

## HSU Academic Department Reports – Journalism and Mass Communication

### September 30, 2008 - Program Prioritization

---

#### I. Departmental History, Mission, and Goals

- The **mission** of the Journalism & Mass Communication Department: help students learn a solid foundation of skills and knowledge to become responsible media and public relations professionals within a strong liberal arts orientation, gain an understanding of the roles and effects of media in society and become more critical consumers of mass media, especially the news.
  
- Academic program **goals** for the Journalism & Mass Communication Department to fulfill the educational aspects of its mission:
  - a) To introduce students to the historical, public policy, legal and ethical issues related to the roles and effects of the mass media as important social institutions and to help students develop more critical-consumer skills of mass-media content, especially in the area of news.
  
  - b) To help prepare students for entry-level positions in journalism, public relations, broadcasting and advertising or for graduate work leading to the teaching of and research in journalism and mass communication and other careers such as law.

A department **history**, with emphasis upon the last 5 years, would have to begin over 40 years ago when the journalism major was first housed in a stand-alone department in 1967-68. Enrollment increased rapidly and by the late 1970s, the department began to be ranked in the top 15 majors on campus in terms of number of majors and has consistently remained there to present. The department has also been very efficient in graduating majors, ranking in the top 12 majors on campus in terms of numbers of majors graduated each year for many years – of special note given the small faculty allocation in the department. In the late 1990s, the broadcast curriculum and student-run radio station, KRFH-AM, in Speech Communication was merged into the Journalism Department and it was renamed the Journalism and Mass Communication Department. KRFH-AM, a very popular student radio workshop, joined a successful mix of departmental student media workshops that produce The Lumberjack weekly newspaper, Osprey magazine (each semester), The Online Humboldt Travel Journal, and the radio and television news workshop. The television news workshop and related curriculum began in the mid-1980s. The major contains emphases in news-editorial, public relations, broadcast news and production, and media studies (the latter is an interdepartmental offering with no stand-alone courses). We are one of the few journalism and mass communication programs in the country with about half of our majors in the news-editorial emphasis.

We attribute our success in recruiting prospective students to our major to a good reputation for teaching effectiveness, the many awards won by our student media, our effective internship placement, and vvery successful job placement of our graduates (reflecting a positive reputation among employers). We also offer two highly popular General Education upper-division service courses. Following Prof. McClary’s retirement in 2000 and completed FERP in 2005 and Prof. Gary Melton’s unexpected death in 2005, we were fortunate in hiring two new tenure-track faculty in Prof. Vicky Sama (broadcast) and Prof. Marcy Burstiner (news-editorial) in 2006-07. Our current programmatic challenges include the following: the need for instructional equipment and software and related technical support; rapidly changing technology, software and “new” media; the emerging demands of interns and graduates to have “convergence” skills for the media workplace, and related needs for curricular changes and faculty development within our department.

## II. Departmental Faculty and Staff

<b>Journalism and Mass Comm Dept Instructors -- AY Average Count of Appointments</b>						
<b>facpos_JMC report generated: 22-FEB-08</b>						
<b>Appt Category</b>	<b>AY 02/03</b>	<b>AY 03/04</b>	<b>AY 04/05</b>	<b>AY 05/06</b>	<b>AY 06/07</b>	<b>AY 07/08</b>
EXED *	0	0	*1	0	0	0
Lecturer	4	5	6	8	4	3
Assist Prof	1	0	0	0	2	2
Assoc Prof	0	1	**0	1	1	1
Professor	3	4	3	3	2	2
Volunteer	1	2	2	1	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

\* We are not sure what this EXED “appt category” means or what this represents.

\*\*We think this should be 1, not 0, since Prof. Estrada was present this year.

