

**JMC Assessment Report  
Undergraduate Report  
December 2011**

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 members hold an annual portfolio review where the portfolios are examined and marked according to a prepared rubric.
- Senior exit exam and freshmen entrance 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. Freshmen complete the same exam in JMC 101, the required entry JMC class. Cognitive recall of seniors is compared with results of the freshmen class and will be compared to each cohort.
- 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. Faculty members teaching JMC 440-Media Ethics, enforce this provision of the requirement. Faculty members are reminded of this requirement and review the policies at the annual portfolio review. A clean copy of the paper (that is without grading marks) must be submitted as part of the portfolio and is critiqued during the portfolio review by members of the faculty who did not grade the paper in class.

Indirect Measures

JMC uses five 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. The groups are moderated by area mass communications professional practitioners and by SOJMC graduate students to encourage free discussion without professors' presence. Freshmen/sophomores comprise one group and juniors/seniors comprise another.

- 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 800 awards at all levels of competition for writing, production and design.
- Advising Assessment: SOJMC instituted assessment of student academic advising in 2010. Freshmen and sophomores are required to see an academic adviser in order to have their registration holds removed, and upper classmen are encouraged to seek advising before registration. Advisers distribute evaluation forms at the conclusion of the advising session, and the students are instructed to return completed forms to the administrative assistant. No evaluations are completed in the presence of the adviser.
- Syllabi Review: Selected tenure track, term and adjunct faculty syllabi are reviewed each year with all faculty in the SOJMC rotating through the review every three years. The syllabi are assessed against required and recommended content. The reviewer may suggest other improvements as well.

### Faculty Review and Actions Taken

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 in April to discuss findings and determine if any changes are necessary in the curriculum.

Changes from the most recent December 2011 assessment meeting actually centered on the assessment process. Several changes were made including the addition of the freshmen entrance exam to be used as a measure against the exit exam. Changes were also made to the test questions including the addition of four questions related to diversity.

Review of course syllabi has resulted in an on-going discussion of measuring course objectives in each class. Discussions continue as each faculty member is to develop a direct measure for each objective listed on the syllabus. More discussions are to be held at the April meeting. Advising assessment data collection was added in 2011 and review of those results is on the April agenda.

Several changes from the December 2010 meeting were implemented in 2011: Portfolio and syllabus reviews indicated students were arriving to JMC 450-Advanced Television News Reporting unprepared for the technical aspects of the course. As a result, a new course, JMC 340-Basic Broadcast News was added to the curriculum. JMC course numbers JMC 350 and 351-Advanced News Reporting I and II were changed to JMC 451 and 452 to indicate the newer advanced status of the class and syllabi were changed to reflect the new technical expectations for the course. The revision is too

recent to assess the effectiveness of this change. However, data are being gathered and the effectiveness of this change will be measured at the April 2012 meeting. In-course competency testing for Final-Cut Pro was added to JMC 451, Broadcast News Reporting and JMC 332, Video Production.

#### Learning Outcomes:

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

Goal 2 Articulate principles of relevant media law and freedoms of expression. Measure-Performance on standardized 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 with which professional communicators must concern themselves. Measure-Portfolio review of capstone paper (from JMC 440-Ethics).

Goal 4-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.

#### Benchmarks

JMC faculty members have established the following benchmarks:

JMC graduates shall have a mean score of 3.7 (on a scale of 5) on aggregate portfolio rubric scores. The following subsets shall be met: 3.5 on grammar, 3.75 on spelling and 3.5 on coherence.

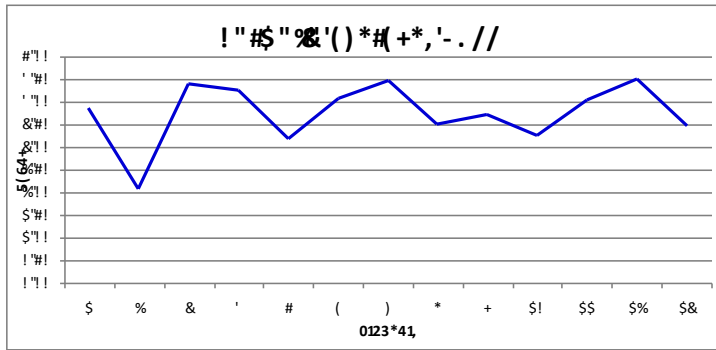
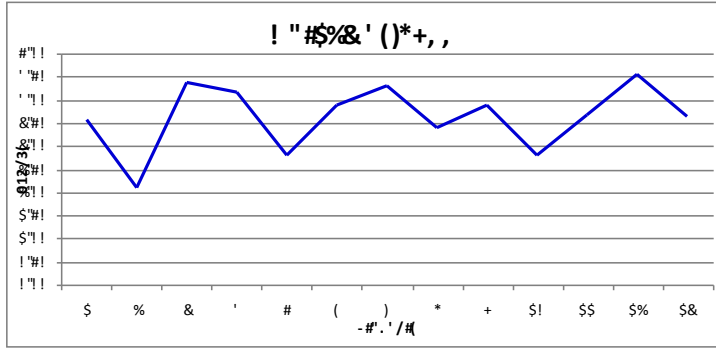
At least 60% of all JMC graduating seniors shall score a grade of at least 70 on the senior exit exam.

