

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Name of Program/Department:	Mass Communication
Year:	2020-2021
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 America, 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 2020-2021 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 2020-2021.

Eighty-three percent of students were expected to show improvement when comparing results of the pre-test and post-test for SLO 1. Eighty-three 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 83% or higher on an evaluation rubric for SLO 4. For SLO 5, a target of 86% was used when evaluating students participating in a practicum or internship, one student had an internship during academic year 2020-2021 and the student exceeded the expected score on the performance rubric for internships.

For SLO 1, 100% of students in foundation course MCOM-110 improved their scores based on the post-test assessment. In MCOM-240, 82% of the students enrolled showed improvement from pre-test to post-test, slightly below the 83% target. MCOM-430 was not offered in the 2020-2021 academic year.

For SLO 2, 91% of students in MCOM-451 and 100% of students in MCOM-455 improved their scores based on the post-test assessment.

For SLO 3, 100% 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 88.8% of students increased their score from pre-test to post-test in MCOM-221. For MCOM-301, 90% of students increased their score. For MCOM-304, 100% of students increased their score from pre-test to post-test. This class (MCOM-304) was moved from SLO 4 classification to SLO 3 classification with the adoption of a pre-test and post-test assessment, which was tested alongside the previous method in two semesters before adoption. For MCOM-310 and MCOM-402, 100% of students increased their scores. For MCOM-330, 75% posted increased scores. For MCOM-440, 83% posted increases. For MCOM-475, with just five students, 67% of students posted increased scores. MCOM-306 and MCOM-320 were not taught during the academic year.

For SLO 4 departmental rubrics were used when evaluating students' foundational knowledge and skills for MCOM-220, MCOM-321, MCOM-410 and MCOM-421. For MCOM-410 student average project grades were all 100%. MCOM-220, MCOM-321 and MCOM-421 were 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. One student completed an internship (MCOM-498) and her supervisor rated her work at 100%.

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-three percent (83%) 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 83% 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% (baseline = 60%) 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 (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.

SLO 2.0: Students in MCOM-451 and MCOM-455 were expected to show 83% (baseline = 60%) 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 (83%) will be increased to 84% in the current academic year with a target of at least 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% (baseline = 60%) 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.

SLO 4.0: Students in MCOM-220, MCOM-321, MCOM-410, and MCOM-421 were expected to perform at the 83% (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 84% in the current academic year and a target of at least 85% is anticipated within three years.

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.

Benchmarks and targets will be evaluated by the department in the current academic year to determine whether identical standards can be set for all SLOs that use direct assessment.

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 2020 and Spring 2021, 100% of students enrolled in MCOM-110 ($n = 10$) 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.

SLO 1.0.2: 81.8% of students enrolled in MCOM-240 ($n = 11$) showed improvement on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The students in this course did not exceed the target of 83% for the SLO. The target was not achieved.

Note: MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication) was 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-three percent (83%) of the students were expected to increase their scores from pre-test to post-test for this SLO. The baseline was 60%. 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 ($n = 11$), 91% of students' scores improved, therefore, the target of 82% 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 ($n = 3$), 100% of students showed improvement when comparing the assessments; therefore, the target for this SLO was 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 2020-2021 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 2021, 100% of the students enrolled MCOM-201 ($n = 6$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, achieving the target of 83%.

SLO 3.0.2: During Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-210 ($n = 26$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, achieving the target of 83%.

SLO 3.0.3: During Spring 2021, 88% of the students enrolled in MCOM-221 ($n = 8$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, achieving the target of 83%.

SLO. 3.0.4: During Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, 90% of the students enrolled in MCOM-301 ($n = 10$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The target for this course was also met.

SLO. 3.0.5: During Spring 2021, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-304 ($n = 7$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. The target for this course was 83%.

SLO. 3.0.6: During Spring 2021, 100% of the students enrolled in MCOM-310 ($n = 6$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment, meeting the target of 83%. MCOM-310 was not offered during the spring semester.

SLO 3.0.7: During Spring 2021, 67% of the students enrolled in MCOM-475 ($n = 3$) showed improvement based on the pre-test/post-test assessment. This course did not meet the target of 83%. There were five students in the class.

Note: MCOM-220 (Broadcast Production), MCOM-320 (Broadcast Presentation Skills), MCOM-321 (Broadcast Field Production), MCOM-421 (Advanced Broadcast Journalism) and MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication) were not offered during academic year 2020-2021. MCOM-306 (News Editing and Design) was taught in fall 2020 but a problem with data collection resulted in a lack of viable data for analysis. The problem has been addressed and is not likely to reoccur.

SLO 4.0: A rubric was used as a semester-ending assessment in academic year 2020-2021 for MCOM-410 (Advanced Public Relations). 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 Fall 2020, 100% of students enrolled in MCOM-410 ($n = 3$) showed improvement based on the rubric assessment, exceeding the target for this SLO. The course was not offered during the spring semester.

Note: MCOM-220 (Broadcast Production), MCOM-321 (Broadcast Field Production) 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.

SLO 5.1: The Work Site Supervisor Ratings of Interns form for the student ($n = 1$) who completed an internship (MCOM-498) indicated a rating of 100%, exceeding the 86% target.

Note: No students were enrolled in MCOM-230 this academic year.

Action Items

SLO 1.0: The target of 83% was achieved for this student learning outcome during the 2020-2021 academic year for MCOM-110 (Introduction to Mass Communication). The target (83%) was not achieved for MCOM-240 (Social Media Impact on Journalism), though class size was small (11 students). Based on these findings, the faculty of the Mass Communication Department will continue to assess student improvement for academic year 2021-2022 based on the pre-test/post-test method. This method will allow faculty to diagnose levels of understanding in order to modify teaching and learning activities. A target of 83% (baseline = 60%) will be used for academic year 2021-2022 for this SLO. MCOM-430 (Critical Issues in Mass Communication) was not taught during academic year 2020-2021. Pre-test/post-test assessments will be used for these courses when taught within the department.

SLO 2.0: The target of 83% was achieved for this student learning outcome during academic year 2020-2021 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. An increased target of 84% will be used for academic year 2021-2022.

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-330 (Covering Sports), MCOM-402 (Online Journalism), MCOM-440 (Convergence Journalism) and MCOM-475 (Sports, Media and Society) will continue to engage in authentic learning activities during academic year 2021-2022 using the target of 83% (baseline = 60%) 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) was not offered in the 2020-2021 academic year.

SLO 4.0: Students in MCOM-410 exceeded the target of 83% during the 2020-2021 academic year. 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-220 (Broadcast Production), MCOM-321 (Broadcast Field Production and Editing), MCOM-421 (Advanced Broadcast Journalism: Reporting and Producing) and MCOM-230 (Mass Communication Practicum) were not taught in academic year 2020-2021. A new target of 84% (baseline = 60%) will be used for academic 2021-2022.

SLO 5.0: MCOM-498 (Communication Internship) exceeded its goal of 86%. No students enrolled in MCOM-230 during academic year 2020-2021. We expect students to enroll 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 again be used for this SLO during academic 2021-2022. 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 has used a baseline of 60% for the purposes of analyzing student learning outcomes. In academic year 2020-2021 the department began to retain the raw data necessary to calculate baselines as an average of at least two previous semesters' outcomes, consistent with written guidance from the university's IE committee. The department plans to calculate baselines using the new methodology beginning in the 2021-2022 academic year.

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, uncooper--
ative.

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