations writing), it is our first opportunity to work directly with students on these foundations and we continue to work towards curricular solutions.

SJMC Associate Professor Ernest Wiggins heads up our efforts in this area, taking a leadership role in the administration of the grammar test (as well as oversight of all our JOUR 291 sections). In past assessment reports, Mr. Wiggins noted that J291 instructors find it difficult to deliver sufficient, targeted instruction in standard English usage within the time allotted for the course. To address those concerns, in the 2017 academic year, Wiggins designed and implemented a separate set of intensive, online grammar modules that would place that basic skills component within the classroom setting. These nine standalone grammar lessons include accompanying quizzes. The grammar lessons were not created as drills for the students – for we know drilling doesn't improve writing though it does improve test scores -- but as tools to help students understand the foundational logic behind standard English usage, sentence construction and punctuation. Instructors are encouraged to use these Powerpoint lessons and quizzes to address grammar challenges throughout the semester, recommend additional individual exercises for acute problems and refer students with chronic difficulties to the Student Success Center and the Writing Center.

A new assessment instrument (that corresponds with grammar lessons in the course's common text) will be introduced in the Fall of 2019. The instrument was scrubbed of some of the more esoteric usage questions while still testing students on proper use of pronoun cases, matching nouns with the proper verbs and the proper uses of commas in a sentence – common errors among students. We hope this revised instrument will help us better gauge student grammar usage in the future. We also continue to consider a different measure - a writing test using a shared prompt and grading rubric for all JOUR 291 sections. Grammar would be part of the evaluation but other professional practices for style and presentation would also be included.

In order to fully "close the loop" in the assessment process, the SJMC's assessment committee plan to share findings of this report, as well as suggestions for future changes to assessment methods, with the full SJMC faculty at a meeting in April 2020. By sharing and discussing this report, we believe the SJMC faculty can continue to work collaboratively and diligently to improve, enhance and refine our measures and methods of assessment. While acknowledging that issues of student competency in writing go beyond what might be accomplished in a single course, we remain vigilant in addressing student deficiencies.

Learning Outcome 2.

Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively and independently; evaluate their own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 101, 201, 203, 291, 303, 332, 439, 531, 533

Measures and Criteria

- Internship Supervisor Evaluations (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students' performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation (direct measure): Using a shared rubric, industry professionals from advertising, public relations, multimedia journalism, broadcast journalism, visual communications and mass communications evaluate content generated in SJMC capstone courses, examining final projects and/or professional portfolios for professional standards in their respective fields. LO1, LO2 and LO5 are measured in this way. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Methods

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation: Each Fall, SJMC sequence heads provide a sample of senior-level student work for evaluation. The work was produced during the Spring semester of the preceding academic year. Industry practitioners on the SJMC Advisory Board evaluate that work to determine whether it meet industry standards in their respective fields. Each project is evaluated by at least two members of the board. Evaluators examine the work on eight standards that parallel LO1, LO2 and LO5. Each variable is measured on a Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Yes & No, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Once complete, responses are typed into an excel spreadsheet, then uploaded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis by the assessment team.
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results

The SJMC uses two direct measures to assess this learning outcome: Internships Supervisor Evaluations and Capstone Project Evaluations. It is the faculty's expectation that student scores exceed 4.0 on a five-point scale for both measures.

Supervisor Evaluation (Internships)

In regard to the Internship Evaluations, mean scores were well above expectations for PR majors in both academic years (table LO2a). On measure 1 (internship evaluations), the LO was met.

Table LO2a: Method of Assessment	**2015/2016 X (N)**	**2016/2017 X (N)**	**2017/2018 X (N)**	**2018/2019 X (N)**
Internship Evaluations (All)	4.4 (133)	4.74 / 5 (91)	4.66 (143)	4.63 (139)
(Public Relations)	4.46 (61)	4.73 (52)	4.68 (88)	4.65 (71)

Senior Capstone Projects

For our second direct measure, industry professionals evaluated 43 randomly selected senior-level capstone projects and portfolios in 2017 and another 49 in the 2018. As a point of clarification, Table LO2b reflects the *total number of individual evaluations* provided by industry professionals on all SJMC capstone projects *versus the total number of projects evaluated* (75 in 2017 and 107 in 2018).

