

**2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM**  
**(Due October 15 to the dean)**

The Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) is committed to a vision of assessment that leads to continuous program improvements and benefits students. Annual assessment reporting informs decision making and resource allocation aimed at improving student learning and success. It also enables the AAC to analyze assessment across the institution and to respond to UA System, Board of Regents, legislative, and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requests. We thank you for your continued support of and participation in this annual activity.

Starting in Spring 2021, UAA is moving to one academic assessment reporting mechanism. The below form merges and streamlines the former Annual Academic Assessment Survey and the Annual Academic Assessment Report. It also incorporates questions about how academic programs contribute to student achievement of institutional core competencies and to student success.

**This annual report will be due to the dean on October 15. Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.**

These reports are public documents and will be posted on the assessment website. Responses are to be narrative only, and must be ADA and FERPA compliant. Do not embed any links, including to webpages or other documents. To be FERPA compliant, do not include the names of any current or former students. Rather, use statements such as, "In AY21 four program graduates were accepted to graduate programs in the field." Programs with specialized accreditation or other external recognitions must comply with restrictions regarding what can be published, as per the accreditor or external organization. Do not include appendices. Appendices to this form will not be accepted.

The form uses narrative, text, and drop-down boxes. Narrative boxes have a character limit, which includes spaces. When using text and drop-down boxes, if you want to undo an answer, press "Control-Z" or "Command-Z."

For technical assistance with this form, email Academic Affairs ([uaa.oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.oaa@alaska.edu)).

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**PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)**

*After completing the Program Section, the program should email this form to the dean, with a copy to the appropriate community campus director(s) if the program is delivered on a community campus.*

**Submission date:** 10/15/2021

**Submitted by:** Paola Banchemo, professor of journalism and public communications,  
pbanchemo@alaska.edu

**Program(s) covered in this report:** Journalism & Public Communications BA  
*(Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.)*

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. *(100 characters or less)*

**College:** College of Arts and Sciences

**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:**  Anchorage  KOD  KPC  MSC  PWSC

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** Select Specialized Accrediting Agency or N/A.

**If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe:** NA

### **INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES**

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four "core competencies" at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA conducted a pilot project focusing on the core competency of Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR). This decision was based on input from the 2020 Annual Academic Assessment Retreat.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in this core competency.

**1. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.**

- **What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this Core Competency? (500 characters or less)**

Several courses throughout the Bachelor of Arts promoted these values. The program's core courses: JPC A201 Reporting & Writing News, JPC A202 First Amendment & Media Ethics, JPC A203 Writing and Producing Media, JPC A204 Media Literacy each reinforce ethical journalism & communication practices. Courses such as JPC A362 Principles of Strategic Communications, JPC A366 Planning & Writing for Strategic Communications, and JPC A492 JPC Capstone Seminar and JPC A204 emphasize community engagement.

- **Do you have an example that could be a model for the university of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency? Yes No**

**If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)**

JPC A204 Media Literacy is a social science GER. It engages students in consuming, critiquing and creating media. These are skills that every citizen needs, especially in a media environment now rife with misinformation. We are now tapping our students in sharing what they've learned to community members: Other students, adults, etc. They are doing this by teaching their own media literacy lessons. Students have sometimes chosen their own topics & sometimes worked in teams.

- **Do you have any ideas about where your program or the university might develop other intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop proficiency in this core competency? Yes No**

**If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)**

Our program is well equipped to explain media literacy/misinformation detection/prevention across disciplines, including science misinformation, health misinformation and political misinformation. Media literacy skills are multidisciplinary, and so are their application.

## PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

**2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY21. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.**

***Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.***

This is a list of our program student outcomes; the outcomes we assessed in AY21 are indicated with whether the the expectations were met or whether they were evaluated.

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and the role of journalism and public communications in society; NOT EVALUATED IN 2020-21
2. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in a global society in relationship to communications; met expectations; EVALUATED in 2020-21. Met faculty expectations
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical concepts, legal rights and responsibilities, considerations and practices that guide public communications and research in the field; EVALUATED in 2020-21. Met faculty expectations.
4. Gather, critically evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources; EVALUATED in 2020-21; Met faculty expectations.
5. Demonstrate the ability to think independently and evaluate their own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness; NOT EVALUATED IN 2020-21
6. Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats; EVALUATED IN 2020-21; Met faculty expectations.
7. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions. NOT EVALUATED IN 2020-21

**3. Describe your assessment process in AY21 for these program student learning outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)**

We took a minimal approach to assessment in 2020-21 because of the pandemic and the stress on students and faculty. We assessed four of our seven program student learning outcomes. We used a pre- and-post test in JPC A202 First Amendment and Media Ethics to assess PSLO No. 3. We used professional communicators who interacted with students on projects to assess other student learning outcomes (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6). These professional communicators in some cases led nonprofits that partnered with students or interacted with them as they prepared their projects. In other cases, we used professional communicators who served as internship workplace supervisors. Three of four full-time faculty contributed to the assessment process.