#### Assessment Results

##### *2011 Graduation Portfolio Review*

Thirteen portfolios (approximately one-third of those submitted) were selected for review. Average scores on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest score) ranged from 2.09 to 4.51 on the portfolio content, from 2.79 to 4.54 on the unit outcomes and from 2.08 to 4.52 overall. Grammar, punctuation, coherence and thought quality were among the lowest scores, yet still in the 3.3 to 3.59 range.





Faculty “reflections” about the work they review remained consistent compared to previous years. Even though numerically the scores are within an acceptable range, faculty continue to cite issues of lack of thought clarity, lack of critical thinking and perennial grammar and spelling errors.

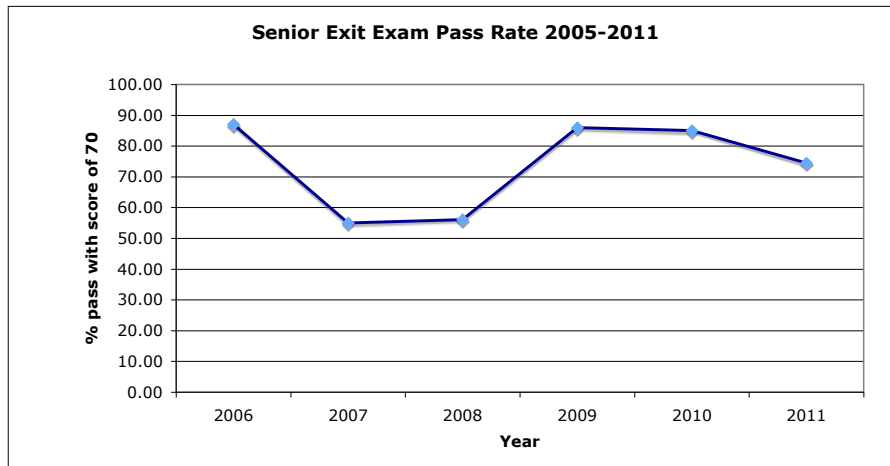
### 2011 Senior Exit Exam

The senior exit exam is administered at the end of classes each spring, summer and fall semesters. Fifty-one seniors completed the exam in 2011.

During 2011 74.5% of seniors taking the exam passed with at least a score of 70%, with the range of scores being 54 to 96. Administering a baseline cognitive exam with freshmen has just begun, and data have not been compiled.

Problematic areas continue to be in more complex subjects of law and ethics. The exam showed a distinct improvement in the area of determining newsworthiness and several legal issues, but indicated new issues in identifying grammatical errors, in understanding ratings and in identifying classic mass communications resources.

## Senior Exam Pass Rate 2006-2011



### *2011 Assessment Day Focus Groups*

#### Freshmen Sophomore Group

The lowerclassmen focus group was moderated by graduate students David Mistich and Myriah Hisam. Eight students attended.

The lowerclassmen consistently expressed dissatisfaction with having to take courses outside the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and they were particularly critical of Freshmen Year Seminar. They complained of a heavy course load and unrealistic expectations from professors, and the students were clearly unhappy with demands regarding grammar. Many expressed a desire to learn more computer design and production programs and wished for increased use of the television studio for production of programs for broadcast.

Collectively the participants praised caring, involved faculty as one of the strong attributes of the SOJMC. They also noted the non competitive nature among student, a family atmosphere and one-on-one learning as attractive qualities. Most felt they were adequately prepared for their internships, though they would like to be involved in internships earlier. One student noted that when he told a prospective intern employer about his computer skills the interviewer's "eyes lit up."

When asked about the most important things they have learned in the SOJMC most cited ability to manage time, learning from mistakes, getting out of one's comfort zone, developing a stronger work ethic, responsibility, flexibility and troubleshooting rather than the specific skills they profess to need.