On the whole, public relations students performed above expectations in 2017/2018 but below expectations in 2018/2019 (X=4.31 and X=3.74). When examining individual variables making up these aggregate scores, evaluators felt our students met professional standards for fairness, but were unable to reach industry expectations when it came to thinking critically, creatively and independently, meeting standards for accuracy & correctness, or meeting professional standards for clarity and style. On measure 1 (capstone projects), the LO came just shy of being met but was not achieved in either year.

Table LO2b: Method of Assessment	**2017/2018 X (N)**	**2018/2019 X (N)**				
Capstone Projects	**LO2 - Combo**	**LO2 - Combo**	**Think critically, creatively & independently**	**Meets prof. standards for accuracy & correctness**	**Meets prof. standards for fairness**	**Meets prof. standards for clarity & style**
Average - All Majors	3.79 (75)	3.88 (107)	3.96 (105)	3.88 (107)	3.95 (87)	3.72 (106)
(Public Relations)	4.31 (16)	3.74 (29)	3.72 (29)	3.93 (29)	4 (14)	3.41 (29)

Use of Results

Clearly, internship supervisors are pleased with our students' work while they are "in the field." Student performance on capstone projects, however, is inconsistent. Among PR majors, students met industry standards in the first year but, as was the case with LO1, fell just short of

expectations in 2018/2019. Qualitative remarks by reviewers suggest students work required better layout and design, was “displayed more as a study paper” instead of a visually compelling or imaginative PR plan, was overly cluttered with words (sometimes including grammatical and word usage errors) or felt rushed. These remarks, alongside the quantitative data in this report, will be provided to faculty members who supervise the course for review.

Learning Outcome 3.

Demonstrate an understanding the history of journalism and mass communications, the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications and the role of journalism and mass communications in society.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 101, 201, 203, 291, 303, 439, 531, 533

Measures and Criteria

- SJMC Student Knowledge Pre-Test/Post-Test (direct measure): The SJMC gauges student learning for this outcome using a measure first pilot-tested in the 2016/2017 academic year, then further refined in 2017/2018. Students in JOUR 101 (our Mass Media & Society course) take a test – once during the first week of the course and again during the last week of the semester – which examines their knowledge about journalism and mass communication history, the role of journalism in society, and diversity concerns. It is the faculty’s expectation that the mean score for all students on the *post*-test should be at least 70%.
- Internship Supervisor Evaluations (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students’ performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty’s expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Methods

- SJMC Student Knowledge Pre-Test/Post-Test (direct measure): JOUR 101 is mandatory for all majors and is taught at a freshman/entry level. The assessment team works closely with faculty members to devise and deploy the instrument in all sections of the course. During the first week of class, professors provide students a link enabling them to take the test online (via desktop, laptop or mobile phone). The test consists of both true-false and multiple-choice questions. Students take the test again at the end of the course, receiving a completion grade for the first test and an actual score for the second test. Data are downloaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed by SJMC Assessment Committee members. Results are then compared between time one and time two.
- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty

meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results

The SJMC employs two direct measures to assess this learning outcome: an entry/exit test in our Mass Communications & Society Course (JOUR 101) and supervisor evaluations of student interns.

JOUR 101 Assessment

We are now in our third academic year administrating a 12-item test in J101. Our assessment chair has worked closely with the SJMC's full-time faculty members to develop the instrument and the assessment process. Since the Spring of 2017, we've revised the instrument and our methods for deploying it in the classroom three different times – slightly amending and revising both since our pilot test. Faculty distribute the pre-test during the first two weeks of class and the post-test during the last week of the class. Results are then compared.

JOUR 101 is most often taken by freshman- or sophomore-level students in our program. As Table LO3a demonstrates, mean scores for all majors have consistently risen on this measure since 2015. Faculty who teach this course have worked diligently to craft an instrument that adequately gauges core concepts we expect all SJMC students to know (namely history, the role of media in society, and diversity).

All SJMC students are required to take this course. As Table LO3a reflects, the mean score for all students rose more than 20% from pre-test to post-test in 2017/2018 and even higher, by more than 33%, in the 2018/2019 academic year.

PR students met faculty expectations in both academic years. As Table LO3a shows, they scored 77.33% on the post-test in year one and more than 74% in year two. Like other students, PR majors struggled to properly answer diversity questions on the post-test, however. That issue will be addressed in some detail shortly (see Use of Results). Despite this shortfall, on the aggregate measure (J101 pre/post-test), the LO was met both years.