**4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (750 characters or less)**

We need to do a better job of explaining what our program student learning outcomes are with students early and often in the program. It is difficult to judge this academic year. We had no assessment completed in 2019-20, and the previous year we made significant changes to the major, including collapsing the two concentrations. We also find that we need to make it more explicit to students that professional communicators (prospective employers) assist us in assessing their achievement of the program student learning outcomes. Students in our program largely graduate into jobs in the profession — journalism, strategic communications or production-oriented positions — evidence of their having met the competencies we've outlined.

**5. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)**

1. Program needs another year or two to determine the impact on students of eliminating concentrations.
2. Program needs another two years to see the the impact of implementing an eportfolio requirement. We need more guidance to students on this requirement earlier in our program.
3. Program has (mostly) clear competencies. We have a more tenuous grasp on how we know if students achieve the competency. Need to determine how we help students in & out of class to learn the competencies outlined.
4. Program is guiding students away from courses that are more superficial but still in our curriculum (due to faculty affinities & abilities) and toward more skills-oriented courses.
5. Program to consider a base knowledgeP survey as an assessment.

#### **PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING**

**6. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please check all that apply.**

- Course curriculum changes
- Course prerequisite changes
- Changes in teaching methods
- Changes in advising
- Degree requirement changes
- Degree course sequencing
- Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- Changes in program policies/procedures
- Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- College-wide initiatives (e.g., High Impact Practices)
- Faculty, staff, student development
- Other
- No changes were implemented in AY21.

**If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 characters or less)**

**7. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)**

Students who graduated in 2020-21 were not asked in an exit survey about how recent changes to the program are working. Anecdotal evidence shows that students are satisfied with the elimination of concentrations; however, some liked the system in which their particular concentration was noted on their transcript and their diploma. Graduates in 2020-21 (N = 16) were more likely to freelance to start their careers. At least two are enrolled in master's programs, with another applying now. At least seven are working in journalism/public communications; others are in professions such as banking.

**STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE CLOSING OF EQUITY GAPS**

Programs are not required to respond to question #8 below for their report due on October 15, 2021. Question #8 will be required for the next round and moving forward.

**8. Respond to at least one of the following metrics. Student success depends on many aspects of a student's experience. On the academic program level, it can relate to correct placement, course sequencing, standardized pre-requisites, the intentional use of high impact practices, proactive advising, course scheduling practices, etc. UAA is using the following two metrics in its cyclical Program Review process, as well as in its reaffirmation of accreditation process. These data are included in the most recent IR-Reports Program Review dashboard. Please review these data for your program, note any equity gaps, and describe steps you are taking or plan to take to close those gaps.**

Metric	Definition	Rationale
JUNIOR GRADUATION RATE - BACCALAUREATE	The percentage of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree within four years of first reaching junior class status (60 credits). <i>Data source: RPTP end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation.</i>	Junior graduation rate (after 60 credits) can reflect a department's success in helping students complete their degrees. Within their first 60 credits, students typically focus on completing GERs and often switch majors. Tracking how long it takes students to complete their degrees after 60 credits, when many students have likely committed to a specific major, can provide actionable information for departments.
COURSE PASS RATES BY COURSE LEVEL	The percentage of students who receive a passing grade (A, B, C, P)	Low pass rates are one critical way to identify courses that are barriers

Metric	Definition	Rationale
(Undergraduate lower-division, undergraduate upper-division, and graduate).	for all undergraduate students and (A, B, P) for graduate students in a course offered by a program compared to the same rate calculated for all courses at that level. Based on a 5-year trend. Included in the denominator for undergraduate courses are the grades D, F, W, I, NP, NB. Included in the denominator for graduate level are the grades C, D, F, W, I, NP, NB. Discipline acts as a proxy for a program. <i>Data source: RPTP end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation.</i>	to student success and degree completion. Failing key courses correlates with low retention and more major switching. Mitigation strategies can be internal or external to the course itself, including, among other things, the use of high-impact pedagogical practices, appropriate placement, course sequencing, tutoring, and other means to ensure student success within a particular course. This metric and the disaggregation of the data can inform planning, decision making, and the allocation of resources to programs and services designed to mitigate gaps in achievement and equity.

9. Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)

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### DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

After completing the Dean Section and signing it, the dean should email this form to the program, and copy [uaa\\_oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_oaa@alaska.edu) for posting. If the program is delivered on one or more community campus, the dean should consult with the appropriate community campus director(s) on the response and copy the appropriate community campus director(s) when emailing the response to the program.

1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? Is there a particular area the program should focus on?

The number of students enrolling in JPC 204 has plummeted to less than half of the previous year (2020-2021 was half of 2019-2020 and Fall 2021 was half of Fall 2020). This



trend in enrollment in gen-ed courses needs to be addressed. As does the number of students in the major. What precipitated this change and how can it be overcome?

It is recommended that all programs review their Program Assessment Plan to ensure clear inclusion of the new UAA Core Competencies and in particular to address the closing of any equity gaps in the program.

- 2. Is there something the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, including the closing of equity gaps, that might serve as a model for other programs? If yes, please explain. You may skip this question. (750 characters or less)**

JPC is thoughtful about their curriculum and recent changes; they are doing a good job of monitoring the impact of the elimination of their concentrations. JPC is strong and a high quality program that does a good job of knowing the successes of their graduates.

Dean's signature: *Jenny McNulty*

Date: December 14, 2021