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| **Assurance of Student Learning Report****2020-2021** |
| *Potter College of Arts and Letters* | *School of Media* |
| *Journalism Major (736)* |
| *Mac McKerral* |

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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 expertise in public affairs reporting** |
| **Instrument 1** | **Bowling Green City Commission Story (JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting)** |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | **[ ]  Met** | **[ ]  Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 2: Build skills in digital media, emphasizing an entrepreneurial approach** |
| **Instrument 1** | **Create, write, execute a published blog on a journalistic topic (JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting)** |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | **[ ]  Met** | **[ ]  Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate the ability to work as part of a collaborative journalistic team** |
| **Instrument 1** | **Group Reporting Project (JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting)** |
| **Based on your results, check 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.)**  |
| While the world of journalism is changing, the need for excellent journalists is not. The major in journalism grounds its curriculum in the skills that all employers within the news media and professional communications want: strong writing and editing skills; excellent storytelling skills; the ability to find and process complex information, and share it in a way that helps others understand it; and the ability to deal on a face-to-face basis with diverse audiences.The core of the curriculum remains reporting, writing and editing for print and the Web. A dedicated and talented faculty with strong professional careers in journalism teaches these courses. That core is joined by a range of classes aimed at developing a foundation in multimedia storytelling: digital photojournalism, audio-visual gathering and editing; and Web site development and content delivery. Experts from all units throughout the SoM teach these classes. Ethical and professional standards, and emphasis on First Amendment principles and media law concepts are incorporated throughout the curriculum. Students in the journalism major graduate prepared for work at any news media outlet or for any position in professional communications. Along the way, they get one-on-one academic and career advising from the journalism faculty — and the knowledge and skills to make a difference. The journalism unit has always adapted the program to continue to provide students with relevant information and training to create graduates ready to step into a career in the field. The program will continue to make those changes moving forward. A comprehensive review of the School of Media curriculum in all units is underway. |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 1** |
| **Student Learning Outcome**  | **Demonstrate expertise in public affairs reporting** |
| **Measurement Instrument 1**  | **JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting students attend a meeting of the Bowling Green City Commission, cover the meeting, and then write a report of the proceeedings on deadline. This gives them practical, real-world experience in how to report on public affairs, which is an important facet of a professional journalism career.*** Students are introduced to the story with a primer lecture on the Bowling Green City Commission (structure, personnel, procedures), along with a review of agenda/document packet covering items and issues that will come up at the meeting.
* Students attend the commission meeting as a group (note: during COVID-19 precautions, attendance was virtual) and watch proceedings.
* After the meeting, students meet for a debrief session to discuss the story lead, most important events within meeting, etc.
* Students have until noon on the day after the meeting to write story.
* Once students have been given feedback, a follow-up session is held to discuss strengths/weaknesses of student work.
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| **Criteria for Student Success** | A 100-point assessment scale is used, with a passing score of **70**.  |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | 80 percent of student sample will pass at the rate of 70 or higher. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 84.6% (13/15) met criteria in Spring 2021 |
| **Methods**  | Grading criteria include Focus/Lead (25 points), Content (25 points), Structure (20 points), Writing (20 points) and Publishability (10 points) *Note: Rubric attached*The instructor and one other member of the Journalism Major faculty review the artifacts using the attached rubric. Scores are averaged. All students in the class complete the assignment (*N* = 15). |
| **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.) |
| This class is the second class in the Journalism Major writing editing sequence. It follows JOUR 202 Intro to News Writing and precedes JOUR 325 Feature Writing in the sequecnce. This assessment serves as a measure as to whether students who took JOUR 202 are grasping the skills/concepts required to succeeed in JOUR 302. If students continue to meet the current 70 percent benchmark, then it might be necessary to raise that to 75 percent or 80 percent. Also, assessment results in JOUR 325 Feature Writing can be compared with the JOUR 302 assessment to ensure optima competency is being brought by students to JOUR 325. |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) |
| This class is made up of three different groups of students – journalism majors, photojournalism majors, and journalism minors. Journalism majors must take JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting and JOUR 325 Feature Writing, and their performance in these classes can be used as a measurement of the efficacy of instruction in JOUR 302. This followup can be completed in the next two academic years. Journalism minors are also required to take JOUR 325, so the same follow-up can be done for these students. However, photojournalism majors are not required to take any additional reporting classes beyond JOUR 302 — although a small number do — so the only measure of the class’s usefulness to these students is their achievement in the class. Since the photo majors routinely score the lowest on the JOUR 302 outcomes, during academic year 2021-22, journalism and photojournalism faculty will consult on additional steps that can be taken to ensure photo students understand the relevancy of JOUR 302, including ideas for assessing achievement. |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 2** |
| **Student Learning Outcome**  | **Build skills in digital media, emphasizing an entrepreneurial approach** |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **JOUR 302 Intermediate Reporting students create, write, execute a published blog on a journalistic topic*** Students are introduced to the assignment by being asked to do a survey of journalistic blogs and come up with an idea for a blog on a topic that interests them.
