

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Name of Program/Department:	Mass Communication
Year:	2021-2022
Name of Preparer:	Stan Diel

Program Mission Statement

The Mass Communication program at Francis Marion University seeks to provide its students with guidance and encouragement to develop communication skills needed to begin careers in journalism, public relations and allied professions. For students who do not choose to prepare for a career as media professionals, we expect to illuminate them on media traditions, to inculcate in them an appreciation of free expression, to kindle in them a desire to learn, to help them understand the roles media play in the world, and to encourage them to share the fruits of their intellectual growth. We will provide our students with a climate of learning that stresses the importance of personal honor and integrity and promotes the responsibility to serve society through the productive use of their communication talent and training.

Rooted in the liberal arts tradition, we emphasize the value of a broad educational foundation that encompasses the use of English. We want to encourage students to become informed, responsible, and articulate; to think critically and creatively; and to write well and develop an understanding of media history, ethics and law. We aim to refine students' reporting, writing and presentation skills, including tasks of editing and content production for traditional and converged media. We want our students to understand and use the changing technologies in communication to better equip them to work in the emerging multi-media workplace.

Combining discipline-specific knowledge with expressive, interpretive and reasoning skills, we encourage originality and creativity and promote intellectual curiosity, critical analysis, clarity of thought, precision of language and a desire to continue learning with graduate study. We seek to provide knowledge and the requisite learning skills necessary to fully participate and succeed in a global society as a communication professional and as an involved citizen.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

All Mass Communication students are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate and advance academic integrity in all interactions.
2. Demonstrate the ability to use tools and technologies appropriate for the communication professions in which they work.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think independently, critically, and creatively.
4. Demonstrate the ability to write correctly and clearly in forms and style appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
5. Demonstrate the ability to gain the required skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively engage the communication professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

Executive Summary

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Department of Mass Communication assessed five Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These Student Learning Outcomes help faculty gauge students' retention of various concepts while evaluating pedagogical approaches. Through actionable items, the department faculty members measured students' understanding of media trends; understanding of law and ethics; ability to write and edit for print, broadcast, and public relations; ability to synthesize foundational information; and understanding and identification of evolving technologies. The Department of Mass Communication continues to monitor these assessments to diagnose insufficient end-of-semester evaluation outcomes and determine if future action should be taken to correct any lower-than-expected results.

Consistent with previous years, the department has employed numerous direct measures of the students' ability to comprehend key issues germane to writing and editing for print, broadcast and public relations. This approach uses a combination of knowledge-based understanding, a critical-thinking component, and, in some cases, production of an artifact. Students enrolled in courses which require an artifact do so in a hands-on learning environment—replicating skills these students will need for employment in their chosen field. As a more direct measure through pre-test/post-test assessments, faculty members have the ability to closely track specific concepts covered in class and evaluate students' retention of material. Overall, this direct measure appears to be a useful tool for faculty when gauging SLO achievement. The Department of Mass Communication has been able to ascertain levels of understanding using these methods; subsequently, the department has been able to modify teaching and learning activities for the academic year.

Overall, student evaluations revealed student improvement in every SLO during academic year 2021-2022.

Eighty-three percent of students were expected to show improvement when comparing results of the pre-test and post-test for SLO 1. Eighty-four percent of students were expected to make adequate progress by showing improvement on the pre-test and post-test assessment for SLO 2. Eighty-three percent of students were expected to show improvement when comparing results of the pre-test and post-test for SLO 3. Students were expected to score 84% or higher on an evaluation rubric for SLO 4. For SLO 5, a target of 86% was set for evaluation of students participating in a practicum or internship, though in part because of the COVID pandemic no students participated in practicums or a university-acknowledged internship during the 2021-2022 academic year.

For SLO 1, 94% of students in foundation course MCOM-110 improved their scores based on the post-test assessment, in excess of the 83% target improvement. MCOM-240 and MCOM-430 were not offered in the 2021-2022 academic year.

For SLO 2, 100% of students in MCOM-451 and 75% of students ($n = 8$) in MCOM-455 improved their scores based on the post-test assessment.

