

**BIENNIAL PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM –
ASSESSMENT COMPLETED IN AY2023-2024 (Due to the dean on November 15)**

Submission date: 11/15/2024

Assessment Plan covered in this report: Journalism and Public Communications BA

College: College of Arts and Sciences

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

Submitted by: Paola Banchemo, professor and chair, JPC, pbanchemo@alaska.edu

- 1. Please list and number the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in the past academic year. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.**

in AY23 and AY 24 we evaluated...

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and the role of journalism and public communications in society; EVALUATED in 2023-24. Met faculty expectations.
- Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in a global society in relationship to communications; EVALUATED in 2023-24. Met faculty expectations.
- 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 2022-23 and 2023-24. Met faculty expectations.
- Gather, critically evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources; EVALUATED in 2022-23. Met faculty expectations.
- Demonstrate the ability to think independently and evaluate their own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness; EVALUATED in 2022-23. Met faculty expectations.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats; EVALUATED in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Exceeded faculty expectations.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions. NOT EVALUATED in 2022-23 or 2023-24. Unable to determine.

- 2. Describe what your assessment process was last year 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. (1000 words or less)**

JPC is working with a skeletal assessment plan, built in the wake of program changes, program review, and the pandemic. We used the 2020 plan to assess how students are faring in 2022-23 and 2023-2024.

We primarily used exit eportfolios, selected student artifacts, student surveys, and pre- and post-tests, and internship portfolios and workplace supervisor evaluations to assess our student learning outcomes.

This process of explaining, collecting, and analyzing PSLOs in the portfolios has been a faculty-run process. Individual full-time faculty commit to collecting data for certain PSLOs. That data is then forwarded to the assessment chair and examined and reported back in this form.

In JPC's 2020 assessment plan, we called for an exit survey of students and focus groups to gather indirect, qualitative data. We did not execute these two measures. We also found no effective way to measure PSLO 7 about analyzing numerical and statistical information.

Thus, this outcome was not measured in this assessment cycle. Faculty meet to discuss the findings and to make changes to the program, including prerequisite changes, eliminating or adding courses, or implementing a high-impact practice.

3. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (1000 words or less)

We evaluate PSLO 1 and 3 with similar or the same measures.

PSLO1: History and the role of journalism and public communications in society and
PSLO3: Understanding of the ethical concepts, legal rights and responsibilities, considerations and practices that guide public communications and research in the field
JPC A202 First Amendment and Media Ethics is based on case studies. Throughout the semester students read, discuss and respond in written form to cases on topics such as privacy, source-reporter relationships, minimizing harm, and deception. Students are also routinely engaged in discussions about the First Amendment as it relates to each case.

A pre-test on First Amendment knowledge and a final exam that includes questions about First Amendment issues provides an assessment of what students have learned with respect to First Amendment law. However, a more accurate assessment of student learning in JPC A202 is a comprehensive written and oral assignment that requires the student to find, design and present their own case study. This quite clearly means students must master "understanding the role of journalism in society."

Lastly, students are asked about the role of journalism and public communications in a brief pre- and post-test in JPC A104 Media Literacy.

For PSLO 3, students in JPC A202 must research, examine, discuss, and present their ethics cases (both written and orally), the student must also understand the viewpoints of various stakeholders and how the repercussions of their decision-making affects the overall credibility of journalism institutions. Students are also tasked with ethical decision-making in other courses, particularly in JPC A201 Reporting and Writing News, JPC A362 Principles of Strategic Communications and JPC A366 Planning and Writing for Strategic Communications.

More than 80% of the students in JPC A202 met PSLO1 and PSLO3 in 2023-24. Although we did collect data in 2022-23, we did not analyze it.

We surveyed students in JPC A366, asking about their own estimation of “knowledge in applying ethical principles and regard for diversity, both domestic and global, in strategic communications materials and plans.”

More than half the class (53%) ranked themselves at 5 or below; 48% ranked themselves at 6 or higher, including one student who ranked their knowledge at 10. The survey was launched in toward the end of the semester. These self-reported data uphold our conclusion that students met PSLO3 in 2023-24.

PSLO2: Understanding of diversity in a global society in relationship to communications
Several assignments in courses ask students to consider how to reach diverse audiences and what ethical considerations are brought to bear in covering distinct communities. An example of this in the 2023-24 academic year was in JPC A366 Planning and Writing for Strategic Communications. Students were tasked with working with community partner Alaska Metal Mines, an industry group.

The goal of the project was to target an audience primarily of women between the ages of 18 and 25 about the positives of metal mining in the state, and how mining is connected to sustainable development of renewable energy technologies.

Students produced strategic communications assets. Two students scored 4, two students scored 3 on the final project, in which they explained their strategic goals for the project, their target audience, the research they completed, and the assets they developed. Their presentations and output demonstrated attention to the multifaceted needs of audiences.

