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| **Assurance of Student Learning**  **2020-2021** | |
| *Potter College* | *School of Media* |
| *Photojournalism 750* | |
| *Professor James Kenney* | |

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| ***Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.*** | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate a mastery of technical and aesthetic skills.** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Professional Advisory Committee review of PJ 436 Capstone Project** | | |
| **Instrument 2** |  | | |
| **Instrument 3** |  | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 2: Produce portfolios meeting the criteria for employment in the documentary photojournalism profession.** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Professional Advisory Committee review of graduating senior portfolios** | | |
| **Instrument 2** | **Indirect: Student Exit Survey** | | |
| **Instrument 3** |  | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate the students’ ability to compete with peer groups nationwide.** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Juried Contests and Scholarships** | | |
| **Instrument 2** |  | | |
| **Instrument 3** |  | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)** | | | |
| For Direct Measures in SLOs 1 and 2, since 2010, the Photojournalism program has been inviting members in the photojournalism profession, who make up the program’s Professional Advisory Committee, to come to WKU for a day of assessment and critiques of senior capstone projects and portfolios.  For SLO 1, 70% of graduating seniors had to score at least 75 on a 100-point scale, based on three criteria. The results are: Idea: 100% (13 students)  Execution and Presentation: 97.2% (12 students) Content Quality: 97.2% (12 students).  For SLO 2, PAC team members had to rate at least 75% of students capable of obtaining employment in the photojournalism field upon graduation. 100% of the students were deemed qualified by the committee.  The Indirect Measure for SLO 2 comes from an exit survey question given to all graduating seniors (13 total) involving overall satisfaction with the program. 100% of the seniors answered yes, or yes with suggestions to improve the program.  For SLO 3, the program has kept a record of student success in juried competitions, which are listed here: <https://wkupj.com/recognition/>, and here: <https://wkupj.com/recipients/>.  For the Indirect measure for SLO 3, the program has kept a record of student internships in the profession, which are listed online here: <https://wkupj.com/internships/>. Though the program has extensive qualitative evidence of student success with these internships, a more formal assessment form is being developed to gather quantitative results.  Given the successful implementation and results of the SLO measures in this report, future goals to improve the program include continuing adjustments in the Photojournalism program curriculum (and a staffing plan) to accommodate new technologies, especially in the area of web-based interactive design; carefully monitoring the curriculum and program changes taking place starting in Fall 2021; continuing to develop alumni outreach to help support program goals, including curriculum improvement; and formalizing a survey to send out to internship employers to more effectively assess student performance during these internships. Though the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and its effects slowed some of these goals, as noted below, progress continues to be made. | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 1** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | **Demonstrate a mastery of technical and aesthetic skills.** | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **Direct:** Senior students in the PJ 436 Projects capstone course produce a semester-long documentary project that consists of visuals, writing, and design that demonstrate their ability to produce a storytelling narrative that could be published in a photojournalism platform. The Photojournalism program’s Professional Advisory Committee members assess the quality of the student projects, determining if these projects reflect the goals and expected outcomes the Photojournalism program has established to reflect its national reputation. The added challenge in the Spring 2021 capstone course was the continued difficulty of access to and production of stories due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, students were able to produce several individual stories, and the group project from 2020 won a Finalist award in the prestigious Online Journalism Awards competition. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Three evaluation questions were asked in the report the PAC team filled out after viewing the students’ final documentary projects and discussing the projects each individual student. The rubric is as follows:  IDEA – Is the idea of this project worthwhile? Does it have news value and relevance to a potential audience? Is the idea developed clearly and logically? Is it a strong visual story?  EXECUTION AND PRESENTATION – The student was given the choice to select the most effective method of documenting their story. Video, audio, stills (including graphics), or a combination of the three could be used. Did the student use the appropriate media in the most effective places in the project? Given the idea and the presentation, did the student execute the project well overall? Specifically assess the quality of the video, audio, and stills (including graphics, if they were used). The words, though not included in the "big three," are nevertheless critical. Please assess the quality of the headlines, captions, story, etc. If there is a video/audio storyline, is the edit clean, logical and concise? For stills, is it a tight edit, with each image contributing to the story in a unique way?  CONTENT QUALITY Are the characters and the story engaging? Is there emotion/feeling; does it make you care about the issue and the characters involved in the story? Did your first 30 seconds with the project make you want to find out more about the issue/characters? Is there a clear introduction, conflict, resulting action, resolution, and reflection? Are you shown the story (unfolding action, takes you on a journey) rather than just told a story? Does the story address/reveal universal themes that the audience can relate to and apply beyond this particular story?  Student success is defined as at least 70% of the students in the class score a 75% or higher on each of the three criteria above. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | At least 70% of the students had to score a 75 or above (on a 100-point scale) in each of the three criteria above. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | Idea: 100% (13 out of 13 students)  Execution and Presentation: 97.2% (12 out of 13 students)  Content Quality:97.2% (12 out of 13 students) | |