* Students are introduced to WordPress and taken through the steps to create and name a blog.
* Students build the functionality of site and publish first post with a “soft launch,” with instructor review before site goes live.
* Sites go live with “hard launch,” with students publishing their first post.
* Students post at least one post each week through remainder of the semester; instructor periodically checks and review blogs to provide feedback.
* Student finalize blogs after final post and prepare them for instructor assessment.
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| **Criteria for Student Success** | 100-point assessment scale with a passing score of 70. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | 80 percent of sample will score at the pass rate. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 100% of students achieved target in Spring 2021 semester |
| **Methods**  | Grading is based on number of required posts made (28 points), content (25 points), writing (20 points), site functionality (14 points), and graphics (13 points). The instructor and one other member of the Journalism Major faculty review the sites/posts using the rubric above. Scores are averaged. All students in the class complete the assignment (*N* = 22). |
| **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.) |
| In today’s media world, where the demand for journalism remains strong but traditional outlets are facing difficulty, journalism students must be prepared to create their own journalistic channels, with an eye toward being entrepreneurial. This assignment gives them these skills by forcing them to think beyond writing a single story and instead create a voice for themselves on a particular topic that has journalistic merit. This class also gives photojournalism majors — many of whom have more limited writing skills than their journalism major counterparts -- an area where they can bring their visual storytelling abilities to bear. Taking students through the process of blog development from idea to execution, which is the approach used here, builds skills sequentially and comprehensively. This helps improve the overall program by helping students in the major and in the SOM news major develop critical thinking and analysis skills that can carry over to all classes they take in the SOM, regardless of major. We are happy with the results of this assessment and do not plan immediate changes. |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) |
| The main criteria for follow-up here will be publication of these blogs and the feedback students and the instructor receive when this work is exhibited publicly. Links to the WordPress sites for these blogs are posted on the WKU Journalism magazine site, and students are encouraged to continue producing their blogs in order to give them a marquee product to show potential employers. During subsequent academic years the website archive can be reviewed to determine whether the skills/concepts measured in this assessment are carrying over to other Journalism Major classes referenced above and carrying forward with regard to student portfolio development, another assessment conducted by the unit. |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 3** |
| **Student Learning Outcome**  | **Demonstrate the ability to work as part of a collaborative journalistic team** |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **Group Reporting Project (JOUR 426 Advanced Reporting); students work as part of a 4-member team to create an in-depth reporting project with a multimedia component. Topics in Spring 2021 included how WKU was changed by COVID-19, sustainable agriculture, and diversity on the WKU campus.*** Students are assigned to teams to develop an idea for an in-depth reporting project that contains a multimedia element.
* Students work collaboratively to develop their concept with input from instructor.
* Students build skills in project work and collaboration by being in charge of their own timeline and work assignments.
* Instructor periodically reviews student work to provide feedback.
* Students create and design a WordPress site to display their project, with instructor input.
* Once project is completed, students present their work in a graded class presentation.
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| **Criteria for Student Success** | 100-point assessment scale with a passing score of 70.  |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | 80 percent of sample will score at the pass rate | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 100% of students achieved target in Spring 2021 semester |
| **Methods**  | Grading is based on Reporting (30 points), Writing (30 Points), Functionality/Layout/Navigation (20 points), and Graphics/Multimedia (20 points) The instructor and one other member of the Journalism Major faculty review the outcomes using the attached rubric. Scores are averaged. All students in the class complete the assignment. |
| **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 today’s journalism environment, students need to learn how to work in collaborative teams and manage a news project from concept to execution. This assignment builds those skills, preparing students for the professional world. JOUR 426 is the capstone class in the JOUR sequence that most students take just prior to graduation. So this is their final opportunity to demonstrate that they are, indeed, prepared to step into a professional environment. These substantive projects are also designed to be entries in the Hearst student journalism competition, giving WKU and our students an opportunity to gain recognition for meaningful work. JOUR 426 is the final class in the Journalism Major writing sequence, so ultimately this assessment could be adjusted to address other industry-standard measures to ensure the program continues to evolve and meet those industry standards. However, for the time being we are happy with the results of this assessment. |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) |
| The main criteria for follow-up here will be publication of these reporting and the feedback students and the instructor receive when this work is exhibited publicly. Links to the WordPress sites for these stories are posted on the WKU Journalism magazine site, and students are encouraged to continue producing their blogs in order to give them a marquee product to show potential employers. Follow-up to this assessment would come in the form of the portfolio review assessment — also done for JOUR 426 — and internship evaluations, which are done with students completing internships for credit and those doing non-credit paid internships. |



