

## **JMC Assessment Report December 2008**

### Direct Measurements

JMC uses three direct measurements:

- A graduation portfolio: samples of work from their area of interest (e.g. public relations news releases, advertising graphics and design, stories for print or broadcast journalism) are collected at the end of the semester in which they apply for graduation and submitted in the portfolio. A clean copy of the senior capstone paper and an evaluation of the internship experience are also among the items required for submission. The JMC faculty hold an annual portfolio review where the portfolios are examined and marked according to a prepared rubric.
- Senior exit exam: All seniors in JMC must complete an exit exam at the conclusion of the ethics course (required for all majors). The battery of questions reflects the content of core courses and relates directly to desired learning outcomes. The questions are multiple choice and the battery of questions are reviewed by a faculty panel as are the results of the tests.
- Senior writing requirement: All JMC students must complete a formal research paper as part of the ethics class. Any papers that do not meet the Schools' prescribed standards must be revised until satisfactory. Unsatisfactory papers prevent a student from graduating. A clean copy of the paper (that is without grading marks) must be submitted as part of the portfolio. The clean version is reviewed during the portfolio process by members of the faculty who did not grade the paper in class.

### Indirect Measures

JMC uses three indirect measures:

- Focus groups: Each assessment day, a self-selected group of 10 to 15 students participate in a focus group to gather information about their impressions of the J-School.
- Internship evaluations: Each student is required to complete a three-credit hour internship. As part of the requirements for completion, students must submit an evaluation from the immediate supervisor for the internship period. The evaluation includes such areas as work ethic, writing and/or production skills, ability to work with others, take instruction etc. The internship evaluation is added to the portfolio.
- Awards: JMC aggressively enters award competitions at the state, regional and national levels. Competition is against other schools and sometimes against professional organizations. Since 2000, JMC students have won over 500 awards at all levels of competition for writing, production and design.

## Faculty Review

Each December, at the conclusion of the semester, JMC faculty members gather for an assessment review. Portfolios are reviewed and graded by an agreed upon rubric. Once findings from the rubrics are gathered, faculty hold another assessment meeting to discuss findings and determine if any changes are necessary in the curriculum.

As a result of these meetings, several changes have been made to the curriculum and to the assessment process. For example: More technical writing exercises were added to JMC 102. A pre-test and post test were added to JMC 402 Mass Media Law, standardized court case review. A pre-test and post test were added to the JMC 305 Copy Editing class. The Senior Exit Exam was moved from Assessment Day to last class day of the JMC 440-Mass Media Ethics to insure larger participation rates.

Faculty members also meet during assessment day in April to discuss JMC assessment procedures. This past April Faculty members discussed the exit exam, reviewed questions for the exam and results of the exam. Student focus groups are also held during the assessment day.

### Learning Outcomes:

Goal 1-Are able to prepare and disseminate written communications in standard American English. Measure-JMC 102 exit standardized exit exam, Portfolio of work.

Goal 2 Articulate principles of relevant media law and freedoms of expression. Measure-Performance on standardize portion of JMC 402 (law) exam and questions on senior exam.

Goal 3-Can synthesize information from primary and secondary sources. Measure-portfolio review

Goal 3-Can articulate ethical responsibilities which professional communicators must concern themselves. Measure-Portfolio review of capstone paper.

Can demonstrate fundamental skills that show competency in ability to be employed in a mass communications field. Measure-portfolio review of work samples and employer assessment in required internship experience.

For results and analysis, please refer to attached document with Fall 2008 Assessment Report.

Assistance needed with Assessment: More coordination between University requirements and the requirements of the accrediting bodies.

**School of Journalism and Mass Communications  
Assessment Report  
Fall Retreat 2008**

A diversity of assessments each year reaffirms the general high performance of journalism and mass communications students. Following is a summary of assessment data with identification of areas that need improvement and suggestions for modifications.

