Journalism Program

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

At the completion of the Journalism Program, the student should:

1. Be academically prepared to transfer to a journalism program at a four-year university or to obtain an entry-level job in journalism or a related field.

2. Demonstrate the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for careers in journalism and related fields.

3. Possess a portfolio of published work suitable for internship/job applications and interviews.

PSLO Assessment Report Summary, 2011-12

What we looked at: Our assessment research focused on PSLO #3. We analyzed the completion of multiple newspaper-related courses on the quality and diversity of the portfolios of 44 students enrolled in Journalism 10, 15ABC, 16ABC, 20 and 30. Students and instructors completed Portfolio Evaluation/Self-Evaluation forms, and instructors rated each portfolio on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the top score and representing a strong portfolio, diverse portfolio. The most diverse portfolios contained work in five major journalistic areas: objective reporting, opinion writing, photojournalism, informational and illustrative graphics, and news presentation.

What we found: The results confirmed what we expected: the more publication experience students have during their educational careers, the stronger and more diverse their portfolios. Of the 44 portfolios evaluated in May 2012, 23 scored a 1 or 2, and 21 of those students had completed just one newspaper-related journalism course, and the other two completed two courses. On the other end of the spectrum, of the 14 portfolios scoring a 4 or 5, 11 students had completed 5 or more newspaper-related journalism courses, and the other three completed just two courses.

What we are planning to work on: We are planning to tweak the Portfolio Evaluation/Self-Evaluation form tool itself to see if we can add questions that will help us make sense of the exceptions. For example, three portfolios scored a 4 or 5 despite the fact the students had taken just two newspaper-related journalism courses. That may be because students entered the program with high school journalism experience or more advanced journalism skills, but we don’t know. We’d like to find out.

Recommendations for students: Potential journalism majors should devise an education plan that incorporates journalism courses early in their educational career at LMC so they can take multiple newspaper-related courses during their time here and build a strong portfolio of work to show off their diverse journalistic skills.