For SLO 3, 91% of students increased their score from pre-test to post-test in MCOM-201, 100% of students increased their score from pre-test to post-test in MCOM-210, and 78% of students ($n = 7$) increased their score from pre-test to post-test in MCOM-221. MCOM-221 was taught by a new instructor. For MCOM-301, 88% of students increased their score. For MCOM-304, 83% of students increased their score from pre-test to post-test, matching the target score. For MCOM-306, 100% of students had increased scores. For MCOM-310, 100% of students had increased scores. For MCOM-402, 100% of students increased their scores. For MCOM-440, 100% posted increases. MCOM-320, MCOM-330 and MCOM-475 were not taught during the academic year.

For SLO 4 departmental rubrics were used when evaluating students' foundational knowledge and skills for MCOM-220 and MCOM-321. The average rubric score for students in MCOM-221 ($n = 9$) was 100% and the average for students in MCOM-321 ($n = 8$) was 75%. MCOM-421 was not taught during the academic year.

Lastly, an on-site supervisor usually provides a snapshot of a student's ability to identify evolving technologies through the *Work Site Supervisor Ratings of Interns* form in SLO 5, which includes MCOM-230 and MCOM-498. Neither course was taught in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Targets

SLO 1.0: Eighty-three percent (83%) or more of students in MCOM-110, MCOM-240, and MCOM-430, on average, will show improvement when classifying salient aspects of current trends and issues in mass communication. This SLO corresponds with Program Learning Outcome (PLO) Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5.

SLO 2.0: Eighty-four percent (84%) or more of students in MCOM-451 and MCOM-455, on average, will show improvement when determining the veracity of statements germane to law and ethics as it pertains to the conduct of journalists. This SLO corresponds with PLO Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5.

SLO 3.0: Eighty-three percent (83%) or more of students in MCOM-201, MCOM-210, MCOM-221, MCOM-301, MCOM-304, MCOM-306, MCOM-310, MCOM-320, MCOM-402, MCOM-440, MCOM-330, and MCOM-475 on average, will show improvement when describing and identifying key issues germane to writing and editing for print, broadcast and public relations. This SLO corresponds with PLO Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

SLO 4.0: Students in MCOM-321, MCOM-410, and MCOM-421, on average, will score 84% or better on a rubric when producing artifacts that will display their ability to synthesize foundational knowledge and skills with specialized instruction within a chosen mass communication track. This SLO corresponds with PLO Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5.

SLO 5.0: Students in MCOM-230 and MCOM-498, on average, will score 86% or better on a rubric based on their ability to identify evolving technologies in the field of communication. This SLO corresponds with PLO Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Assessment Methods

SLO 1.0: Students in MCOM-110, MCOM-240, and MCOM-430 were expected to show 83% or greater improvement based on results of a departmental pre-test and post-test (direct assessment) when classifying salient aspects of current trends and issues in mass communication. The benchmark goal (83% of students demonstrating improvement) will remain unchanged in the current academic year but a target of at least 85% is anticipated within three years. Baselines, which previously were set at 60% for all Mass Communication courses, are in this report calculated in accordance with written guidance from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee when sufficient data is available. The 60% standard is retained for courses that were taught fewer than two times in the previous two academic years. It is anticipated that baseline for all courses will be determined in accordance with industry standards and written committee guidance by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. The new baseline for MCOM-110 is 97% and the new baseline for MCOM-240 is 83%. There was insufficient data to calculate a baseline using the new methodology for MCOM-430, which was not taught in the 2021-2022 academic year. The 60% baseline is retained for MCOM-430.

SLO 2.0: Students in MCOM-451 and MCOM-455 were expected to show 84% (baseline = 91% and 82%, respectively) or greater improvement based on results of a departmental pre-test and post-test (direct assessment) when determining the veracity of statements germane to law and ethics as it pertains to the conduct of journalists. The benchmark (84%) will be increased to 85% within three years.