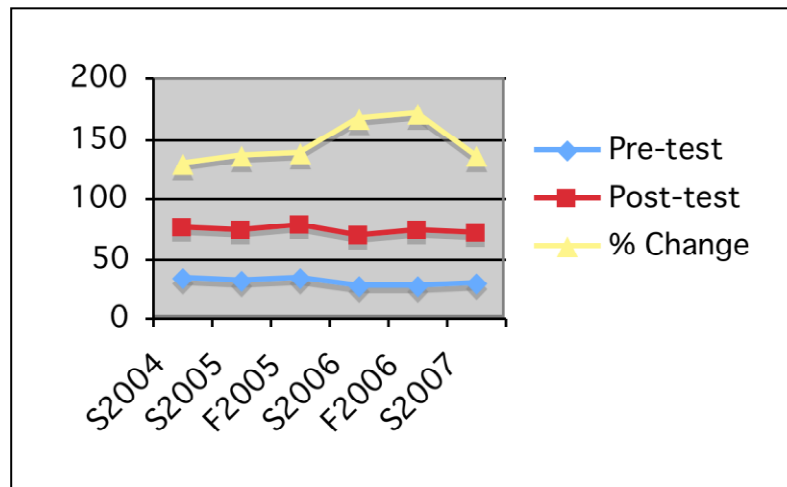
***Before and after assessment—JMC 101***

**Assesses:** principles of freedom of speech and of the press, thinking ethically, history, diversity and tools and technologies of the profession

**Results:** The pre-test and post-test assessments are administered in all JMC 101 classes including approximately 557 students over four years. The exam scores consistently show a remarkable increase in performance, averaging a +146% increase in correct responses.

**Recommendation:** Continue without change.

<b>JMC 101 Pre-test/Post-test Comparisons</b>						
	S2004	S2005	F2005	S2006	F2006	S2007
Pretest	33.15	31.25	32.6	25.68	27.27	29.8
Post-test	76.16	73.45	77.8	68.6	74.05	70.05
% Change	129.74	135.04	138.65	167.13	171.54	135.07



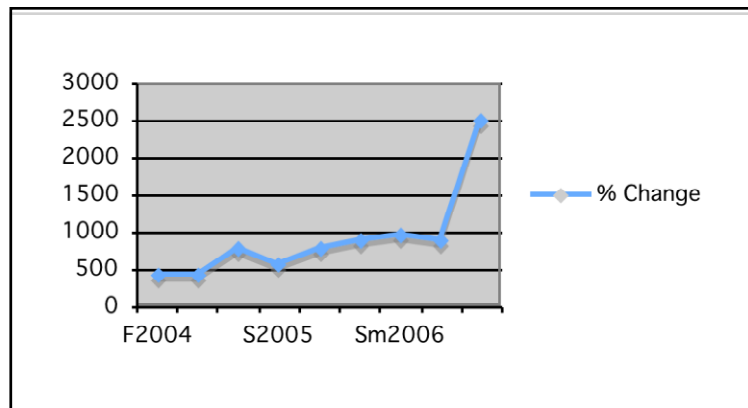
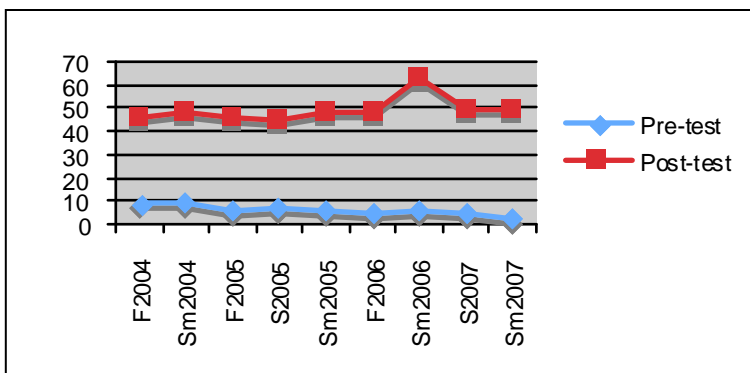
***Before and after assessment—JMC 402/502***

**Assesses:** freedom of speech and of the press, history, diversity

**Results:** The pre-test and post-test assessments are administered in all JMC 402/502 classes. The exams consistently show a remarkable increase in performance, averaging a +918% change, and a steady rise in the percent increase since 2004, perhaps attributable to declining scores on the pre-test.

