

Unit Plan for Assessing and Improving Student Learning in Degree Programs

Unit: Advertising

Unit Head approval: Dr. Jan Slater

Date: 5/5/08

SECTION 1: PAST ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Brief description of changes or improvements made in your unit as the result of assessment results since 2000.

Immediately following the assessment of 2000, the Department of Advertising underwent a complete curriculum change. Because the leadership of the department has changed multiple times since then, and no documentation was kept, it is uncertain if the change was an outcome of the assessment. Clearly the process for the change in curriculum began before the 2000 assessment.

The Department did have an assessment plan at the time, but it included no measurable outcomes, nor is there any indication the faculty adopted it.

Thus, the assessment process for the department truly begins with this document.

SECTION 2: REVISED ASSESSMENT PLAN

(a) PROCESS: Brief description of the process followed to develop or revise this assessment plan.

In August 2007, Dr. Jan Slater was appointed Head of the Department of Advertising. Under this new leadership, assessment became a priority and data was collected for the first time.

In the fall, six focus groups were conducted with advertising students (72 students total). Students were asked to discuss course content, expectations, course objectives and outcomes for individual courses. Students reported repetition in courses, lack of opportunity to apply knowledge, and feelings of being unprepared for the profession because of the lack of focus within the current curriculum. Results of the focus groups were written up and distributed to faculty for discussion.

In February, a syllabus audit was conducted to determine where in our course work learning outcomes were evident and measured. It was determined that only the creative courses, ADV 450, ADV452, and ADV 400 was assessing learning outcomes. In addition, a retreat allowed the faculty to develop and formalize the mission and objectives of the advertising program that clarified the learning outcomes expected. The faculty met with industry professionals to discuss the future demands and expectations

the industry has of our graduates. And lastly, student survey was conducted (n=230) in May to provide a broader perspective regarding student expectations and preparedness for the industry. Using the data collected via these multiple sources of input, and in accordance with its accrediting body – the Accrediting Council on Education Journalism and Mass Communication, this plan was developed and we intend to adopt it and implement it fully beginning Fall '08.

(b) STUDENT OUTCOMES: List Unit's student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).

The core competencies of the Department of Advertising are aligned with the professional values and competencies formulated by the Accrediting Council on Journalism and Mass Communication. Accordingly, there are varying levels of these: 1) awareness – being familiar with the information; 2) knowledge – comprehending and synthesizing information; and 3) application – competency to apply the information and the skills to the disciplines.

- Outcome 1: understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Outcome 2: demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Outcome 3: demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
- Outcome 4: understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Outcome 5: demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Outcome 6: think critically, creatively and independently;
- Outcome 7: conduct research and evaluate information by reporting methods appropriate to advertising;
- Outcome 8: write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for advertising;
- Outcome 9: critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Outcome 10: apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Outcome 11: apply tools and technologies appropriate for advertising.

(c) MEASURES AND METHODS USED TO MEASURE OUTCOMES:

Indirect Measures

1. Employer internship survey. The majority of advertising students complete at least one internship during their academic career. This is an opportunity to judge the student's preparedness for the industry. This survey will outline the values

- and competencies and will be sent to all internship employers at the end of the semester in which the internship was completed.
2. Admission/Retention/Graduation Rates. Student demand and graduate rates are some indication of success, especially within a rigorous program. Data on applications, admissions, and enrollments will be compiled and compared with retention and graduation rates.
 3. Syllabi Audit. This audit will monitor the consistency of the learning objectives for each course, and determine the measurable outcomes. This will be done every four years.
 4. Annual Survey of JMC Grads. This annual survey conducted by Lee Becker of Georgia provides valuable information on the length of time before a graduate finds work, and what that work entails. Our success can be measured to an extent as to how well our graduates find work and how well prepared they are for their first job.
 5. Student Competitions. We want our students to be able to compete regionally and nationally and this is an excellent means to evaluate learning. These competitions can range from the National Student Advertising Competition, to exclusive American Advertising Federation scholarships and internships, to local and regional Addy Awards. Measuring this data over time will assist in determining effectiveness of some learning outcomes.
 6. Alumni Survey. An annual survey will be developed and administered to alums who graduated two years previous. The survey will focus on values and competencies within the program and evaluate the preparedness of our graduates.

