

**Agenda and Evaluation Report for  
Audit & Review Face-to-Face Meeting  
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Communication & Journalism Majors and Minors, 2020-2021**

**Date:** 5/10/2021

**Time:** 10-11am

**Place:** Webex

**Invited:** Interim Provost Greg Cook; Interim AVC Kristin Plessel; Dean Eileen Hayes (Arts & Comm); Department Chair/Program Coordinator Kathy Brady; faculty and staff in the Communication & Journalism program; Audit & Review Team Chair Pascal Letourneau; Audit & Review team members Barbara Bren, Lynn Gilbertson, and Robert Mertens, Assessment Representative Katy Casey.

- 1) Call to order: 10:01
- 2) Introductions
- 3) Overview of review team evaluation, program comments
  - a) The program appreciated the feedback provided in the review. However, they asked that the first recommendation related to the mission statement be revised to “Consider revision to mission..,” instead of “Update mission..”. The mission was recently revised and the program feels confident in the current statement. While they will consider the teams recommendation regarding including more discipline specific skills, they do not want to be required to make changes.
    - i) Considering the program has a very wide array of potential career paths, the program already displays different career paths example on the web site and other material, among other things, the review committee agrees to revise the first recommendation.
    - ii) The review team agreed, and the programs suggestions were reflected in the first recommended action.
- 4) Discussion of Review Team’s evaluation:
  - a) How will the program prioritize goals or support more programs to address the potential growth?
    - i) The program has been working on this for a long time. One way in which they help manage program growth is being mindful when creating new courses to ensure they can be used by more than one program. The strategically designed intermeshed curriculum allows the program to offer courses for many emphasis areas – e.g.- one courses could service 3 emphases. However, the program feel strongly that it cannot risk losing any more instructors. In addition, they will be losing one faculty member to retirement. For the moment, the program was able to fill the vacancy with existing staff but will eventually need to fill that line.
    - ii) Very active staff in terms of University and College service. This department is well connected to goals of University as whole and helps guide University through many initiatives. This puts the department in the position of understanding how program goals fit into the overarching mission of the university.
    - iii) Emphases are tied to professions. To ensure the curriculum reflects these professional fields, the program as a whole leverage their advisory board, which provides constant feedback to program from external stakeholders. The program responds accordingly through updating curriculum and program offerings.
  - b) We are interested to know more about the accreditation available for your program. How could it benefit students? What changes would need to occur?
    - i) Historically, the program has not seen an advantage to seeking accreditation. The accrediting body for the field, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) covers mass communication programs and this program is blended with communication, so the process would require review of the entire department but only cover journalism and mass communication.
    - ii) The program does align to the accreditation standards. In terms of career preparation, AEJMC

accreditation of programs is not really recognized – it does not seem to matter to employers.

- iii) If the program were to seek accreditation, they may need to upgrade technology. This could be a benefit to the students. However, accreditation is not required to get those upgrades. Radio and TV station try to keep up to industry standards and reflect the profession. Student and employer feedback suggest the program does a good job with equipment- providing an editing lab and hands-on experiences. Could use some updates to cameras and adding lab space would be helpful.
  - iv) Dean commented that other programs are accredited in the college and the accreditation agencies point out issues with facilities that the College does not have the financial resources to address. Accreditation in the college does not seem to impact student enrollment to justify the expense.
- c) What models of funding might be available to address the needed classroom and lab space?
- i) This was addressed a bit in the previous point related to accreditation.
  - ii) The program has been working with alumni board to discuss potential sources of revenue. Traditionally, these are small amounts. Space is an issue. There does not seem to be space for labs. Creating a lab would require the use of classrooms and there is not enough classroom space to dedicate to labs.
  - iii) Program has been successful at securing money for student scholarships.
  - iv) There are a couple rooms on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of HE that may be a potential lab space. Provost Cook suggested the program discuss the possibility with Dean Hayes and University Space Committee.
  - v) The fully online Master program should be a good source of revenue in the long term.
- d) Are there plans in place to consolidate office space and bring faculty to one building?
- i) This is a little complicated. The faculty at Andersen are close to radio and TV labs and that works well for those faculty. There does not seem to be one building that can accommodate all the facilities that would support staff in one building.
- e) Provost Cook noted his appreciation to the program and review team for a high-quality self-study. He was impressed with the large turnout of meeting attendees and felt it communicated the commitment of the faculty and staff in the program. Regarding resource needs- he noted the large enrollment and contributions to general education. The Provost recognized the challenge of finding a collaborative way to set priorities as a university so institutional resources are going into the programs that are growing and can attract more students. He believes it will be necessary to engage in these collaborations in order to increase enrollment and benefit all programs.