**Recommendation:** Continue without change.

JMC 402/502 Pre-test/Post-test Comparisons									
	F2004	Sm2004	F2005	S2005	Sm2005	F2006	Sm2006	S2007	Sm2007
Pre-test	8.84	8.8	5.25	6.8	5.48	4.95	5.9	4.86	1.9
Post-test	45.7	48	46	45.3	48.35	48.6	63.3	49	49.5
% Change	417	445	776	566	782	882	973	908	2505



## Senior Exit Exam

**Assesses:** principles of freedom of speech and of the press, writing clearly and correctly, working ethically, thinking ethically, history, and diversity

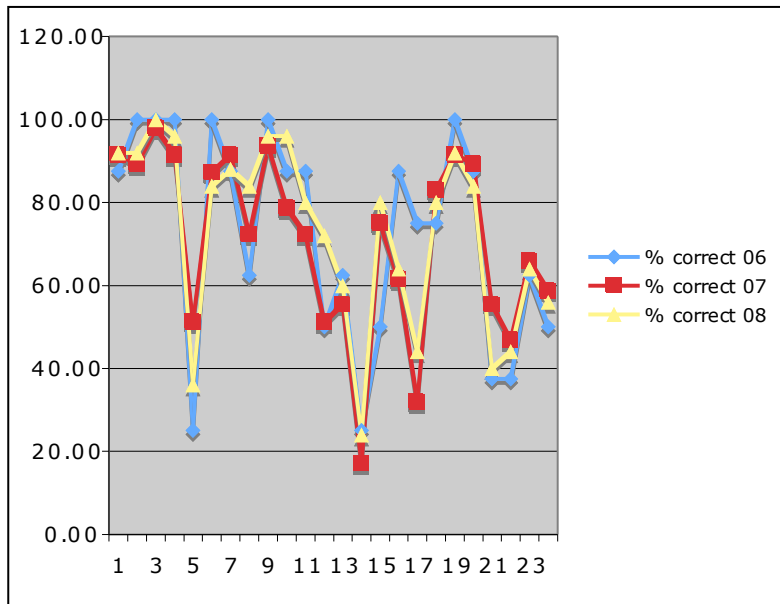
**Results:** All seniors enrolled in JMC 440, Mass Communications Ethics, complete the senior exit exam, creating a data set from a census of graduates throughout the year. The overall pass rate is satisfactory with over half of all students passing at 70% or better. The exam revealed:

- difficulty with the content questions of “newsworthiness” (average 37% correct),
- difficulty identifying ethical principles (average 58.6% correct),
- difficulty identifying specific government documents (average 50% correct), and
- some confusion with FCC licensing (average 22% correct).

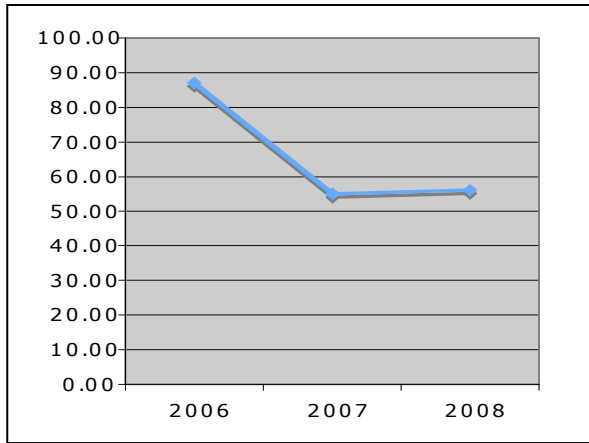
**Recommendations:** • Agree on a testable definition of newsworthiness, but continue to address the debatable aspects of the concept in classes.

- Stress in JMC 440 the ethical principles and their underpinning of journalistic decision-making.
- Review FCC rules in law and broadcast management classes to reinforce earlier exposure.
- Cover the use of government documents consistently in JMC 102, Information Gathering and Research, and take advantage of an embedded librarian from library services to strengthen all library use.
- Expand the exit exam to include more grammar questions and to more fairly present the ethical principles questions.

### Senior Exit Exam Correct Answers Comparison



## Senior Exit Exam Pass Rates



2006—volunteers for exam  
2007 and 2008—census of all seniors

## Graduation Portfolios

**Assesses:** principles of freedom of speech and of the press, presentation of images and information, writing correctly, conducting and evaluating information, evaluating information, evaluating students' own work, synthesizing information, critical thinking and applying the tools and technologies of the profession