Table LO3a:	**2015/2016**	**2016/2017**	**2017/2018**	**2018/2019**			
Method of Assessment	**LO3 - Combo**	**LO3- Combo**	**LO3- Combo**	**LO3- Combo**	**History**	**Role**	**Diversity**
J101 Pre-test all	57.71 (211)	55.8 (112)	50 (232)	42.32 (152)	52.30 (153)	33.17 (153)	41.99 (153)
J101 Post-test all	73.67 (213)	71.2 (119)	70.7 (149)	75.78 (181)	81.11 (180)	79.83 (176)	69.09 (181)
(% Change)	**↑ 15.96 %**	**↑ 15.40 %**	**↑ 20.7 %**	**↑ 33.46 %**	**↑ 28.81 %**	**↑ 46.66 %**	**↑ 27.10 %**
(Public Relations)	73.47 (126)	69.93 (22)	73.44 (16)	74.31 (24)	76.04 (24)	81.52 (23)	68.75 (24)

Note: As a point of comparison, data included in the table above (for the 2015/2016 academic year) feature scores from the previous freshman/senior exam, not the newer J101 within-course pre/post-test.

Supervisor Evaluation (Internships)

As noted above, J101 is commonly taken by students in their freshman or sophomore years. Our second measure assesses student performance when they're a bit further along in their studies. SJMC students most commonly take internships during their junior and senior years. Data in Table LO3b demonstrate that internship supervisors appear quite pleased with our students by the time they get out into the field.

PR majors had a mean score of 4.6 on this measure in 17/18 and 4.67 in 18/19, above the minimum standard of 4.0 set by SJMC faculty. On measure 2 (internship evaluations), the LO was met.

Table LO3b: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **X (N)**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Internship Evaluations (All)	4.54 (133)	4.63 (60)	4.54 (95)	4.62 (104)
(Public Relations)	4.55 (61)	4.64 (36)	4.60 (57)	4.67 (57)

Use of Results

The SJMC is generally satisfied with the performance of our students on this learning outcome as demonstrated by supervisor evaluations. The entry/exit exam in J101, particularly issues surrounding the diversity questions, require further consideration. There are four diversity questions on the instrument. The assessment team plans to meet with faculty members who teach this course in December of 2019 to discuss item analysis and determine what might be done to enhance student performance in this area, be it additional instruction and/or further revision of the instrument. To be sure, diversity is a key concern for the SJMC and we intend pursue the matter with due diligence.

The assessment team will review all of these results with the full SJMC faculty at the first scheduled faculty meaning in Spring of 2020.

Learning Outcome 4.

Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical concepts, legal implications, considerations and practices that guide the mass media professions.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 101, 201, 203, 291, 303, 332, 531, 533

Measures and Criteria

- SJMC Student Knowledge Pre-Test/Post-Test (direct measure): The SJMC gauges student learning for this outcome using a measure first pilot-tested in the 2016/2017 academic year, then further refined in 2017/2018 and again in 2018/2019. Students in JOUR 303 (our Law & Ethics course) take a test – once during the first week of the course and again during the last week of the semester – which examines their

knowledge about key legal concepts affecting mass communicators. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score of the *post*-test should be at least 70%.

- Internship Supervisor Evaluations (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students' performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty's expectation that student scores meet or exceed 4.0 on a five-point scale

Methods

- SJMC Student Knowledge Pre-Test/Post-Test (direct measure): JOUR 303 is mandatory for all majors and is taught at a junior level. The assessment team works closely with faculty members to devise and deploy the instrument in all sections of the course. During the first week of class, professors provide students a link enabling them to take the test online (via desktop, laptop or mobile phone). The test consists of both true-false and multiple-choice questions. Students take the test again at the end of the course. They receive a completion grade for the first test and an actual score for the second test. Data are downloaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed by the SJMC assessment team. Results are then compared between time one and time two.
- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results

The SJMC employs two direct measures to assess this learning outcome: an entry/exit test in our Law & Ethics course (JOUR 303) and supervisor evaluations of student interns.

JOUR 303 Assessment

We are now in our third academic year administrating a 10-item test in our Media Law & Ethics course (JOUR 303), which is required for all majors. Our assessment chair has worked closely with the SJMC's two full-time faculty members to develop the instrument and the assessment process. Since the Spring of 2017, we've revised the instrument and our methods for deploying it in the classroom three different times – slightly amending and revising both since our pilot

test. Faculty members distribute the pre-test during the first two weeks of class and the post-test during the last week of the class. Results are then compared.