5) **Recommended Actions:**

1. Consider ways to market degree-related career possibilities, e.g., in mission statement or elsewhere.
2. Update the assessment plan to include a timeline for the continued work in assessment.
3. Resources in the program appear to be limited, particularly in faculty and instructional staff to support the variety of programs. However, there are good ideas to expand offerings.
  - a. Meet with Dean to determine availability of resources to continue the development of this program.
  - b. Explore funding opportunities outside of the College.
  - c. Create a strategic plan to address the growth of the course offering and balance the General Education and major course offerings.
4. Provide explanation of accreditation not being advantageous for the program, and alternative means used by the program to maintain the currency of its curriculum and facilities to support student success.
5. Make a conscious effort to leverage the media venues to support recruitment and retention across campus and the community.

6) **Recommended Result:** *Continuation without qualification*

- Please make use of the detailed comments in the evaluation report (below).
- Please select all applicable boxes and fill in the appropriate year:
  - Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on October 1, Choose an item. and to the Assessment Office on November 1, Choose an item..
  - Next SHORT self-study will be due to the Dean on October 1, 2025 and to the Assessment Office on November 1, 2025.
  - A progress report will be due Choose an item., of [Year]

7) Adjourn.

*Review team report is attached below, including Recommended Actions and instructions for Progress Reports (if required).*

**University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Committee Form: Review of Audit & Review Self-Studies  
Undergraduate Programs, 2020-2021  
Majors/Minors and Standalone Minors**

Date of Evaluation 2/16/2021 Short Self Study (SS\*) \_\_\_\_\_

Program: Communication & Journalism \_\_\_\_\_

Major

Minor

**Evaluations submitted by:** Pascal Letourneau, Robert Mertens, Barbara Bren, Lynn Gilbertson, Katy Casey

**Review meeting attended by:** Pascal Letourneau, Robert Mertens, Barbara Bren, Lynn Gilbertson, Katy Casey

**I. General Program Information**

**1. The program's mission statement reflects the nature and scop**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. The program is aware and reflective of changes affecting improvement since the last review.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. Characteristics of the program set it apart from others when compared regionally and nationally. The unique aspects of the program attract students.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**4. The program has been responsive to actions recommended from the previous Audit and Review Reports; Progress Reports have been submitted, if relevant.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**5. The program has achieved or maintained program-level accreditation or has considered seeking it, where appropriate (only select N/A if there is no accreditation available).**

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

## General Comments related to Section I

3. Is there anything that sets the advertising or PR emphases apart from other programs within UWS or externally? An advantage stated under the self-study's program conclusions is that 100% of the advertising faculty/staff have professional industry experience. 4. Tracking graduates is a challenge for programs across campus, and here individual instructors' social media accounts are mentioned. Is there any way for additional support to be provided for at a college or campus level? Have the college departments discussed most effective practices with alumni or with each other? 5. The student media outlets are listed as a draw to the program, but required upgrades to them was a reason given for not pursuing accreditation. However, under program conclusions it's stated that the campus invests in providing up-to-date facilities. Are any of the upgrades that accreditation would require critical or important now or in the near future to ensure students continue to get experience with real world facilities?

In addition to the great principles that guide the program, it may be helpful to explicitly state what types of careers these programs prepare students for in the mission statement. The unique offerings of direct media experience are a great asset to the program. The efforts/plans made toward the recommended actions, particularly alumni outreach, are notable. Do students typically find themselves working at accredited media outlets? Even if accreditation is not sought, would it be beneficial to implement the components of accreditation if that is what is experienced in the work place?