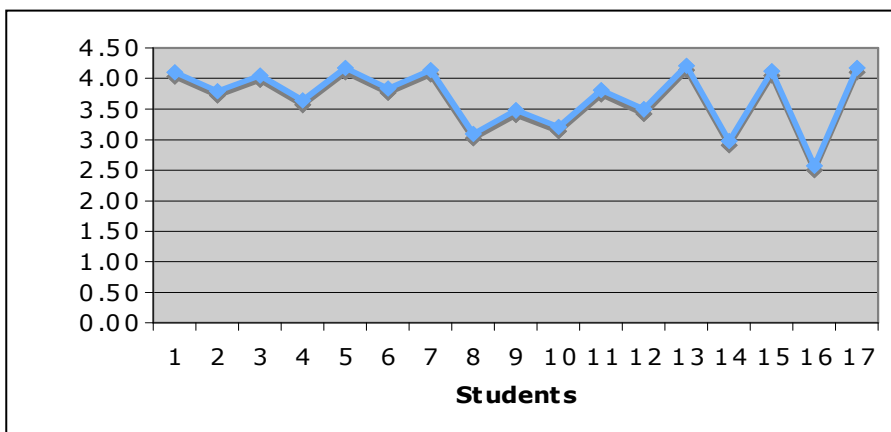
**Results:** Overall, portfolio reviews reflect a consistently high performance by School of Journalism and Mass Communications seniors. Averages in 2004 to 2006 ran from 2.4 to 4.0 on a four-point with the overall average at 3.2 or in the “good” range and a 92% “acceptable” rate. A new five-point rubric was introduced in 2007 and averages ran from 2.57 to 4.10 with an overall average of 3.7, or in the “proficient” range.

The lowest averages, while remaining consistently above 3.0 ratings, were in writing mechanics and content. Journalistic writing samples were strong, but formal, academic writing was weaker.

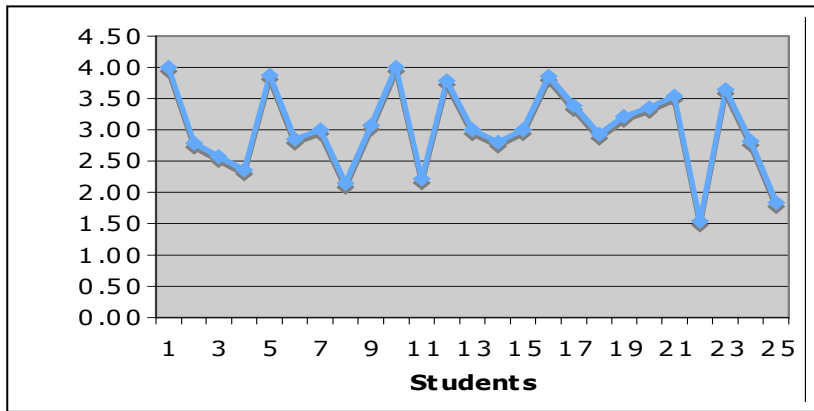
**Recommendations:**

- Add Writing Across the Curriculum certification to upper division classes.
- Increase the number of formal writing requirements in the sophomore and junior year experiences.

## Senior Portfolio Averages—2007



### Senior Portfolio Averages—pre 2007



### Faculty Portfolio Reflections and Recommendations December 2007

<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Solutions</i>
<b>Regarding Statement of Philosophy</b>	
<p>Strange ideas about the profession, some seem to believe journalism is supposed to be comfortable and comforting; 360 students almost unanimously would not publish images of accidents-bothersome.</p> <p>Students have zero idea about how to write a statement of philosophy about responsibility of the media.</p> <p>Statements of philosophy/values are in inconsistent in their focus and scope, which makes it difficult to assess them accurately.</p> <p>Don't seem to understand what a philosophy is.</p> <p>I don't think they spend enough time on philosophy and (arregal) writing. Just seem to be poorly written.</p> <p>Philosophies of media responsibility are weak.</p> <p>Don't seem to understand journalism or media definitions/issues.</p>	<p>Better intro in 101 and in all classes: more discussion about the "profession."</p> <p>Give better instruction on what the statement of philosophy/values should include to attain greater uniformity.</p> <p>Direct students to incorporate more intellectual material into the statements of philosophy/values. They are too often merely, "I think . . ." statements without support.</p> <p>Check understanding of basic definitions.</p>
<b>Regarding Thinking</b>	
<p>Our students don't understand journalism. They lack journalism values—even the good students.</p>	<p>Oral questions on their field.</p>
<b>Regarding Writing</b>	
<p>Organizational and conceptual quality of the</p>	<p>Ethics papers need to be based on more and</p>