| **Methods** | Two professionals, Justin Fowler, a photographer from the State-Journal Register in Illinois, and Scott Strazzante, a photographer for the San Francisco Chronicle, viewed documentary projects produced by the 13 students in the class. During the day-long documentary screening (which was conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19), the PAC team asked questions and gave feedback to the students. The PAC team then filled out a Google Form consisting of the rubric in the Criteria section above, where they put in numerical score (based on a 100-point scale) and provided written comments to the students and faculty to help gauge the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| In preparation for the spring senior capstone course, the faculty member teaching this course begins preparing students during their previous fall-semester Advanced Short Form Documentary class. They are often encouraged to turn one of the projects they do in this class into a long-term project for their capstone course and if not, at least have their project idea developed before the spring semester begins. This enables students to use the entirety of the spring semester to gather content and allow time for the extensive post-production required for these semester-long projects. These measures have been implemented in the past three years in response to PAC team comments regarding the need for improvement in story development and technical execution. The positive PAC team responses this year reflect that these measures are improving the quality of the projects. However, the effects of COVID-19 did hinder progress in these areas as well, so the Photojournalism program faculty is planning to reinstitute the pre-pandemic goals and strategize to further improve the students’ preparation for and successful execution of projects in the capstone course in 2021-2022. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| In analyzing the data from 2020-2021 and comparing it to the previous year’s results, in the Idea section, results maintained a 100%, rating, the Execution and Presentation results declined slightly from 100% to 97.2% (one person scoring a 70%, which is below the 75% threshold), and the Content Quality section results declined slightly from 100% to 97.2% (one person scoring a 70%, which is below the 75% threshold). PAC team members noted the high quality of content in many of the projects, especially in terms of character development and story value. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| The next assessment will be administered at the end of the Spring 2022 semester in the capstone PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects class. The PAC team will be invited to visit campus (assuming the effects of the pandemic continue to diminish) during finals week of the Spring 2022 semester. Results of the assessment will be collected following the PAC team visit and the information tabulated and submitted to the assessment server by the end of May 2022. | | | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 2** | | | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | **Produce portfolios meeting the criteria for employment in the documentary photojournalism profession.** | | | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **Direct:** Senior students submit a portfolio of their photographs, video, writing, and design to the Photojournalism program’s Professional Advisory Committee members, who assess the portfolios to determine whether these students are prepared for the photojournalism/visual profession and are employable once they graduate. | | | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | The question given to the PAC team after they review graduating student portfolios, resumes and other work is as follows:  After reviewing examples of photojournalism seniors' work, do at least 75 percent of the students show overall work that would make them employable in the photojournalism/visual industry? | | | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | | 75% of graduating students need to show overall work that would make them employable in the photojournalism/visual field. | | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | **100%** | |
| **Methods** | The two PAC team members were sent the student portfolios and resumes ahead of their Zoom-day meeting with the students at the end of the capstone semester so they were be prepared to give direct individual feedback during the meeting. The PAC team then filled out a Google Form that included answering the survey question above and providing qualitative written comments about the 13 students in the class. | | | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 2** | **Indirect:** Graduating students complete an exit survey on a Google Form about their experience in the Photojournalism program. The question used for this Indirect Measure is in the section below. | | | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | One of the questions on the survey asks students if they are satisfied with how the Photojournalism program helped to prepare them to work in their chosen profession. The three answer choices are:  1. Yes, completely;  2. Yes, with reservation  3. No, the program did not prepare me to work in the industry. | | | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | Collectively, 100% of students answered yes (either 1 or 2 in the section above). | | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | | **100%** | |
| **Methods** | At the end of the capstone semester, 13 students filled out a Google Form asking 44 questions about their experience in the program. These questions were then collated and tabulated by the capstone teacher. Each year, the Photojournalism faculty decides on whether changes or additions need to be made to the questionnaire. | | | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | | | |
| Concerning the Direct SLO measurement target, the quantitative analysis shows that 100% of graduating students are rated employable by the PAC team. Strengths listed in the qualitative analysis based on PAC team responses include positive comments about website portfolio designs, capturing moments, use of effective light and composition, sports photography, portraits, video narrative storytelling, and connection with subjects. There are also positive comments about the business skills of some students, reflected in their approach to promoting their work on their websites. The students’ need for more business acumen has been a concern of the PAC team in past years, so this reflects well on faculty measures that have been implemented to improve this area of preparing students for the profession. PAC team comments also indicate that cover letter writing and résumé content/design is improving from past years, which is a positive indication that increased instruction and exercises in several classes are helping to improve this area of career preparation. However, there are comments about some students’ promotional materials that indicate that more improvement is needed.  Concerning the Indirect SLO, students express overall satisfaction with the program, including an appreciation of the frequency and intensity of class assignments in preparing them for the profession. Suggestions for improvement include more flexibility in the curriculum; a need for a more philosophical approach to the profession, specifically, increased ethics training; more business skills training; additional software training; and a clearer distinction between the traditional “news” photojournalism path and other career paths. Also noted is an appreciation that due to COVID-19 restrictions, more freedom was given to produce personal narratives and stories about family. One student commented that though working on stories during the pandemic was challenging, they believed it was an essential step to preparing them for the profession.  The goal of the major curriculum changes being implemented in Fall 2021 is to address the need for more flexibility within the program. This will allow students more choices in the order of classes, shorten by one semester the time required to complete the program, and provide transfer students, or students with extensive photojournalism experience prior to coming to WKU, to complete the program in two years instead of three. The new curriculum will also emphasize business skills in all courses, which will supplement specific instruction and practice already implemented in three required classes (starting in the students’ freshman year), as well in an elective course, now called Advanced Lighting and Contract Photography, that will continue to teach the skills necessary to prepare students to build a freelance photography business. Built into this class and every class in the Photojournalism major is an encouragement for students to pursue both traditional and nontraditional jobs involving visual storytelling; the skills they learn can be applied across the spectrum, including print and online publications, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and advertising/public relations firms. Also included in the Fall 2021 curriculum changes are measures to include more ethics and software training. | | | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | | | |
| Despite the effects of the pandemic that hindered classroom learning and experience outside of the classroom (due to lack of access to stories), PAC team results reflect an overall positive response to student work, as well as improvement in areas such as portfolio development and technical expertise in story production. However, based on some of the suggestions for improvement in these same areas, the Photojournalism faculty will continue to implement adjustments to current teaching and class content, which will be greatly aided by the new curriculum debuting in Fall 2021. The faculty will be carefully monitoring results in 2021-2022. In addition, when seniors are assessed by the PAC team in the capstone course in May 2022, cover letter and other portfolio building progress will be measured. If necessary, further changes will be made and implemented in Fall 2022. When seniors take the Exit Survey in May 2022, the results will also indicate the degree of their satisfaction with the curriculum changes and additional measures being implemented, as well as suggestions as to how to improve them further.  Given that the Photojournalism program changes will be in place in Fall 2021, the effects of increasing flexibility in the curriculum (as well as any additional changes that need to be made) should begin to become apparent by Fall 2023. | | | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | | | |
| |  | | --- | | The next assessment will be administered at the end of the Spring 2022 semester in the capstone PJ 436 Photojournalism Projects class. The PAC team will be invited to visit campus (assuming the effects of the pandemic continue to diminish) during finals week of the Spring 2022 semester. Results of the assessment will be collected following the PAC team visit and the information tabulated and submitted to the assessment server by the end of May 2022. | | | | | | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 3** | | | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | **Demonstrate the students’ ability to compete with peer groups nationwide.** | | | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **Direct:** Though not required to do so, students are encouraged to enter photography competitions and apply for scholarships throughout the year. Photojournalism faculty members are required to participate in determining student entries for the Hearst Journalism Awards competition (see details below) and are actively involved in assisting students in entering other competitions and applying for national scholarships, including writing letters of recommendation for them. | | | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Through faculty direction and decision-making, a limited number of students are entered into the Hearst Journalism Awards competition, which is a national contest that is often referred to as the Pulitzer Prizes of college journalism. The other major contest, College Photographer of the Year, is an international contest that any students can enter. In addition, students enter the contests such as the White House News Photographer Student Contest, Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar, National Press Photographers Association’s Best of Photojournalism contest (an international contest), Kentucky News Photographers Association’s Pictures of the Year competition, and the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence awards. Beyond the Photojournalism program scholarships, students also enter the National Press Photographers Foundation national scholarship competition. Our students of color have also applied for and successfully obtained minority-based scholarships. | | | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | | See below (Actions section) | | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | See below (Actions section) | |