- 2 & 4. It has been 10-years since the last review, due to the program's participation in the DQP project. Since then, the program created an integrated assessment system across the curriculum. It has been responsive to the recommended actions. 3. Clearly unique program including applied opportunities in print, radio, and television. 5. The program makes a clear and logical case for not pursuing program level accreditation.

## II. Alignment within the University

### 1. The program contributes to the fulfillment of UW-Whitewater's Mission and Strategic Plan.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 2. The program supports general education and/or proficiency programs at the University.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 3. The program is collaborative and supports other academic programs across the College and/or University.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

## General Comments related to Section II

Good communication is essential to any major. All introductory and advanced courses offered through the program are contributing to the development of better candidates.

The program makes exceptional effort to improve, align, and assess COMM 110 with the general education requirements, essential learning outcomes, and university goals. The program has a clearly defined model of advising. What are the unique advising supports offered to students of color and first-generation students? Could the efforts of using the media venues to "tell the story" be expanded to encompass more campus programs and expand the perspective and scope of students in the program? Is there data to support the statement that COBE students that struggle with math move toward COMM programs? Perhaps this data could fuel a collaborative effort between COMM and COBE to better support students through challenging content and afford equal opportunity and choice.

1-3. Significant contributions to GenEd and other programs across the university.

### III. Program Goals & Accomplishments

#### 1. Goals and objectives were identified and undertaken to improve/advance the program.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### 2. Goals currently in place will continue to the program's advancement. Criteria for determining success were measurable and attainable.

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### 3. The program has a process for setting and assessing goals and making decision about changes to the program.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### General Comments related to Section III

1. It is nice to see that the department worked towards preparing a fully online Communication program.

1. The program has been very active in creating a new online major, minor, and certificate options for students, which may appeal to non-traditional students and help students "demonstrate their skill sets to potential employers." 2-3. There's little discussion about how success is determined, such as impact on student enrollment or increased student diversity, although the interference of the pandemic is noted and some of the minors were created in response to students' attempts to create their own equivalents to a minor. Success should not be just that another certificate or minor or online offering is completed, but that it has a positive effect on students. It's not clear, for example, how it's known that the Communication Ambassadors make a difference. Is student demand driving the efforts towards offering more emphases online?

It is clear that the faculty and staff take action to develop programs and are goal oriented.

1. Congratulations on the online degree program, great accomplishment! Additional work was done to develop certificate and minor options to address student interests and needs. The program noted significant work in recruitment efforts through the Communication Ambassadors program and hosting of large events. There

are ongoing discussions on how to recruiting a more diverse student population. 3. The program has an annual process in place to set and evaluate goals.

#### IV. Curriculum

##### 1. The program has a clearly articulated, efficient, and purposeful curriculum.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

##### 2. The program prepares students in majors, minors, and related emphases tracks in post-graduation and other applicable experiences.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

##### 3. Appropriate assessment data were used in making curricular revisions.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

##### 4. Students participate in the high impact practices.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### General Comments related to Section IV

4. Students have access to a large number of HIP.

3. Kudos to the department for conducting "extensive focus group work" and responding to alumni feedback to determine needed changes to improve student career success for a couple of the emphases. Good critical review of student performance from entry-level to capstone in a third emphasis. 4. There are plentiful HIPs provided, including active student organizations, practical experiences at the student media outlets and internships, and capstone courses. 4. What percentage of students in each emphasis actually complete an internship? Does every student who wants an internship obtain it?

There is a great variety of high impact practices offered in these programs.

1-2. The program offers a variety of options to students majoring in Communication. I realize the program shares courses across emphasis areas but there does not seem to be much overlap in courses between emphases. 3. The program made significant curricular revisions responding to industry expectations and best practice. The revisions let to streamlining of curriculum (e.g., Corporate Com emphasis), and additional applied learning experiences (e.g., Electronic media). 4. Impressive number of HIPs addressed in the curriculum.

## V. Assessment of Student Learning

### 1. The program has clearly articulated learning outcomes for students.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 2. Student learning outcomes are "mapped" to the curriculum.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 3. The program provided a timeline indicating when faculty and staff assess SLOs. The timeline is manageable and sustainable.