SLO 3.0: Students in MCOM-201, MCOM-210, MCOM-221, MCOM-301, MCOM-304, MCOM-306, MCOM-310, MCOM-320, MCOM-402, MCOM-440, MCOM-330, and MCOM-475 were expected to show 83% or greater improvement based on results of a departmental pre-test and post-test (direct assessment) when describing and identifying key issues germane to writing and editing for print, broadcast and public relations. The benchmark (83%) will remain unchanged in this academic year but a target of at least 85% is anticipated within three years. The baseline for MCOM-201 was 92%. The baseline for MCOM-221 and MCOM-304 was 83%. The baseline for MCOM-301 was 87%. The baseline for MCOM-440 was 89%. Data was insufficient to calculate a new baseline for the remainder of the courses in SLO 3, so baseline for those courses was unchanged at 60%. It is anticipated that baseline will be calculated in accordance with standards for those courses in the coming academic year.

SLO 4.0: Students in MCOM-220, MCOM-321, MCOM-410, and MCOM-421 were expected to perform at the 84% (baseline = 60%) level or above based on scoring from a departmental rubric (direct assessment) when producing artifacts that will display their

ability to synthesize foundational knowledge and skills with specialized instruction within a chosen mass communication track. The benchmark (83%) will be increased to 85% in the current academic year. It is anticipated that baseline will be calculated in accordance with applicable standards in the coming academic year.

SLO 5.0: Students in MCOM-230 and MCOM-498 will perform, on average, at the 86% (baseline 60%) level or above when showing their ability to identify evolving technologies in the field of communication on the *Work Site Supervisor Ratings of Interns* form. (Direct assessment). The benchmark (86%) will remain unchanged in the current academic year and a target of 86% is anticipated in the immediate future.

It is anticipated that benchmarks for courses in SLO 5 will be calculated in accordance with applicable standards in the coming academic year.

Assessment Results

SLO 1.0: The Department of Mass Communication used a pre-test/post-test process for academic year 2020-2021 to evaluate students' learning outcome for MCOM-110 (Introduction to Mass Communication), MCOM-240 (Social Media Impact on Journalism), and MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication). Students were expected to show 83% (baseline = 60%) or greater improvement based on the results of the pre-test and post-test.

SLO 1.0.1: During Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, 94% of students enrolled in MCOM-110 ($n = 18$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment when classifying salient aspects of current trends and issues in mass communication. The results surpassed the target of 83% improvement for this Student Learning Outcome.

Note: MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication) and MCOM-240 (Social Media's Impact on Journalism) were not offered during the 2020-2021 academic year.

SLO 2.0: A pre-test and post-test were used to evaluate student learning outcomes in MCOM-451 (Media Law) and MCOM-455 (Media Ethics). Eighty-four percent (84%) of the students were expected to increase their scores from pre-test to post-test for this SLO. The baseline was 89%. These assessments gauged students' knowledge of law and of tools for addressing ethical dilemmas pertaining to the professional conduct of journalists.

SLO 2.0.1: In MCOM-451 ($n = 16$), 94% of students' scores improved, therefore, the target of 84% or above was achieved for this course. Students were also challenged with writing two research papers and presenting case studies, incorporating media law concepts throughout the semester.

SLO 2.0.2: In MCOM-455 ($n = 11$), 82% of students showed improvement when comparing the assessments; therefore, the target for this SLO was not achieved for the course.

SLO 3.0: Students in MCOM-201 (News Writing), MCOM-210 (Introduction to Public Relations), MCOM-221 (Introduction to Broadcast Journalism), MCOM-301 (Writing for Public Affairs), MCOM-304 (Photojournalism), MCOM-310 (Public Relations Techniques), MCOM-330 (Covering Sports), MCOM-402 (Online Journalism), MCOM-440 (Convergence Journalism) and MCOM-475 (Sports, Media & Society) engaged in authentic learning activities and a target of 83% (baseline = 60%) was used for academic year 2021-2022 when describing and identifying key issues germane to writing and editing for print, broadcast and public relations. The department used the pre-test/post-test assessment method for this SLO to provide a direct measure of student learning.

SLO 3.0.1: During Spring 2022, 90% of the students enrolled MCOM-201 ($n = 10$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, exceeding the target of 83%.

SLO 3.0.2: During Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-210 ($n = 31$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, exceeding the target of 83%.