<b>Journalism and Mass Comm AY average FTEF (time base totals)</b>						
<b>facpos_JMC report generated: 22-FEB-08</b>						
<b>Appt Category</b>	<b>AY 02/03</b>	<b>AY 03/04</b>	<b>AY 04/05</b>	<b>AY 05/06</b>	<b>AY 06/07</b>	<b>AY 07/08</b>
EXED*	.00	.00	*1.00	.00	.00	.00
Lecturer	1.87	1.10	1.80	2.80	1.10	.90
Assist Prof	1.00	.00	.00	.00	2.00	2.00
Assoc Prof	.00	1.00	**0.00	.50	1.00	1.00
Professor	3.00	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.00	2.00
Volunteer	.14	.17	.11	.07	.07	.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>5.77</b>	<b>5.91</b>	<b>5.87</b>	<b>6.17</b>	<b>5.95</b>

\* We are not sure what this EXED “appt category” means or what this represents.

\*\*We think this be 1, not 0, since Prof. Estrada was present this year.

<b>Journalism and Mass Comm department release/assigned time</b>						
<b>facpos_JMC report generated: 22-FEB-08</b>						
<b>Assignment Description</b>	<b>AY 02/03</b>	<b>AY 03/04</b>	<b>AY 04/05</b>	<b>AY 05/06</b>	<b>AY 06/07</b>	<b>AY 07/08</b>
New Preparations	.00	.00	.00	.00	*.20	.00
Instr-Related Comm Assignmnts	.00	.00	.20	.50	.50	.40
Dept Chair AY, Leaders/Dir.	.40	.26	.26	.26	.26	.26
Dept Chair - 12mo	.13	.13	.13	.13	.13	.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>.53</b>	<b>.39</b>	<b>.59</b>	<b>.89</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>.79</b>

\*Represents one class release time in Fall for two new tenure-track faculty.

## Personnel (At least .5 FTE)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Description of Specialty and Key Contributions (no more than 100 words per person)</b>
Marcy Burstiner	Asst Prof	Teaches print and online reporting, beginning to advanced news gathering methods, investigative reporting, media theory and history. Serves as faculty adviser to the Lumberjack newspaper. Serves on the board of the California College Media Association. Serves as liaison to the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, local high school journalism programs and to local media for job placement and internships for students. Advises the student newspaper, The Lumberjack, which has won many state and regional awards.
George Estrada	Professor	Teaches newspaper reporting and editing, magazine production, literary journalism, international communication, propaganda analysis, mass media and popular culture, agenda setting, critical theory and the ethnic press. Has written two books about Philippine history and the Filipino-American immigrant experience: "I Have Tasted the Sweet Mangoes of Cebu" (2003) and "As Flip As I Want to Be" (2007). Also writes a weekly column for two newspapers: the California Examiner and the Philippine Times. Created an editing skills workbook, published in 2003 by Bedford St. Martin's. Advises the student-produced magazine, The Osprey, which has won many first-place awards in state and regional competitions.
Craig Klein	Professor	Teaches reporting, media law, audio production and radio news production and mass media and society. On leave in 2008-09.
Mark Larson	Professor	Teaches intro and advanced photojournalism, research in mass communication, intro and advanced public relations and mass media and society.
Vicky Sama	Asst. Prof.	Teaches reporting, mass media ethics and law, intro and advanced video production, television news production and mass media and society. Advises the tv news workshop which won an award in the CSU Media Arts Festival competition for student-produced TV news reports,

		Television News Category.
Zoe Walrond	Lecturer (0.8 in 2008-09)	Teaches reporting and radio news production and advises the student-run radio station and radio news workshop.

### III. Recruitment and Retention

*Describe any specific actions (other than HOP or similar standard efforts) the department has taken to recruit and/or retain students, particularly diversity students and/or students who are underrepresented in your discipline. What have been the results of those actions?*

For over 30 years, faculty in the JMC Department have made special recruiting efforts to attract community-college transfer students to HSU. We travel to the Journalism Association of Community Colleges' fall NorCal and SoCal regional conferences and its annual Statewide spring conference to recruit the highly diverse students interested in journalism who participate in these conferences. These transfer students are truly a "rainbow" of cultural backgrounds and most report to us they had never considered attending HSU prior to our contact with them. For many years we carried out these highly successful trips at our own expense (supported by departmental O.E. and fund-raising) but recently these have been supported as "program" trips by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. We also write personal letters after each conference to each of the hundreds of student award winners in the J.A.C.C. conference competitions congratulating them on their successful performances and encouraging them to consider transferring to a four-year journalism program such as the one at HSU. We know these are highly successful outreach efforts as documented by our intake surveys of incoming students and feedback from community-college journalism faculty.