<p>written samples is low; they often display a superficial understanding of the material and a lack of intellectual engagement, especially with regard to research.</p> <p>Our students cannot analyze issues and write a coherent report.</p> <p>Not really taking on ethical issue—doing both sides of topic.</p> <p>Foggy thinking and writing.</p> <p>Found writing to be clumsy and dull.</p> <p>Formal writing is weaker than journalistic writing.</p> <p>Lack of passion for writing well each time one writes, even when grades or money aren't part of the outcome.</p> <p>They have problems suggesting a thesis and engaging in a thoughtful discussion of it.</p> <p>Writing skills lack when it comes to style, punctuation, grammar, spelling.</p> <p>Grammar problems are troublesome and unacceptable for a school that prides itself on writing: agreement problems, confused words, first person in formal capstone paper, weak transitions if present at all, people are <u>who</u> not <u>that</u>, split infinitives, too many contractions in formal papers, don't underline, italicize, or surround with quotes names of magazines, books, . . .</p>	<p>better research. This could be emphasized and prioritized in the assignment.</p> <p>The chapter format of the ethics paper is confusing.</p> <p>Only one paper I read had a literature review section. Requiring one would compel more research and more contemplation about the research material.</p> <p>Critical thinking is a concern on every campus. Ideally, reporting classes should teach the critical thinking needed to research and synthesize information if prerequisite courses haven't accomplished the goal.</p> <p>I would suppose JMC 102 or ethics is where students would learn/develop a personal philosophy.</p> <p>Each non-skills course (such as intro, history, special topics) must require research and report writing.</p> <p>Writing assignments to improve skills.</p>
<p><b>Regarding internships</b></p>	
<p>Internship samples are weak. Some of the internship work seems weak—perhaps they didn't do much during internship then and threw something together at the end.</p>	
<p><b>Regarding Portfolio Preparation</b></p>	
<p>All material should be on a DVD.</p> <p>Distinguish between job and class samples.</p> <p>Mentions of Dean's list should provide semester and year.</p>	<p>There must be a one-hour, non-credit course, to help students understand how to package the portfolio packages.</p> <p>Either grade them for a class or have a "portfolio" class that works on them.</p>

	<p>Need more specifics on how materials are submitted for the portfolios and what materials are submitted.</p> <p>Encourage students to take graduation portfolio seriously. They need to proofread carefully and submit only their best work.</p> <p>Provide template for setting up a CD portfolio.</p> <p>Could portfolios go on a secure location on the website?</p> <p>Tell students how important the portfolio is. Include how the portfolio is used.</p>
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### ***Internship Supervisor Evaluations***

**Assesses:** presentation of images, writing correctly, critically evaluating students’ own work and that of others, synthesizing information, applying tools and technologies of the profession

**Results:** Internship professional supervisors offer their praise regularly for School of Journalism and Mass Communications’ interns. The lowest ratings, on a scale of 1-4, are typically only in the 3.5 to 3.7 ranges. However, there is still concern that those ratings are generally linked to writing skills and to general adaptability to the daily work routine. Also it should be noted that the average scores have dropped somewhat from 2003.

In 2003 students earning internship credit were those who elected the course, creating a self selected sample of already engaged scholars. After internships were added as a graduation requirement, the rapid influx of students filled the pipeline. Many students have opted to complete their internships early in their academic careers.

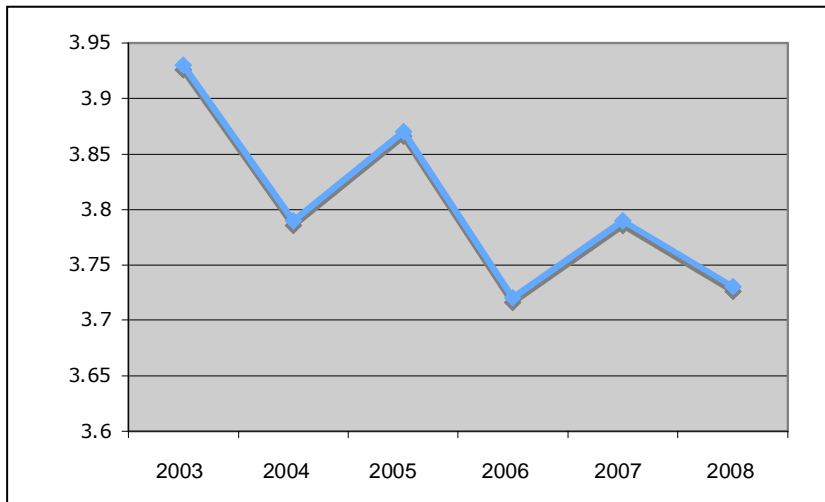
Conversely, as the internship channel filled the proportion of supervisors recommending “A” grades for internships increased. The greater demand for internships necessarily added novice supervisors to the pool of employers, many of whom are not familiar with internship direction. While they rate student work on a scale comparable to the industry work world rather than with an academic mindset, they still find students’ overall contributions superior.