Overall, data show student learning *is* taking place. Trending from 2015 to present, mean student scores have risen significantly since we began focusing on how and when these items are measured. In 2017/2018, mean student scores rose by 18% and by more than 25% in 2018/2019. Nonetheless, scores remain below the minimum standard set by faculty for most of our majors.

In 2017/2018, PR scored 67.53%, but that number rose to more than 70% in year two. On measure 1 (J303 pre/post-test), the LO was not met in year one but was met in year two.

Table LO4a: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **% (N)**	**2016/2017** **% (N)**	**2017/2018** **% (N)**	**2018/2019** **% (N)**
J303 (Pre-test, all students)	44.79 (211)	45.5 (226)	48.92 (284)	43.48 (180)
J303 (Post-test, all students)	60.33 (213)	61.5 (244)	66.72 (239)	69.11 (169)
(Percentage Change)	**↑15.54 %**	**↑16%**	**↑ 18.01 %**	**↑ 25.63 %**
(Public Relations)	60.23 (126)	58.97 (58)	67.53 (67)	70.30 (44)

Note: As a point of comparison, data included in the table above (for the 2015/2016 academic year) feature scores from the previous freshman/senior exam, not the newer J303 within-course pre/post-test.

Supervisor Evaluation (Internships)

Results are better when our second direct measure is considered. Supervisor evaluations demonstrate that SJMC students are doing quite well on LO4 while in the workplace. Mean scores for all majors combined are well above minimum expectations on this variable. As shown in Table LO4b, in the 2017/2018 academic year, the mean score for PR majors was 4.55 out of 5 and 4.65 in 2018/2019. Both were well above minimum expectations. On measure 2 (internship evaluations), the LO was met.

Table LO4b: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **X (N)**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Internship Evaluations (All)	4.53 (133)	4.73 (71)	4.55 (114)	4.66 (113)
(Public Relations)	4.67 (61)	4.78 (41)	4.55 (67)	4.65 (57)

Use of Results

While satisfied with the performance of students in the workplace (as witnessed and evaluated by their supervisors), results of the entry/exit exam continue to be a concern. Students clearly struggle with legal concepts as measured using this particular pre/post-test design. Faculty members who teach our J303 course argue that this may not be the best method for evaluating student learning although suitable alternatives have not yet been identified. That said, it is clear, student scores haven risen overall in the past several years *and* faculty members are committed to teaching and measuring the same concepts across different sections of the course. The assessment chair plans to meet again with the faculty members in December

2019 to discuss results and methods of deployment further. It is a continuous process of development to which the SJMC is dedicated.

All results will be shared with the full SJMC faculty in the Spring of 2020.

Learning Outcome 5.

Demonstrate the ability to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the production, editing and presentation of visual, aural, textual or other media content.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 203, 332, 533

Measures and Criteria

- Internship Supervisor Evaluations (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students' performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation (direct measure): Using a shared rubric, industry professionals from advertising, public relations, multimedia journalism, broadcast journalism, visual communications and mass communications evaluate content generated in SJMC capstone courses, examining final projects and/or professional portfolios for professional standards in their respective fields. LO1, LO2 and LO5 are measured in this way. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Methods

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- Capstone Project/Portfolio Evaluation: Each Fall, SJMC sequence heads provide a sample of senior-level student work for evaluation. The work was produced during the Spring semester of the preceding academic year. Industry practitioners on the SJMC Advisory Board evaluate that work to determine whether it meet industry standards in their respective fields. Each project is evaluated by at least two members of the board. Evaluators examine the work on eight standards that parallel LO1, LO2 and LO5. Each variable is measured on a Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Yes & No, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Once complete, responses are typed into an excel spreadsheet, then uploaded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis by the assessment team.
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student

performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results

The SJMC uses two direct measures to assess this learning outcome: Internships Supervisor Evaluations and the Capstone Project Evaluation. It is the faculty's expectation that student scores exceed 4.0 on a five-point scale for both measures.

Supervisor Evaluation (Internships)

In 2017/2018 academic year, 137 supervisors evaluated student interns on LO5 and another 134 in 2018/2019. The mean score for all SJMC majors were well above expectations. For PR majors, the mean scores were 4.74 and 4.79 across these two academic years. On measure 1 (internship evaluations), the LO was met.