We have also made special efforts to target local high school journalism programs and advisers. Our faculty regularly contact the advisers and visit local high schools. We also regularly invite the high school advisers and their students to campus for tours and to participate at no cost in our special guest lecturers and workshops such as the workshop led by design guru Tim Harrower last year. We see positive results from this outreach, especially in the last 5 years, with increased numbers of freshmen from the local programs.

We are also in our fourth year of participating in the Freshman Interest Group program, offering two introductory courses in our major (JMC 116 – Intro to Mass Communication and JMC 120 – Beginning Reporting). We conclude from evaluating the F.I.G.'s effectiveness so far that we are

retaining more freshmen in the major and that the F.I.G. students are participating earlier than non-F.I.G. majors in our student media workshops, major curriculum and professional internships.

We believe all of the above recruiting and retention activities in the department (such as individual and group advising sessions, departmental advising newsletters) have helped retention of our journalism majors. Student self-report data show that the journalism major is one of the most highly diverse on campus in terms of student self-identification of cultural background.

#### IV. Learning, Curriculum, and Assessment.

*List the student learning outcomes for your academic programs. Then for each learning outcome that has been assessed, provide a summary paragraph that includes the methodology and results of the assessment.*

##### • Student Outcomes for the journalism major:

We believe all HSU journalism-major graduates should know and be able to do the following as a result of their HSU experience. Journalism-major graduates have demonstrated:

- a) Effective news writing skills.
- b) Effective technical competence in visual reporting and/or layout and design using desktop publishing software and/or in editing and production using digital audio and/or video software.
- c) Creative critical thinking in acquiring a broad base of knowledge about the historical, public policy, legal and ethical issues related to the roles and effects of the mass media as important social institutions.
- d) Appreciation for and understanding of an expanded world perspective by engaging respectfully with a diverse range of individuals, communities and viewpoints.

Regarding learning outcome a):

The Journalism & Mass Communication Department chose to assess this learning outcome by having students, faculty and professionals reflect on and discuss the data and feedback in student professional internship evaluations as to whether or not our curriculum adequately prepares students with “effective news writing skills in written or audio/video news formats.”

Students (depending on their emphasis within the major) participating in our professional internships need to have taken JMC 120 – Beginning Reporting and at least two or more of the following courses all rated as “high intensity” (where this outcome is the main purpose of the course or activity) for **learning outcome a) *Effective news writing skills in written or audio/video news formats:*** JMC 320 – Public Affairs Reporting, 322 – Editing, 324 – Magazine Writing, 325 – Magazine Workshop, 326 – Interpreting Contemporary Affairs, 327 – Newspaper Workshop, 333 – Radio News Workshop, 336 –

Public Affairs Video Workshop, 429 – Advanced Public Relations, and, 490 – Television News Workshop.

Since its origins in 1967 as a stand-alone department, the JMC Department has used professional internship experiences to help prepare students for entry-level positions in their chosen careers. At the close of the internship experience, the professional intern supervisors evaluate whether our students were capable of applying effectively in the internship the theoretical knowledge and skills taught in our classrooms (including writing, visual reporting, layout and design, and audio/video editing and production skills).

In 2006-07, we revised our existing departmental assessment approaches, guided in the process by the “Eleven Values and Competencies” from the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (the voluntary accrediting body within the national Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). As one action, we re-wrote our assessment tool to be used by intern supervisors for evaluating JMC Department interns in 2007-08. Variables in this revised instrument related to **learning outcome a**) included the follow items (rated from 1 (poor), 2 (below average), 3 (average), 4 (above average) 5 (outstanding) or NA (not applicable)):

- #1. Ability to produce good results consistently.
- #3. Knowledge of fundamentals of the workplace.
- #6. Writing skills.
- #7. Completes tasks on deadline.
- #9. Ability to conduct research and evaluate information.
- #12. Professionalism.
- #14. Student was prepared for this internship.

