

ASSESSMENT REPORT, AY2025-26

Program Information

- B.A. and B.S. in **Advertising & Public Relations**
- B.A. and B.S. in **News & Sports Media**
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- Program assessment website: <https://www.k-state.edu/media-communication/about/accreditation.html>

Introduction and summary

Designed to comply with expectations of the K-State Office of Assessment and the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), this report offers a summary of the A.Q. Miller School's assessment plan and its outcomes for 2025-26 in the programs of **News and Sports Media (NSM)** and **Advertising & Public Relations (ADPR)**, which launched in Fall 2022.

To assess means to measure the validity of student learning outcomes (SLOs) in coursework and, subsequently, to draw relevant lessons for improving curriculum and instruction. ACEJMC Standard 3, which is titled "Assessment of learning outcomes," requires the School to "regularly assess student learning using direct and indirect measures that engage communication professionals" and use results to improve curriculum and instruction, and, in doing so, to close a loop with Standard 2, which is titled "curriculum and instruction." Standard 2 reads: "The unit provides a curriculum and instruction, whether onsite or online, that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society."¹

The School activated two indirect measures of the 10 ACEJMC "professional values and competencies" (SLOs) in the academic year 2025-2026. ACEJMC used to require 12 SLOs, which were collapsed to 10 four years ago. We continue to measure 12 SLOs, separating, for instance, competencies into domestic/multicultural and global diversity proficiency. The direct measures took the form of a pre- and post-test and internship evaluations. The indirect measures included a senior satisfaction survey and a self-assessment of seniors' perceived SLO preparedness. Unfortunately, the university-administered senior satisfaction survey returned zero participants for the 2025-2026 academic year. The school will develop its own robust survey for internal administration for AY 2026-2027.

¹ "A guide to assessment of learning outcomes for ACEJMC accreditation," Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications

B. Outcome Report

Assessment Method(s) *(must include at least one direct measure)*

Direct measures used in AY2025-26:

Pre- and post- test (“assessment exam”): Students took a pre-test in MC 100 SMC Orientation, and seniors took the same test in the form of a post-test nearer the conclusion of the program in MC 580 Storytelling Across Platforms (the capstone for the NSM program) and in MC 581 Campaigns for Advertising & PR (capstone for the ADPR program). The assessment tests were administered to measure the validity of SLOs across general coursework and to inform curriculum and instruction. Notably, the post-test administered to seniors is used to compare graduating students' results with those of incoming freshmen, who are given the pre-test. Seniors' scores are not linked to their respective freshman cohort (the scores don't capture changes in the same individuals). To more precisely determine the desired level of program impact, the School could devise a plan to carefully track students' progress as they move from freshman to senior status.

A total of 226 students took the assessment survey in AY 2025-2026 (173 in Fall 2025 and 53 in Spring 2026). More specifically, 158 students across four majors (ADPR, COMM, DIGIN, and NSM) completed the pre-test in MC 100 SMC Orientation, 20 students in MC 580 Storytelling Across Platforms, and 48 students in MC 581 Strategic Communication Campaigns.

NSM

In the News and Sports Media program, **History** (mean 1.95), **Global Diversity** (mean 1.85) and **Math and Statistics** (mean 1.90) emerged as areas of concern. Meaning: students scoring below 2.0 on the post-test, with a summative score where 4=maximum points, are identified as areas of concern. The NSM faculty will need to discuss these findings in the coming year and develop a plan to address students' learning in history, global diversity, and math and statistics. Of particular concern is **History**. While not statistically significant, the post-test mean (1.95) was lower than the pre-test mean (1.98). The graduating students scored highest in their knowledge of **Technology** (mean 3.15). The previous assessment period returned **Global Diversity** (mean 1.75) as an area of concern. Although Global Diversity remains a recurring area of concern, scores have improved compared to the previous year. Overall, comparisons (computed with independent-samples t-tests) between the pre-test cohort and the post-test NSM group show statistically significant improvements in 3 out of 12 SLOs. While not statistically significant, the means improved in 11 SLOs from pre- to post-test. The comprehensive results are presented in Table 1.

ADPR

In the Advertising & Public Relations program, there were **zero** returns of concern (a mean score below 2.0 on a 4-point summative scale). During the previous review period, **Math and Statistics** (mean 1.5) and **Freedom of Speech** (mean 1.82) were areas of concern. Overall, comparisons (computed with independent-samples t-tests) between the pre-test cohort and the post-test ADPR group show statistically **significant improvement on all 12 SLOs**. Graduating seniors scored

highest in their knowledge of **Theories** (mean 3.62) and **Domestic Diversity** (mean 3.08). The ADPR faculty will need to continue having ADPR are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average points for each SLO in the pre-test and post-test groups

<i>SLO</i>	Pre-test (MC 100)		NSM Post-test (MC 580)		ADPR Post-test (MC 581)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 – Freedom of Speech	1.15	1.02	2.30*	1.21	2.50*	1.02
2 – History	1.98	1.25	1.95	1.31	2.50*	1.14
3 – Domestic Diversity	2.50	1.12	2.80	1.10	3.08*	1.14
4 – Global Diversity	1.67	1.16	1.85	1.22	2.18*	1.42
5 – Theories	2.68	1.29	2.80	1.54	3.62*	1.61
6 – Ethics	2.33	1.16	2.90*	1.25	3.00*	1.09
7 – Critical Thinking	2.43	1.01	2.80	1.15	2.87*	.91
8 – Research	2.01	1.10	2.10	1.16	2.50*	1.01
9 – Writing	1.86	1.07	2.25	1.06	2.50*	1.22
10 – Critical Evaluation	1.93	1.08	2.30	1.21	2.27*	1.21
11 – Math and Stats	1.86	1.08	1.90	1.11	2.37*	1.17
12 - Technology	2.38	1.20	3.15*	1.34	2.89*	1.20
	N=158		N=20		N=48	

*Statistically significant difference, on a summative score where 4=maximum points, with 4 items out of 4 answered correctly.