Direct Measures

1. Freshmen/senior survey. The first class of directly admitted freshmen will arrive in Fall '08. This provides the opportunity to obtain a baseline of knowledge from the freshmen class to compare with them as they graduate. The freshmen survey will be conducted in the majors only ADV 300 – Principles of Advertising course. The senior survey will be administered online during the fall and spring semester of 2011-2012. We anticipate that there will eventually be a senior capstone course wherein this survey would be conducted. However, that is currently not in place, but is part of the curriculum review discussion currently taking place.
2. Portfolio/project assessment. Student work will be collected and assessed by professionals based on the outcome criteria for assessment. Student work may consist of campaign projects, media plans, or creative portfolios. Work will be chosen randomly.

SECTION 3 : PLANS FOR USING RESULTS
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(a) **PLANS: Brief description of plans to use assessment results for program improvement.**

We have already begun using the results from our syllabi audit and our discussions and surveys with students, alums and professionals. The faculty has agreed on learning objectives for each course being taught as well as objectives for the entire program. Syllabus guidelines have been established and faculty have been instructed to implement these in Fall '08. These guidelines include the definition of learning outcomes and measurement within the course. The curriculum review, coupled with the curriculum matrix and the input from students, alums, and professionals, has led to a entire curriculum revamp. The faculty has already established objectives for a new curriculum and the development of the curriculum will begin in Fall'08, with the hope of implementation in Fall '09.

For the future, the department has appointed an assessment manager who will represent the department on the College Assessment Committee, as well as manage the assessment data for the department, in conjunction with the front office staff.

Annually, results will be presented to the faculty for review and discussion as to how to change or enhance the elements of our assessment, as well as determining what action, if any, needs to be taken for curricular improvement.

(b) **TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:**

Pre-Measurement Stage

2005-06

Curricular and syllabi review for the ACEJMC self-study.
Development of learning assessment plan

Experimental Measurement Stage

2005-06

Advertising: review of student projects in creative courses. Results reported in ACEJMC self study.

Post-Accreditation Analysis and Action

2007-08

Revision of department assessment plan.
Consultation with assessment professionals.
Curriculum review.
Syllabus audit.
Focus group and survey of current students.
Alumni survey.

Informal discussions with professionals.

2008-09

Implementation of learning objectives established for each course.

Implementation of syllabus guidelines.

Ongoing Assessment Program

2008-09

Revise curriculum.

Conduct trial testing of incoming freshmen class.

Refine direct and indirect measures of what the graduating class knows and can do (tests of students' knowledge and understanding of free speech and press principles and laws, ethics and diversity; analysis, with professionals, of the final student products).

Apply direct measures in defined courses or a combination of required and elective courses in which final products lend themselves to analysis.

2009-10

Implement new curriculum.

Analyze findings from the direct and indirect measures, identify areas of weakness in the learning outcomes, make changes in curriculum and/or courses to address these weaknesses and introduce them for the 2010-11 entering cohort.

Refine direct and indirect measures. Work on entry-level tests.

2010-11

Administer pre-tests (skills: grammar and writing; knowledge: law, ethics and diversity) to the entering cohort.

2011-12

Survey the 2008-09 graduating class (i.e., three years after graduation) with questions, among others, specific to several of ACEJMC's 11 professional values and competencies. Administer the survey in time to be able to receive responses, analyze and summarize the data and report the results in the self-study due in fall 2012.

2014-15

Administer direct and indirect measures to the graduating cohort (the one entering in 2010-11).

2015-16

Analyze direct and indirect measures, including alumni survey and including, where appropriate, comparison between entry-level and exit tests, to determine whether:

- a. the graduating class has mastered the values and competencies at an appropriate level.
- b. the changes introduced in 2010-11 have overcome the weaknesses they were designed to overcome.

Decide whether any changes in curriculum, courses and/or instruction are necessary and introduce them for the cohort entering in 2016-17.

Refine measures.

2016-17

Administer direct measures of the entering cohort.