| **Methods** | For the Hearst Journalism Awards competition, two students are chosen by the Photojournalism faculty to enter each of the two rounds of in the Photojournalism division. In the Multimedia division of the contest, two students are chosen for each of the first three rounds and two teams of students are chosen for the fourth round. Students who qualify for the semifinal round of the Photojournalism division then submit a portfolio to compete for the national championship competition. Students who win first place in the each of the first three rounds of the Multimedia division qualify for the national championship round. In addition, the university program with the most overall points in the first round of the Photojournalism and Multimedia divisions wins the Intercollegiate competition and a $10,000 prize in addition to the student earnings. The other contests require a submission of a portfolio and/or individual entries. The NPPF scholarships, as well as other scholarships, require a written essay, a portfolio submission, and letters of recommendation. | | | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 2** | **Indirect:** Photojournalism students compete with students from other universities for internships at publications nationwide. | | | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Though they are not required to do so, students are strongly encouraged to obtain internships in the photojournalism field to practice technical and storytelling skills learned in the classroom. | | | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | See below (Follow-up section) | | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | | See below (Follow-up section) | |
| **Methods** | In addition to encouraging students to apply for internships, students are required to create an online portfolio, resume and cover letter in PJ 233 Intermediate Photojournalism, a class taken in their second-semester freshman year. For 16 years, the Photojournalism faculty has hosted WKU PJ Career Day, a program that brings in 13-15 professional visual journalists from across the region to interview students, critique their portfolios, and give them advice on how to obtain an internship/job in the photojournalism field. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the decision was made to postpone the event until Fall 2021. | | | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | | | |
| In 2020-2021, the Photojournalism program won first place in the Intercollegiate Photojournalism competition (its 27th national championship in 32 years of the competition) and second place in the Intercollegiate Multimedia competition (in 10 years of the competition, WKU Photojournalism has placed first eight times and placed second twice). In addition, two students, one in Photojournalism and one in Multimedia, are currently competing in the national championship (held virtually due to COVID-19). In the College Photographer of the Year international competition, the Photojournalism program garnered five awards. In the Kentucky News Photographers Association’s state contest, Photojournalism program students won 14 awards, including Best Portfolio award in the Student Pictures of the Year division, as well as the Best in Show award (in this contest category, students compete against professionals in the state as well). One Photojournalism student won a National Press Photographers Foundation scholarship. In addition, a student team project about COVID-19 won a Finalist award in the Online News Association’s David Teeuwen Student Journalism Award competition. All WKU Photojournalism student awards are recorded online here: <https://wkupj.com/recognition/>. Scholarships are recorded online here: <https://wkupj.com/recipients/>.  Internship results for 2020-2021: Five students obtained internships at these publications: Lexington Herald-Leader, Friends of Acadia National Park (Maine), Cincinnati Enquirer, and Boyd Station (two internships). Internships are recorded online here: <https://wkupj.com/internships/> .The number of student internships decreased significantly from previous years due to COVID-19, as well as due to fewer internships in the profession being offered even before COVID-19. Of particular concern, fewer internships are being offered in the summer, with publications instead opting for spring and fall semester-long internships. Fewer students can apply for these internships because obtaining an internship during the fall and spring semesters often delays their graduation. | | | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | | | |
| Photojournalism faculty members continue to assist students with contests, scholarships, and internships using the methods detailed above. In addition, a Google Form is being developed to gather quantitative information, as well as more formal, recorded qualitative feedback about student performance during their internships. This form is being developed in Fall 2021 and will be sent to the internship supervisors of students who obtain internships during the spring and summer of 2022. During this same time frame, Photojournalism faculty will also survey prospective employers to determine what can be done on the academic end to increase the numbers of internships that are available to students. In addition, major changes in the Photojournalism curriculum being implemented in Fall 2021 will provide more flexibility for students to pursue internships in the fall and spring. | | | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | | | |
| The Photojournalism faculty will begin to adjudicate the Hearst competition entries in Fall 2021 and work with students with other contests and scholarships during this same time period, as well as the Spring 2022 semester. Internship announcements begin in October 2021, so Photojournalism faculty will be helping students (both inside and outside of the classroom) apply for these employment opportunities. WKU PJ Career Day (scheduled for Fall 2021, as noted above) provides a foundational experience for students to practice interviewing with prospective employers during this event and to prepare them for future job interviews (this event has also generated many internships for students). | | | | | | | |