- Differences between the pre-test and each program's post-test were analyzed with independent-samples t-tests.

Internship evaluation: All students in the Ad&PR and NSM programs are required to take MC 491 – Mass Communication Internship before they graduate. Evaluations received from 116 internship supervisors over the course of the 2025-2026 academic year indicated overwhelming satisfaction with the skill sets of the juniors and seniors in NSM and ADPR, as shown in Table 2. Many used adjectives such as “proactive”, “enthusiastic”, “inclusive”, “professional”, “engaging”, “strategic,” and “trustworthy”. Thematic analysis of supervisor comments revealed themes ranging from eager to learn and coachable to collaborative, communicative, detail-oriented and independent. Multiple organizations discussed extending employment, making return offers, or wanting the intern back. In areas of growth, a few supervisors noted that some students could improve audience-centered thinking, project coordination, confidence, and their ability to adjust to professional settings. Overall, the growth feedback was developmental rather than corrective. Evaluators emphasized our students’ growth and learning, and saw the interns as capable and successful.

Multiple students had two or more internships, depending on their chosen number of credits (up to 3) in the repeatable course, MC491: Media Internship. Interns had to document 80 hours of work to earn each credit hour. Fall 2025 saw 13 evaluator comments returned, Spring 2026 saw 30 supervisor comments returned, and Summer 2026 saw 73 supervisor comments returned (for a total of 116 evaluations). A few interns received more than one evaluation for having more than one supervisor.

Internship evaluators expressed not only overall satisfaction, but also pleasure with their respective interns’ preparation and performance. All eight skills were rated above a 4.0. The strongest scores

were in **Respect for Diversity** (M=4.92, SD=.27 on a 5-point scale, where 5=Excellent) and in **Professional Ethics** (M=4.90, SD=.32), while the lowest score (M=4.59, SD=.61) was in **Research Skills**. Overall, internship data indicate that students graduating from the NSM and ADPR programs are well prepared for jobs in the industry. When asked what grade they would assign to the student, the average grade was 95.95 (out of 100, SD =5.14), with a minimum of 75 and a maximum of 100.

Table 2. Internship supervisor ratings of students' skills

<i>SLO</i>	N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Concepts and theories	115	2	5	4.83	.46
Professional ethics	115	3	5	4.90	.32
Respect for diversity	114	4	5	4.92	.27
Critical and Creative Thinking	115	3	5	4.69	.54
Research skills	111	2	5	4.59	.61
Writing and Oral Communication	113	2	5	4.67	.62
Critical Evaluation	113	2	5	4.67	.57
Statistics	85	4	5	4.80	.40

*Internship supervisors only rated the skills that applied to the student's work.

Indirect measure used in AY2025-26:

In Spring 2026, students in the two capstone courses (MC 580 for NSM and MC 581 for ADPR) were asked to assess their own level of preparation along the 10 professional values and competencies. The results are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Student self-reports of preparedness along program SLOs

	NSM		ADPR	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SLO1: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can apply freedom of speech and press principles and laws in both global and U.S. contexts relevant to the communication profession.	4.29	.611	3.92	1.187
SLO2: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.	4.14	.770	3.76	1.234
SLO3: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts	4.21	.893	4.00	1.179
SLO4: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.	4.36	.633	4.27	1.217
SLO5: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.	4.14	.663	4.24	1.188

SLO6: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I understand the professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and service to all people and communities.	4.50	.650	4.14	1.199
SLO7: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to communications professionals.	4.43	.756	4.14	1.199
SLO8: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.	4.14	.770	3.97	1.213
SLO9: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can critically evaluate my own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness	4.21	.699	4.27	1.194
SLO10: As a result of my degree in Media and Communication: - I can apply tools and technologies appropriate for communications professionals.	4.21	.699	4.30	1.199
	N=14		N=37	

-Level of preparedness was measured on a 5-point scale, where 5=Strongly Agree.

For NSM, students felt most prepared to **work ethically** (mean 4.50) and to effectively **present images and information** using the appropriate technology (mean 4.36). Means for all items were above 4.0, meaning students in NSM feel prepared in all 10 of the ACEJMC competencies. This result, compared with the post-test, indicates a potential disconnect between perceived preparedness and skill performance.

For ADPR, students felt most prepared to apply **tools and technologies** appropriate for communications professionals (mean 4.30), to **critically evaluate** (mean 4.27), and to **present images and information** using the appropriate technology (mean 4.27). ADPR students felt least prepared for three of the competencies, including **statistics** (mean 3.97), **freedom of speech** (mean 3.92), and **history** (mean 3.76). The result, compared with the post-test, indicates a potential disconnect between skill performance (which was higher) and perceived preparedness.

Summary

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that all graduates of accredited programs should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Students were directly assessed on 12 outcomes that reflect these values and competencies. While SLOs overall came back strongly, pre-test and post-test comparisons showed areas of concern for **Global Diversity, History and Math and Statistics** in the News and Sports Media program. The programs should address these learning outcomes in their coursework in the following year. The Advertising and Public Relations program returned zero areas of concern. Internship supervisor evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Coursework and participation in student media organizations and clubs within the School of Media and Communication are preparing students in the ADPR and NSM programs to succeed in the industry.