Western Kentucky University

School of Media

ASSESSMENT PLAN

adopted
October 2022

MISSION

The professional faculty in the School of Media work to advance the practice and knowledge of journalism, photojournalism, broadcasting, and other fields of media. We embrace community impact, compelling craft, evolving technology, clear communication, innovation, collaboration, diversity, and ethical behavior. Our objectives align with the core values and competencies of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

This assessment plan outlines our strategies and procedures for ensuring that students master the 10 ACEJMC values and are prepared for successful careers in our affiliated fields. While the courses below specifically address the aforementioned ACEJMC values, the School deliberately weaves those values throughout its curriculum.

A standing School of Media Assessment Committee is charged with ensuring that appropriate data are collected, organized, analyzed and shared with faculty and with the School's Curriculum Committee.

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1, First Amendment: *Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the First Amendment as a guaranteed constitutional right and as a cornerstone for the maintenance of freedom in a constitutional republic.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate awareness of the five rights protected by the First Amendment and an advanced professional appreciation of the rights to free speech and to a free press.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of First Amendment law, including prior restraint, libel, obscenity, privacy and access to government records.

Goal 1 Courses:
- BCOM 301 Communication Law and Ethics
- BCOM 465 Advanced Broadcast News
- JOUR 301 Press Law and Ethics
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects

- SOM 101 Understanding Media
- SOM 402 Fleishchaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars

Goal 2, Media History: *Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communication.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of press history, including important figures and events.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate understanding of both modern and historical practices and styles.

Goal 2 Courses:
- BCOM 201 Process and Effects of Mass Communication
- BCOM 301 Mass Communication Law and Ethics
- JOUR 301 Press Law and Ethics
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- PJ 390 Cultural History of Photography
- SOM 101 Understanding Media
- SOM 310 Media Diversity
- SOM 402 Fleishchaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars
- SOM 421 American Press History

Goal 3, Diversity: *Demonstrate communication techniques that empower those traditionally disenfranchised in society across communication and media platforms.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate understanding of the needs of diverse communities and the ability to produce media that serve them.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures and perspectives.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate a willingness and ability to engage members of diverse and underrepresented groups.

Goal 3 Courses:
- BCOM 301 Mass Communication Law and Ethics
- BCOM 365 Broadcast News Reporting and Producing
- BCOM 465 Advanced Broadcast News
- JOUR 301 Press Law and Ethics
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- PJ 431 Advanced Photojournalism
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 101 Understanding Media
- SOM 310 Media Diversity

- SOM 402 Fleishchaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars

Goal 4, Technology and Presentation: *Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies; apply those tools and technologies suitably and ethically for industry professions.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate understanding of visual literacy in all forms of media, including still photography, motion pictures and web content.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate awareness of technology trends and innovations.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to use industry-standard equipment, hardware and software to gather, produce, distribute and promote effective content.

Goal 4 Courses:
- BCOM 266 Basic Television Production
- BCOM 361 Advanced Radio Performance
- BCOM 367 Field Production
- BCOM 368 News Videography/Editing
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- PJ 131 Fundamentals of Photography
- PJ 330 Short Form Documentary
- PJ 331 Photojournalism
- PJ 430 Advanced Short Form Documentary
- PJ 431 Advanced Photojournalism
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 102 Media Collaboration

Goal 5, Written Communication: *Write clearly and effectively within the formats and styles of modern media professions; critically evaluate writing for accuracy, fairness, clarity, and grammar.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate fundamental language arts aptitude.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate the capacity to evaluate their own reporting, writing, and presentation skills, as well as the skills of others.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to write clearly and effectively within the styles appropriate to their discipline.

Goal 5 Courses:
- BCOM 265 Basic Broadcast News
- BCOM 325 Electronic Media Writing
- JOUR 202 Intro to News Writing
- JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation

- JOUR 325 Feature Writing
- JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting
- PJ 431 Advanced Photojournalism
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 102 Media Collaboration
- SOM 402 Fleischaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars

Goal 6, Professionalism and Ethics: *Demonstrate an appreciation of professional ethical principles in pursuit of truth, accuracy, and fairness.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge and practical application of professional codes of ethics.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate practices that prioritize truth, accuracy, authenticity, and context.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate ethical reasoning that applies to and is sensitive to the needs of diverse groups.

Goal 6 Courses:
- BCOM 301 Mass Communication Law and Ethics
- BCOM 365 Broadcast News Reporting and Producing
- BCOM 465 Advanced Broadcast News
- JOUR 301 Press Law and Ethics
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting
- PJ 331 Photojournalism
- PJ 430 Advanced Short Form Documentary
- PJ 431 Advanced Photojournalism
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 101 Understanding Media
- SOM 310 Media Diversity
- SOM 402 Fleischaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars

Goal 7, Analytical and Critical Thinking: *Apply critical thinking skills in professional conduct, information evaluation, and research.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate a capacity to interpret, analyze, and evaluate data in a variety of forms and contexts.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to gather information through both traditional academic and journalistic research.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate an aptitude for assessing veracity and bias in the information they gather, and for verifying all content.

Goal 7 Courses:
- BCOM 301 Mass Communication Law and Ethics
- BCOM 465 Advanced Broadcast News
- JOUR 202 Intro to News Writing
- JOUR 301 Press Law and Ethics
- JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting
- PJ 390 Cultural History of Photography
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 101 Understanding Media
- SOM 310 Media Diversity
- SOM 402 Fleishchaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars
- SOM 421 American Press History

Goal 8, Data Interpretation: *Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.*

Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate basic numerical, mathematical and statistical competency.

Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the role of accurate and effective data in media.

Goal 8 Courses:
- BCOM 365 Broadcast News Reporting and Producing
- BCOM 465 Advanced Broadcast News
- JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting
- JOUR 323 Multiplatform News Presentation
- JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting
- PJ 390 Cultural History of Photography
- PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects
- SOM 402 Fleishchaker-Greene First Amendment Scholars

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

To assess the extent to which students achieve the stated goals and learning outcomes, the School of Media uses the following direct measures:

- **Pre-Test/Post-Test:** This test is administered every semester to students in SOM 101: Understanding Media, the intro course required of all incoming majors. It is administered again in each of the School's capstone class options: SOM 402: First Amendment Studies, JOUR 426: Advanced Reporting, PJ 436: Photojournalism Projects, BCOM 465: Advanced Broadcast News, and BCOM 482: Television Program Production. This provides a measure and comparison of

student knowledge related to our eight Learning Goals, with a special emphasis on writing and language arts skills.

- **Professional Assessment:** At least once each academic year, media professionals evaluate a random selection of student portfolios from each major using rubrics created by the individual programs. These portfolios include cover letters, résumés, and representative samples of student work within the major. These assessments occur in a variety of classes, but most notably and consistently: SOM 402: First Amendment Studies, JOUR 426: Advanced Reporting, PJ 436: Photojournalism Projects, BCOM 465: Advanced Broadcast Newswriting, and BCOM 482: Television Program Production.

- **Performance Evaluations:** Student performance in specific capacities relevant to their field of study are evaluated for competency, style, and adherence to our eight Learning Goals. Students are evaluated by external reviewers in BCOM 465: Advanced Broadcast News, by story sources in JOUR 426: Advanced Reporting, and by assigned mentors in PJ 431: Advanced Photojournalism.

The School of Media also employs the following indirect measures:
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Employment rates and patterns
- Contest and competition performance
- Exit surveys
- Post-graduate surveys
- Internship/coop evaluations