SLO 3.0.3: During Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, 78% of the students enrolled in MCOM-221 ($n = 9$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, falling short of the target of 83%.

SLO 3.0.4: During Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, 88% of the students enrolled in MCOM-301 ($n = 18$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The target for this course was met.

SLO 3.0.5: During Spring 2022, 83% of the students enrolled in MCOM-304 ($n = 13$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The target for this course was met.

SLO 3.0.6: During Spring 2022, 100% of students enrolled in MCOM-306 ($n = 5$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The target was 83%.

SLO 3.0.7: During Fall 2021, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-310 ($n = 3$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, meeting the target of 83%. MCOM-310 was not offered during the spring semester.

Note: MCOM-320 (Broadcast Presentation Skills), MCOM-421 (Advanced Broadcast Journalism) and MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication), and MCOM-475 (Sports, Media and Society) were not offered during academic year 2021-2022.

SLO 4.0: A rubric was used as a semester-ending assessment in academic year 2021-2022 for MCOM-220 (Broadcast Production) and MCOM-321 (Broadcast Field Production and Reporting). A target of 83% (baseline = 60%) was used when producing artifacts that will

display students' ability to synthesize foundational knowledge and skills with specialized instruction within a chosen mass communication track.

SLO 4.0.1: During Spring 2022, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-220 ($n = 5$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, exceeding the target of 83%.

SLO 4.0.2: During Spring 2022, 75% of the students enrolled in MCOM-321 ($n = 8$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, falling short of the target of 83%. This course was taught by a new instructor who is evaluating the use of rubrics.

Note: MCOM-410 (Advanced Public Relations), and MCOM-421 (Advanced Broadcast Journalism) were not offered during this academic year.

SLO 5.0: Mass Communication faculty continue to monitor the profiles of students enrolled in MCOM-230 (Mass Communication Practicum) and MCOM-498 (Mass Communication Internship). The department uses the 86% target based on students' ability to identify evolving technologies in the field of communication as indicated by the *Work Site Supervisor Ratings of Interns* form. *No students were enrolled in MCOM-230 or MCOM-498 this academic year.*

Action Items

SLO 1.0: The target of 83% was achieved for all SLO 1 courses in academic year 2021-2022. The target was not achieved for MCOM-240 (Social Media's Impact on Journalism) in academic year 2021-2022, but that course was not taught in 2021-2022. MCOM-240 will be a point of emphasis in the coming academic year. A target of 84% (baseline = 92%) will be used for academic year 2022-2023 for this SLO. MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication) was not taught during academic year 2021-2022. Pre-test/post-test assessments will be used for these courses when taught within the department.

SLO 2.0: The target of 84% was exceeded for this student learning outcome during academic year 2021-2022 in MCOM-451 (Media Law) and MCOM-455 (Media Ethics). Students will continue to be assessed using the pre-test/post-test method in the next academic year. The pre-test/post-test for MCOM-455 (Media Ethics) was written by a previous instructor and will be evaluated to determine whether change is necessary in light of a change of emphasis in the curriculum. The current instructor emphasizes statutory, constitutional and case law that is most applicable in news and public relations.

SLO 3.0: Using the pre-test/post-test method of assessment when describing and identifying key issues germane to writing and editing for print, broadcast, and public relations has proven beneficial in gauging students' comprehension and retention of material taught in this SLO. Students enrolled in MCOM-201 (News Writing), MCOM-210 (Introduction to Public Relations), MCOM-221 (Introduction to Broadcast Journalism), MCOM-301 (Reporting of Public Affairs), MCOM-304 (Photojournalism), MCOM-310 (Public Relations Techniques),

MCOM-402 (Online Journalism), and MCOM-440 (Convergence Journalism) will continue to engage in authentic learning activities during academic year 2022-2023 using an increased target of 84% (baseline = 93%) in the new academic year. The department will continue to use the pre-test/post-test assessment method to provide a direct measure of student learning. MCOM-320 (Broadcast Presentation Skills), MCOM-475 (Sports, Media and Society) and MCOM-330 (Covering Sports), were not offered in the 2021-2022 academic year.