Despite sending every student into the workforce, internship ratings have generally been highly complimentary and above the 3.5 mark.

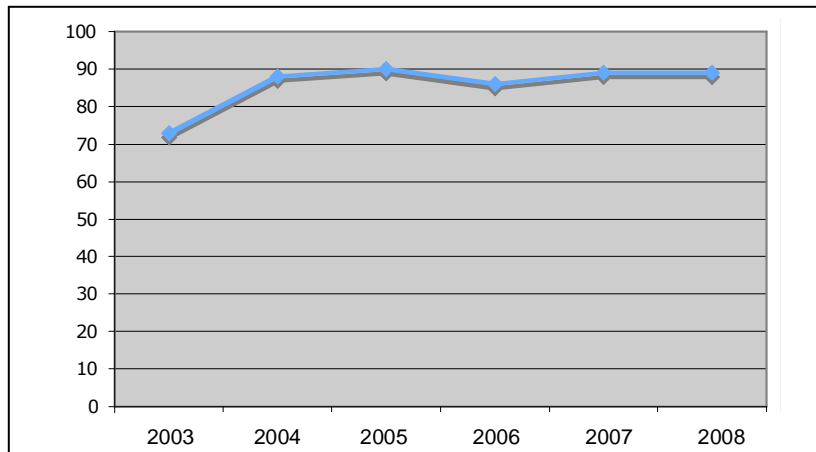
**Recommendations:**

- Establish prerequisites that will encourage students to postpone their required internships until they have developed skills that will genuinely benefit employers.
- Construct a “Supervisor’s Syllabus” to help new internship supervisors better understand their roles and responsibilities.

### Internships: Supervisor Evals.—Average Ratings



### Internships: Supervisor Evals.—Recommend A



### *Alumni Survey*

**Assesses:** satisfaction, application of all skills

**Results:** The triennial alumni survey always brings much appreciated praise to the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. It also identifies areas that graduates who are practicing professionals consider shortcomings.

A few of the more outstanding results of the most recent survey are summarized below.

- 76% of graduates have found full-time employment in the field
- 48% of those employed in other areas chose to change fields

- 97% reported their education was useful or very useful and prepared them for work in the field
- 61% responded that their degrees aided in gaining promotions
- 70% indicated that the technology used in the school reflected that used in the field
- 70% said their internship helped prepare them for work and 66% said it made them more marketable (NOTE: most respondents graduated before internship became a required course)
- Comments were largely complimentary expressing graduates' appreciation of specific professors and the faculty in general, noting their respect for a demanding curriculum, and conveying their views that being at Marshall's School of Journalism and Mass Communications was an opportunity.
- Graduates isolated two areas they felt needed development:
  - convergence and
  - keeping up with technology.

- Recommendations:**
- Continue with overriding mission.
  - Continue strong emphasis on professional practice.
  - Continue to develop convergence.
  - Strive to maintain changes in technology.

**Grade distributions**

**Assesses:** fluctuations and trends in overall performance

**Results:** An examination of grade averages over time reveals a distinct pattern of performance among journalism and mass communications majors. Freshmen consistently produce the lowest grades, generally earning “C” averages or less, and trending downward.

Sophomores and juniors consistently earn grade point averages in the 2.8 and 2.9 range and seniors are averaging in the 3.0 range. All three classes are trending upward.

- Recommendations:**
- Continue to set high performance standards for journalism and mass communications majors.
  - Aggressively target freshmen for retention efforts.

<b>Grade Distributions</b>									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Freshman	2.02	1.90	2.50	2.12	1.62	1.98	1.98	1.88	1.65
Sophomore	2.81	2.89	2.88	2.88	2.90	2.89	2.80	2.83	2.88
Junior	2.82	2.86	2.94	2.94	2.95	2.88	2.94	2.86	3.02
Senior	2.89	2.95	3.01	3.01	3.03	3.02	3.04	3.06	3.06
Averages	2.77	2.80	2.88	2.88	2.89	2.88	2.88	2.88	2.93