Sufficient Evidence	1
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	1

### 4. The program collected a variety of appropriate assessment data allowing judgements about the extent to which students are achieving learning outcomes.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 5. Program faculty consider assessment data in making changes to the curriculum, students' learning outcomes, and/or other aspects of the program.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 6. Student learning outcomes are aligned with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes in a way that is reasonable and meaningful.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0



**7. Overall, the program has an appropriate assessment plan for measuring students' progress in attaining the outcomes.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**General Comments related to Section V**

3. Reading the text carefully, I was able to find clues about what was assessed when. However, it was not fully clear. I do not see this as a major red flag though. It is possible to have sustainable assessment without a strict assessment calendar. I have noted "Some/partial Evidence", but it is not necessarily a negative point.
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1. The Corporate and Health Communication emphasis is the only one that does not include ethics among its SLOs. Is that an oversight? In the Findings section of the uploaded Assessment Plan, Advertising is missing. In the same section. Information about what assessment revealed about student learning in the Corporate and Health emphasis was vague. It's troubling that changes made to public relations courses that cannot be supported by current faculty/staff in spite of student demand.
- 
3. I only rated the timeline item as "some" because it was not clear how the individual emphasis areas sustain the individual assessment plans. It is clear this work is embedded in the day-to-day work of staff, but it would be helpful to hear about processes to determine a timeline. Are individuals in the program tasked with leading assessment in each emphasis area? Is this level of work sustainable? 4. The program collects assessment data by emphasis area. The curriculum in each emphasis area has SLOs that are aligned to courses. Most use embedded and signature assessments to evaluate student learning using a variety of formats, including select items from exams, capstone projects, applied experiences. Data has been collected and analyzed across the curriculum in all areas.

**VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation:  
A. Trend Data**

**1. Five-year enrollment and graduation trends reflect program vitality and sustainability.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. [MAJORS ONLY] Credits-to-degree show that students can complete the degree in four years, or reasonably efficiently.**

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. [MAJORS ONLY] Program has strategies to recruit and retain students.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

## General Comments related to Section VI.A

5. I was concerned when I read you wanted to remove a GPA requirement because students struggled with it. Lowering the bar is not a good long-term plan. However, the reasons given (COMM 110 being taken very early in the academic program) is a good argument. I hope the department will find a better requirement, to ensure the students graduating from the program are worthy of it, while allowing struggling students to eventually grow and progress.
- 
1. Enrollment has been sustained and remains stable across emphases. Congratulations to the program for proactively offering curricular options to address student interests, such as the online option in Corporate Communication and additional Electronic Media courses. 3. Significant work has gone into addressing recruitment and retention efforts in this program. Not only were there a number of strategies listed, but all were based on student feedback and analysis of data from multiple sources (e.g., exit surveys). This is an impressive amount of work that likely led to stable enrollment in this program, when enrollment across the university is declining. Congratulations! 6. The program reports they could support up to 650 majors and have room to grow. Enrollment has remained pretty consistent, with a peak in 2018-19.

## VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation:

### B. Demand for Graduates

- 1. [MAJORS ONLY] Placement information indicates that program graduates find employment or continue their education.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

## VII. Resource Availability & Development:

### A. Faculty and Staff Resources

- 1. Information on numbers of full and part-time faculty and staff are provided. Expertise of teaching staff are aligned with the needs and future vision for the program.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

- 2. Information is provided about changes in the faculty since the last Audit and Review.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General Comments related to section VII.A

3. The program reported areas in which they could grow. In addition, indicated that current staffing was appropriate. It seems with additional resources there are emphasis areas that could grow (e.g., Corporate and MAGD), and there are areas that could be created (e.g., sports, e-sports, social media) that would attract students. It is not clear if additional major or emphases would draw from current UWW students or attract new students. Is it worth exploring a market analysis in these areas?

## VII. Resource Availability & Development: B. Student Resources

### 1. The program has adequate personnel, student help, and service and supplies to serve its undergraduate students.

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General Comments for VII.B

1. and 2. I note "Sufficient Evidence" in regards to the answer provided by the program, i.e., the answer was sufficient. That said, the resources are not sufficient.