## Juniors and Seniors

The upperclass group of ten students was moderated by Ashley Graham, an account executive with Bulldog Creative Services in Huntington, WV.

When asked about their most useful experiences in the SOJMC, the upper classmen responded capstone experience, real life hands-on approach with projects and with case studies and a curriculum that "allows us to build on interests." The students enjoy learning through work at both local and national levels rather than just lectures and tests.

In response to the a questions about the most important things they leaned in the SOJMC the students offered some very tangible lessons such as ways to find people for stories, typography, target audiences and effective communication and some broader "life lessons"--adaptability, effective oral and written communication, going beyond oneself and getting to know about others.

Most participants agreed they would like to have learned more about social networking.

Students expressed dissatisfaction with JMC 102, Information Gathering and Research. They said the databases and archives are out of date by the time they learn them and said they felt they can do research on their own. It was suggested by most participants that they are more likely to learn AP style and grammar by using it other classes as opposed to taking exams in those areas.

Focus group participants also said they felt as if the difficulty in courses just went up suddenly, and they would be happier with a more gradual, transitional approach. They suggested making 102 and 201 more demanding. Many would like to do internship earlier.

Ethics should be a lower level course. Many asked why they learn about ethics, laws, and guidelines after they've already been writing and producing for years.

Participants said they are prepared for their first jobs, but a little nervous. They said student organizations were great for networking and that the internship advisors were wonderful. Most participants were not thinking beyond their first job, but felt that with the skills and experience they have gained thus far that they can and will adapt to any job or opportunity given. Versatility was mentioned throughout the discussion.

If presented with one minute to tell prospective students about the SOJMC the participants said they would stress that the J-School has close-knit atmosphere with the ability to gain access to work opportunities through the student media, even as a freshman and sophomores, award-winning students throughout all forms of journalism and mass communications, leadership opportunities, professors who really care about students and their future, an excellent learning experience in which students really get to learn by doing, a supportive atmosphere, plenty of room to grow, and chances to build self-esteem and overcome fears.

Seniors who are nearing graduation say they will miss most consistency, professor feedback with constructive criticism, professor interaction (many never thought they would have such great relationships with professors.—this came up quite a bit, how much they appreciate and enjoy their professors), friends, fellow students that they easily relate to, close-knit family like atmosphere of the J-School, WMUL, opportunities, The Parthenon, professors passion and investment in students and our futures, having someone to talk to easily as they can their professors, having peers that understand exactly what they've been through.

It was mentioned that while the programs and software in the SOJMC computer labs are awesome and up-to-date, many complained about the accessibility to those. This was mostly in regards to only having limited access to Final Cut Pro for JMC 360 and that lab. One student mentioned missing After Effects in the Adobe Suite.

Respondents were asked, "If you had to write a slogan for the school what would it be?" Their responses included, "Criticism – Learn to Handle it," "Learning by Doing," "Sticking Our Nose Where It Doesn't Belong Since 1939," "Where Strangers Become Friends," "Small Steps, Big Experience," and "Make Your Mark, Leave Your Legacy."

The underclassmen and the upperclassmen reflected a remarkable difference in their perceptions of journalism specific skills classes and general studies and more cognitive and theoretical courses. Lower classmen repeatedly expressed a desire for access to more skills classes and wanted a greater portion of their program to be within JMC. Upperclassmen seemed to have a deeper appreciation of a broad education.

### *2011 Internship evaluations*

The internship evaluations have been distributed, but results will not be available until January. Preliminary returns are indicating that the SOJMC continues to have a strong internship program in which students make a clear contribution to their employers.

### *2011 Academic Advising*

Surveys given to students at the conclusion of advising sessions during pre-registration reflect such satisfaction with advising that we are reconsidering the questions posed and the process of assessing advising. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being best, the SOJMC faculty were consistently rated 5 on all of the dimensions measured.

### *Syllabus review 2011*

All course syllabi for three randomly selected faculty were assessed. Although most required Board of Governon's criteria were met, spotty omissions were noted with course

credit hours, co-and pre-requisities, and attendance policies. The syllabi reviewed met required content at only about a 55% rate.

The most difficult syllabus objective to achieve seems to be the inclusion of degree program learning outcomes and descriptions of how outcomes are to be assessed. Movement toward Lumina Pathways will strengthen this part of course syllabi

Again, at the beginning of each term faculty receive a reminder of required and recommended syllabi content as they are preparing for an upcoming semester.