

JMC MAJ Assessment Program December 2010

Direct Measures

Comprehensive Exams: JMC requires all graduating candidates to complete a written comprehensive examination on five core areas: proseminar, media history, media ethics and law, JMC research, and mass communications theory. During the annual assessment review, graduate faculty members other than the original comprehensive exam reviewer read and assess answers.

Portfolio Review: Graduate students must submit a graduation portfolio consisting of a copy of either the thesis proposal or another formal research project from the JMC-602 research course and the comprehensive assessment. If the student completes a graduate level internship, the evaluation from the immediate supervisor is included in the portfolio. All papers are reviewed within a rubric by graduate faculty.

Indirect measures

Awards: JMC enters award competitions at the graduate and undergraduate level. Graduate students won seven awards for production in the last year. The most significant award was the Jim Nance Award for the Collegiate Sportscaster of the Year.

Research Presentation: Each graduate student involved in a research project presents his or her finding to the members of the graduate faculty during the afternoon of assessment day.

Objectives

1. Can articulate ethical responsibilities and implications of decisions faced by professional communicators. Measure: comprehensive exam.
2. Can articulate principles of relevant media law and freedoms of expression. Measure: Comprehensive exam.
3. Can articulate the historical context of mass communications. Measure: comprehensive exams.
4. Can articulate the theoretical framework of normative mass communication function. Measure: Comprehensive exams and portfolio review.
5. Can synthesize information from primary and secondary sources. Measure: Portfolio review.

6. Demonstrate the basic methods of research, carry out a valid survey. Measure: Standardized learning objectives in JMC 600-Pro-Seminar and JMC 602-Media Research, comprehensive exams and portfolio review.

Analysis/ Planned Action

JMC graduate faculty met three times in 2010 to discuss assessment. Portfolio reviews and comprehensive exam reviews determined that MAJ graduate students were not prepared to do graduate level research. Furthermore, MAJ students were basically rehashing undergraduate learning objectives for law and ethics. Two significant actions were taken: JMC 600-Pro Seminar, a required introductory course, added a new segment designed to help students obtain basic fluency in social science and provide a general survey of methods communication researchers use to investigate human and mediated communication activities.

To address the issue of recycled learning objectives in the law and ethics courses, a new class was created, JMC-604-Media Law and Ethics. The new class separated graduate students from the cross-listed courses and allowed for the deeper exploration of issues more appropriate to graduate education. Comprehensive exams were adjusted accordingly.

The graduate history class that used to be cross-listed with undergraduate history was advanced to a 600 level course (612).

MAJ Assessment Data

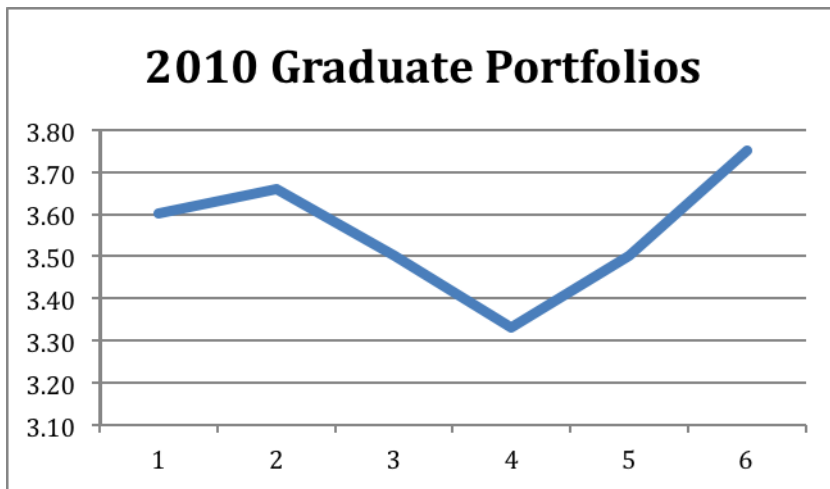
2010 Comprehensive Assessments

Fourteen SOJMC master's candidates, all who attempted, successfully completed the comprehensive assessment, passing with at least a minimum score of 70. A "pass with excellence" rating given in 13% of possible incidences.

2010 Graduate Portfolio Assessments

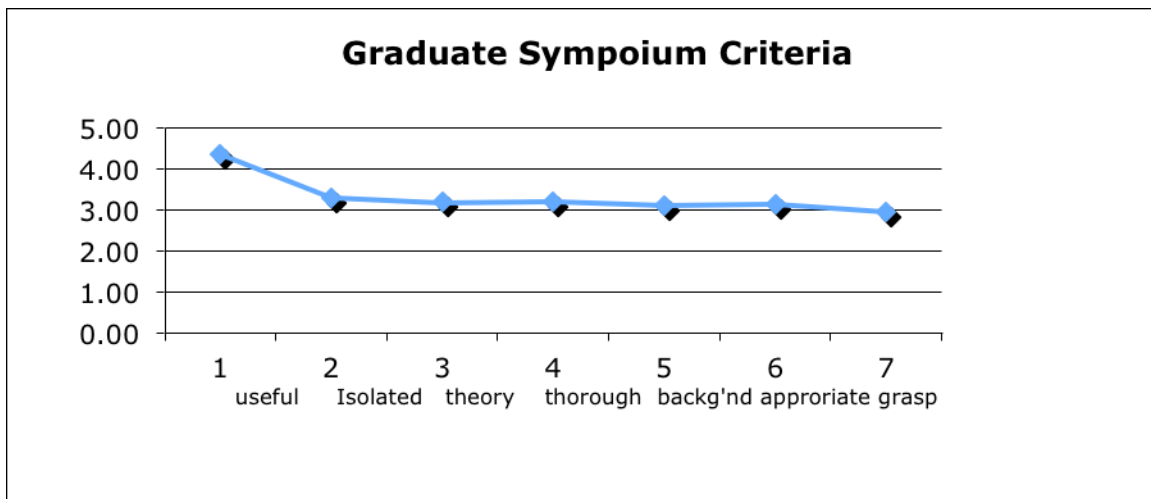
Graduate portfolios were assessed using a 5-point scale rubric on 14 criteria. Criteria were Written mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation), Writing content (coherence, organization, thesis/thought quality), Comprehensives (subject competency, thorough within the time frame) and Research paper (subject competency, topic significance, appropriate method, appropriate language, appropriate writing style) and Appearance. Reviewers indicated whether candidates were accomplished (5), proficient (4), developing (3), novice (2) or unacceptable (1) on each criteria.

The range of averages was 3.33 to 3.75, an acceptable result. Comprehensive assessments reflecting some of the lowest scores overall, possibly because of the extended time frame of the process and the pressure to compose and think quickly.



2010 Graduate Research Project Presentations

Seven master's candidates presented their "in progress" theses. Their averages over seven criteria equaled 3.25, an acceptable score, but in need of improvement. An examination of the criteria assessed indicated a very low score on the dimension of "reflected a grasp of methods", and comments pointed dissatisfaction with the quality of the literature reviews. The "in progress" nature of the projects contributed in part to the critiques, but a greater emphasis on literature reviews will be added to proseminar and to research. It may also be possible to present more research methodology earlier in the semester so projects can be more fully developed by assessment day.



Graduate Symposium Student Averages