SLO 4.0: Students in MCOM-220 (Broadcast Production) exceeded the target of 84% during the 2021-2022 academic year. Students in MCOM-321 (Broadcast Field Production and Editing, $n = 8$) did not meet the 84% target. Students will continue to be evaluated when producing artifacts that will display their ability to synthesize foundation knowledge and skills with specialized instruction within a chosen Mass Communication track. MCOM-421 (Advanced Broadcast Journalism: Reporting and Producing) and MCOM-230 (Mass Communication Practicum) were not taught in academic year 2021-2022. A target of 84% (baseline = 88%) will be retained for academic 2022-2023.

SLO 5.0: In part because of practical limitations associated with the COVID pandemic, no students enrolled in MCOM-498 (Communication Internship) or MCOM-230 (Mass Communication Practicum) during academic year 2021-2022. We expect students to enroll in the upcoming academic year. The department will continue to assess student performance based on students' ability to identify evolving technologies in the field of communication as indicated by the *Work Site Supervisor Ratings of Interns* form. A target of 86% (baseline = 60%) will be retained for this SLO during academic 2022-2023. Meanwhile, the faculty will continue to monitor the profiles of our practicum and intern placements each semester.

All SLOs: Historically, the Department of Mass Communication used a baseline of 60% for the purposes of analyzing student learning outcomes. In academic year 2021-2022 the department began to calculate baselines as an average of at least two previous semesters' outcomes, consistent with written guidance from the university's Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Where data was sufficient for these calculations baselines in this report were calculated based on previous semesters' performance. Where data was insufficient 60% baselines were retained. It is anticipated that all baselines will be calculated in accordance with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee's standards by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. Because class size for upper-level courses in this department is sometimes especially small, class sizes for individual classes and the sum total class sizes for Student Learning Outcomes will be noted in future reports.

Appendix: Practicum/Internship Evaluation Form

STUDENT INTERN EVALUATION (To be filled out by Student's Supervisor)

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT ID NUMBER _____

EVALUATION PERIOD: FROM _____ To _____

Instructions: Place an "x" in one square for each category below the phrase which most nearly describes the person being rated. Carefully evaluate each of the qualities separately. In making choices compare the intern with other interns or those with comparable knowledge.

1. Quality of work:

Work is unsatisfactory

Work is often below average.

Work is above average

Work superior to that of others.

Work is of exceptional quality

2. Quantity of work:

Production is unsatisfactory

Production is very low.

Production is average.

Production is high.

Production is exceptional.

3. Attitude toward criticism:

Negative reaction to criticism.

Takes some exception to criticism.

Accepts criticism.

Seeks criticism and instruction

Seeks criticism and immediately corrects weaknesses.

4. Cooperation with others:

Quarrelsome, surly, uncooperative.

Sometimes difficult to work with.

Exhibits an average level of Cooperation.

Always congenial and cooperative and promote morale.

Works hard to be cooperative

5. Dependability:

Works half-heartedly.

Sometimes acts indifferent to work.

Steady worker.

Hard worker.

Works exceptionally hard.

6. Attendance:

Often absent or late.

Sometime absent or late.

Usually present and on time.

Rarely late or absent.

Never absent or late without good reason.

7. <u>Initiative:</u>					
Waits to be told what to do.	Often waits unnecessarily for directions.	Works without waiting for directions.	Looks for additional tasks to accomplish.	Highly self-reliant. Finds and completes extra tasks	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

8. <u>Appearance:</u>					
Untidy, Poor taste in dress.	Somewhat careless about personal appearance.	Satisfactory personal appearance.	Better than average appearance.	Very neat. Excellent taste in dress.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

9. <u>Progress made:</u>					
Able to do little more at end of this period than at beginning.	Exhibited a minimal gain of knowledge/skill.	Progressed in skill /knowledge at an average rate.	Gained skill/knowledge at an above average rate.	Showed exceptional progress in skill/knowledge.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

10. <u>Overall assessment:</u>					
Unsatisfactory.	Below average.	Average.	Above average.	Exceptional.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please discuss any other strengths or weaknesses exhibited by the intern below.

Please sign form, discuss results with the intern, and obtain his/her signature.

Supervisor's Signature Date

Intern's Signature Date