

Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Communication & Journalism (BA, BS) Majors and Minors, 2020-2021

Date: 5/10/2021

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.

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 team’s 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.

Discussion of Review Team’s evaluation:

1 – 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 feels 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.

2 – 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.

3 – 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 4th 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.

4 – 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.

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.

Recommended Actions:

Recommended Action #1

Consider ways to market degree-related career possibilities, e.g., in mission statement or elsewhere.

Recommended Action #2

Update the assessment plan to include a timeline for the continued work in assessment.

Recommended Action #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.

Recommended Action #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.

Recommended Action #5

Make a conscious effort to leverage the media venues to support recruitment and retention across campus and the community.

Recommended Result:

Continuation without qualification

Next Self-study and/or Progress Report Due Dates:

1 - Next SHORT self-study will be due to the Dean on May 1, 2026 and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2026

For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: assessment@uww.edu.