Our assessment process includes requiring each student intern to have his/her immediate professional supervisor complete the intern evaluation form at the completion of the student’s internship. It is also often used during the exit interview between the supervisor and intern. The completed intern evaluation is sent to the faculty adviser of the JMC 338 – Internship course. The faculty adviser then interviews the student intern and the professional supervisor about the feedback in the evaluation form and the following questions. For the student: did you consider yourself adequately prepared for this internship (if “No,” why not?). For the intern supervisor: In addition to your feedback on the evaluation form, what comments do you have on this student’s preparation for this internship?

Our assessment process included having students, faculty and professionals reflect on and discuss the feedback in the intern evaluations and in the interviews to determine the effectiveness of our curriculum as to whether or not it adequately prepares students with “effective news writing skills in written or audio/video news formats.” The JMC Department faculty on our curriculum committee then reviewed the “data” from the internship evaluation feedback and the interview feedback for the 21 internships in 2007-08 to determine our strengths and weaknesses relative to this learning outcome. We then integrated

this data into our discussions on developing ways to make curricular changes to better prepare students with effective news writing skills in written or audio/video news formats.

As an aside, we wish to point out the confounding assessment challenge when many of our graduates are transfer students from community colleges where most completed their lower-division major requirements (such as Beginning Reporting).

During this assessment process we found that the professional internship supervisors rated our JMC Department student interns as:

Item:	<b>Below</b>				
	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Above Avg</u>	<u>Avg</u>	<u>Avg</u>	<u>Poor</u>
#1. Ability to produce good results consistently	53%	47%	--	--	--
#3. Knowledge of fundamentals of the workplace	59%	35%	6%	--	--
#6. Writing skills	50%	44%	6%	--	--
#7. Completes tasks on deadline	73%	15%	12%	--	--
#9. Ability to conduct research and evaluate info	84%	6%	12%	--	--
#12. Professionalism	71%	17%	12%	--	--
#14. Student was prepared for this internship	76%	24%	--	--	--

Conclusions from the data above:

a) Ideally, we would like all of our JMC Department student interns to have “outstanding” *news writing skills*. We were pleased to find that 76 percent of the 2007-08 interns were rated by their professional supervisors as “outstanding” in terms of “being prepared for this internship,” with the remaining 24 percent all rated as “above average” in this area. Nearly all (94 percent) of our student interns were rated as “outstanding” (50 percent) or “above average” (44 percent) on “writing skills.” All (100 percent) of the student interns were rated “outstanding” (53 percent) or “above average” (47 percent) on “ability to produce good results consistently.” The data do suggest our student interns could be better prepared for writing on deadline and have better abilities to conduct research and evaluate information, as well as have improved understanding of “professionalism” qualities, though nearly 90 percent of our student interns are rated as “above average” or “outstanding” on these qualities.

Conclusions from the interviews students and professional intern supervisors:

b) Interview feedback confirmed the need for more deadline-writing practice and more exposure to “professionalism” in the real world. In addition, feedback documented that our current and future JMC Department students will need more “convergence” writing skills to be considered effective in the future professional workplace. “Convergence” skills are defined in this context as our journalism majors need to be able to write for print, broadcast and online audiences.

We are undertaking the following curricular actions related to the above findings:

a) We plan to improve our students' abilities to write on deadline by planning more assignments that involve deadline writing and require more research and critical evaluation of information. We could also in our classes find curricular methods to improve our students' knowledge and awareness of standards of professionalism in the real world.

b) We are revising our curriculum within each emphasis in the journalism major to include more "convergence" writing and production courses. We are proposing a new approach to how our beginning reporting sections will be taught. Currently these are often taught by different permanent or part-time faculty who emphasize varied levels of "convergence" (print" and broadcast) writing skills in their assignments. We are proposing that all faculty teaching JMC 120 – Beginning Reporting will use the same syllabus, text and learning outcomes as well as use similar assignments involving "convergence" writing skills. We are also proposing an informal team-teaching approach to beginning reporting courses to maximize faculty "convergence" expertise in teaching related skills. In an ideal world, all faculty teaching this and other reporting courses could participate in faculty development workshops or summer "internships" to improve their own "convergence" skills to improve their ability to teach these skills.