Table LO5a: **Method of Assessment**	**2015/2016** **X (N)**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Internship Evaluations (All)	4.58 (133)	4.76 (86)	4.72 (137)	4.73 (134)
(Public Relations)	4.64 (61)	4.73 (48)	4.74 (85)	4.79 (28)

Senior Capstone Projects

Scores were somewhat lower when professionals evaluated senior-level student work – a new measure employed starting the 2016/2017 academic year. Industry practitioners were asked whether each capstone project, taken as a whole, meets professional standards for production, editing and presentation of content in their respective industries. This learning outcome was measured as a single variable (versus multiple elements). Professionals evaluated student work on a five-point Likert scale. Answer options included: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Yes & No, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree.

The mean score for all SJMC majors – combined – was below expectations on this variable for both academic school years featured in this report. Outcomes were slightly different for PR majors. Although they met the minimum standard of 4.0 in 2017/2018, mean scores fell to 3.65 on this measure in 2018/2019. On measure 2 (capstone projects), the LO was met in year one but was not met in year two of this assessment cycle.

Table LO5b: **Method of Assessment**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Capstone Projects – All	3.77 (61)	3.64 (76)	3.78
(Public Relations)	3.893 (16)	4.13 (16)	3.65 (20)

Use of Results

The SJMC is satisfied with the performance of our students on this learning outcome as demonstrated by supervisor evaluations. We also believe the capstone evaluation process is

extremely valuable for our program. Having industry practitioners review the work of our students helps us gauge their readiness for the workplace. It is not surprising that, upon close examination, professionals see elements of student work not *quite yet* meeting industry standards. We regularly provide practitioners' qualitative feedback to our faculty members (along with this data) to help guide our students towards stronger work. Each sequence (or "major") is working to develop different approaches to reach our expectations. For example, on this variable, the issue of visual appeal and/or the need for a graphic designer or layout specialist was mentioned "to help make your data and plan come to life." Despite the occasional challenges on such variables, the SJMC assessment committee believes this measure remains exceptionally useful to identifying student strengths and weaknesses in LO1, LO2 and LO5. We recommend the continued use of this measure, as is, in the future.

Learning Outcome 6.

Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions.

CURRICULUM: JOUR 332, 439, 533

Measures and Criteria

- Internship Supervisor Evaluations (direct measure): As part of our normal evaluation of interns from the school, employers are asked to assess our students' performance on the job as well as their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately. These data help us to accumulate outside opinion about the extent to which prospective employers and communications professionals believe our students are prepared for their respective fields of practice. It is the faculty's expectation that the mean score for all students meets or exceeds 4.0 on a five-point scale.

Methods

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation are required for all students who complete an internship for course credit. Faculty members gather the reports at the end of each semester and submit those surveys to our assessment team. Survey results are synthesized and analyzed by team members using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- The SJMC Assessment Committee is responsible for aggregating, analyzing, storing and sharing the data for all direct measures listed above. The Committee Chair shares results with the SJMC faculty at least once per year, typically during an open faculty meeting where all faculty members can raise questions and discuss results. During the annual reporting of results, the Assessment Committee also discusses proposed revisions and/or additions to assessment measures. In cases where student performance does not meet minimum faculty expectations, the Assessment Committee shares more detailed data with sequence heads (including individual item analysis and open-ended responses by evaluators), working to address concerns and/or establish curricular changes needed to enhance student performance on those learning outcomes.

Results

The SJMC uses a single direct measure to assess this final learning outcome: Internship Supervisor Evaluations.

Supervisor Evaluations (Internships)

Overall, SJMC majors scored quite well on LO6. 107 supervisors rated their interns on this measure in 2017/2018 academic year, and another 115 in 2018/2019. There were no significant differences by major. PR majors scored 4.68 and 4.66, year-over-year. On measure 1 (internship evaluation), the LO was met.

Table LO6a: **Method of Assessment:**	**2015/2016** **X (N)**	**2016/2017** **X (N)**	**2017/2018** **X (N)**	**2018/2019** **X (N)**
Internship Evaluations (All)	4.61 / 5 (133)	4.65 (57)	4.68 (107)	4.63 (115)
(Public Relations)	4.66 (61)	4.61 (36)	4.68 (66)	4.66 (59)

Use of Results

The SJMC is satisfied with the performance of our public relations students on this learning outcome as demonstrated by supervisor evaluations. Therefore, no changes to curriculum are recommended at this time.