In JPC A492 Capstone Seminar, several projects brought to the fore diverse voices.

PSLO 4: Gather, critically evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources

This outcome was primarily measured with the eportfolio. We have had students turn in exit eportfolios as a graduation requirement since the 2020-21 academic year. However, in the first couple of years of the requirement, few students who graduated needed to turn in a portfolio because they were graduating under the requirements of previous catalogs. Even this fall, we are graduating a student under a catalog that predates this requirement. Of the 15 portfolios that have been turned in since May 2022 (May and December 2022 graduates, May and December 2023 graduates, May 2024 graduates), 10 met or exceeded expectations in this PSLO. Five portfolios did not meet expectations, either the student failed to meet expectations or because the student failed to provide enough evidence of meeting the competencies outlined by the program.

Examples of satisfactory work include academic papers, deeply reported articles, documentaries, and communications campaigns for real-life clients.

PSLO 5: Think independently and evaluate their own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness.

Students in Journalism and Public Communications are routinely asked to evaluate their own work and the work of others in critique sessions. JPC A492 Capstone Seminar, JPC A445 Magazines, JPC A490, JPC 213 Digital Imaging all rely on this method. We also ask students to engage in self-reflection in other courses.

This outcome was measured using internship supervisor evaluations, exit eportfolios, and student artifacts.

PSLO6: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats

JPC students excel at this outcome. They are communicating orally with real-life clients, defending their concepts for strategic communications strategies. They are communicating visually with photography and video in a number of courses, such as JPC A344 Television News Reporting, JPC A213 Digital Imaging, JPC A203 Multimedia Storytelling I and most of the strategic communications classes. Written communication is evidenced a variety of courses.

We relied on eportfolios and on student artifacts to determine the mastery of this competency. We also used workplace supervisor evaluations for students in internships. These overwhelmingly pointed to student mastery of this competency.

PSLO7: Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions. This was not evaluated in 2022-23 or 2023-24. We lack a good mechanism to do so. We are establishing a signature assignment that can capture data on this outcome.

This process of explaining, collecting, and analyzing PSLOs in the portfolios has been a faculty-run process.

4. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Yes

- i. Please describe the recommended action(s), what improvements in student learning the program hopes to see, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change(s) has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (1000 words or less)**

-Change the language around the quantitative skills GER prerequisite for JPC A492 JPC Capstone Seminar. This is going to be implemented this year.

-More effectively communicate the requirements of the eportfolio. This is being carried out this year.

-Implement a signature assignment or two to measure PSLO7 and consider revising the student learning outcome itself. This will be developed over 2024-25 and implemented in the fall.

-Incorporate more consistent and comprehensive feedback from professional communicators.

5. 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 last year. *(If no options above were selected)*

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

We have known about the very serious lack of direction on visual communications (video, photography) in our program for some time. We first made connections with the Department of Art on this front and developed an OEC in graphic design. We have been focused on hiring Atwood Chairs of Journalism who have this expertise.

6. 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. (1000 words or less)

We simplified our curriculum in the 2020-21 academic year by removing our concentrations. Now students take six upper-division courses in JPC in addition to a capstone. We didn't have much data at our last report about how this was affecting students, but anecdotally, it seemed as if students were navigating the program more quickly. Four years in, we have found that students are moving through the curriculum with fewer stumbling blocks, such as having to complete academic petitions. However, we had some residual issues — primarily courses that did not align closely with our program student learning outcomes or with current demands in the industry. We have revised our program to eliminate those courses, which means there is no longer awkward language about 300-level and 400-level electives.

We have retained language about directing students to take 3 credits of an interdisciplinary elective, in addition to GERs. UAB asked about the need for this, and we are considering striking this language in a future revision.

We are also removing the language about specific quantitative skills GERs from JPC A492 Capstone Seminar. That has been an impediment to students.

Could our curriculum stand a complete overhaul? It is possible. We have a shrinking student base, and competition now from a robust and fully staffed Department of Communication in CTC that has its own major.

The information we have about these changes have been largely anecdotal. Capturing this improvement may be difficult because the beneficiaries of these changes may not notice that these impediments have been removed. Recent alumni may be able to speak to these issues, and a survey of them could supplement our next assessment report.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

- 1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? (200 words or less)**

The program is encouraged to implement changes as discussed above along with careful tracking of how these changes impact student learning. In particular, changes that improve retention and completion time should be prioritized.

- 2. Discuss what the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, for example, the use of a common rubric or prompt, a signature assignment, etc. (200 words or less)**

The program is commended for its yearly assessment and rotation of SLOs assessed each year. Additionally, the use of the Atwood Chair to fill curriculum needs and provide additional student opportunities is applauded.

Dean's signature:

Jenny McNulty

Date: 1/13/2025