The program articulates some needs for instructors with particular expertise, student help, and lab & classroom facilities. I'm not sure if student laptop availability could substitute for lab computers, or is there a software issue?

It will be important to discuss strategies for student support dollars, facility renovation, and program material upgrades with campus administrators.

2. It seems the program could benefit from updated technology in terms of faculty computers. It was not clear if faculty need new computers or if they just need technical support for computers over 4-years old. How does the department support media technology- are there needs in this area (e.g., TV, radio studios)? Additionally, the program reported a need for increased student lab space.

## VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations from the Department or Program

### 1. Areas of strength are discussed.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General Comments for VIII

Overall, this was a good self-study to read. It was clear. We feel the genuine desire to serve our students well, and make sure they learn what they need to learn to have a successful career.

The program clearly communicated strengths and areas of improvement. Throughout the report, these were clearly expressed and elaborated. 1. The strengths of the program are in its ability to adapt to changing times both in the curriculum and resources to students. Faculty and staff in the program are flexible and responsive to

outside demands and student interests. 2. The needs of the program seem reasonable and it would be helpful if the college and/or university could support the programs currently available to the fullest potential. This would include investment in lab space and the recruitment activities listed.

## **VI. Reviewer Conclusions**

### **1. Strengths of the Program**

The department is making legitimate efforts to make sure they are helping their students, and all students of UW-Whitewater to be successful in their respective careers.

Student media facilities, internships, student organizations, and the structure of emphases and their LOs to ensure students acquire a good mix of theory and practical skills so students are well-prepared for their careers. Instructors with professional expertise.

The program clearly dedicates time and resources to developing programs and opportunities for students. Most notable is the abundance of high impact practices and the direct media experience provided.

Dedicated staff and leadership committed to the success and growth of the program. The faculty and staff seem to have a clear vision for how to grow the program and decisions are made strategically. Changes are based on data and both internal and external stakeholders are consulted to keep the program current.

### **2. Areas for Work or Improvement**

Further development of the assessment plan, especially for corporate and health communication and electronic media. Prioritization of needs for facilities and personnel. Could professional development opportunities grow the needed expertise for sports journalism, for example? Or is that an area where an adjunct may be necessary, at least for the short term?

The program might consider tracking the enrollment in different emphases in order to plan future programming. The program might use its expertise to develop and market more online programming.

I am not sure the program needs to improve. There is an impressive level of reflection that is ongoing and leads to curricular updates and sustained student enrollment. The one area that would be beneficial is a meeting with the College Dean to determine supports that might be available to the program to continue developing the emphases, maintaining assessment system, and securing resources.

### **3. Other comments/questions**

How would accreditation be beneficial to the students and/or program?

### **4. Recommended Actions (please specify):**

1. Consider ways to market degree-related career possibilities, e.g., in mission statement or elsewhere.
2. Update the assessment plan to include a timeline for the continued work in assessment.
3. Resources in the program appear to be limited, particularly in faculty and instructional staff to support the variety of programs. However, there are good ideas to expand offerings.
  - a. Meet with Dean to determine availability of resources to continue the development of this program.
  - b. Explore funding opportunities outside of the College.
  - c. Create a strategic plan to address the growth of the course offering and balance the General Education and major course offerings.

4. Provide explanation of accreditation not being advantageous for the program, and alternative means used by the program to maintain the currency of its curriculum and facilities to support student success.
5. Make a conscious effort to leverage the media venues to support recruitment and retention across campus and the community.

## 5. Recommended Result

Insufficient Information in the self-study to make a determination; revise self-study & resubmit.	0
Continuation without qualification. Next self-study will be a shortened one focusing on the Recommended Actions from the current report.	5
Continuation with minor concerns. Progress report may be required, at the discretion of the review team.	0
Continuation with major concerns in one or more of the four areas; submit annual progress report to the College Dean & Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on progress addressing the major concerns	0
Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years, at the Committee's discretion.	0
Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, recommend placing in receivership within the college, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years at the Committee's discretion.	0
Non-continuation of the program.	0
Report not submitted; refer to Provost for action.	0