

ASSESSMENT REPORT, AY2022-23

A. Program Information

- B.A. and B.S. in **Mass Communications** (precursors to the current B.A. and B.S. in **Advertising & Public Relations**; and 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 2022-23 in the programs of **News and Sports Media (NSM)** and **Advertising & Public Relations (Ad&PR)**, which launched Fall 2022, as well as the older **Mass Communications** program.

To assess means to measure validity of student learning outcomes (SLOs) in coursework and, subsequently, to draw relevant lessons for improving curriculum and instruction. ACEJMC Standard 9, which is titled “assessment of learning outcomes,” requires the School to “regularly assesses student learning 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 2022-2023. ACEJMC used to require 12 SLOs, which were collapsed to 10 two 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 measure appeared as a satisfaction survey of seniors.

The year was marked by a **relative increase in class enrollments and steady indicators across the SLOs**. In the undergraduate courses offered during Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, including online sections, the average enrollment saturation was 70.8% and 60.2%, up from 63.5% and 50.5%, respectively, in the previous fall and spring semesters.

¹ “A guide to assessment of learning outcomes for ACEJMC accreditation, 2022,” Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, <http://www.acejmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ACEJMC-Guide-to-Assessment-of-Learning-Outcomes.pdf>

B. Outcome Report

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

- **Direct measures used in AY2022-23:**

- I. **Pre- and post- test (“assessment exam”):** Pre-majors took a pre-test in MC 100 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 Journalism and Digital Media sequence, now the NSM program) and in MC 581 Strategic Communications Campaigns (capstone for the Strategic Communication sequence, now the Ad&PR program). The assessment tests were administered with goals to measure validity of SLOs in general coursework and draw from results to improve curriculum and instruction. Notably, the post-test given to seniors is used to compare results of graduating students to 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). For more precise comparisons to determine a desired level of program impact, the School could devise a plan to carefully track students’ progress as they move from freshman to senior status.

Of the 58 valid responses to the post-test, 20 were collected in MC 580 (News & Sports Media capstone) and 38 in MC 581 (Ad&PR capstone) via a Qualtrics survey. The pre-test was administered in MC 100 (JMC Orientation) and was completed by 91 students.

Returns of concern in the post-tests (scores with an average below 2.0 in a summative score where 4=maximum points) appeared in the areas of **Freedom of Speech** (mean 1.74; standard deviation .98) and **Math and Statistics** (mean 1.74, standard deviation .98). The School will discuss these numbers and relevant possible interventions at a faculty meeting focused in the coursework of the Ad&PR and NSM BA/BS programs. Of note is that the College of Arts & Sciences is in the process of replacing Algebra as a general-education math requirement with a Quantitative Reasoning (Contemporary Math) course for majors in social sciences, arts, and humanities. Also, during Spring 2023, the Ad&PR faculty reviewed the assessment tool and edited some of the survey questions, including those measuring the freedom of speech SLO, to better reflect realities of the discipline and the subject matter taught in the program. That updated survey questionnaire will be deployed during AY 2023-2024.

Two areas of concern from the previous assessment cycle, namely written communication and global diversity, returned scores above 2.0 in AY 2022-2023, showing improvement from the following year.

Overall, comparisons between the pre-test and the post-test groups show statistically significant improvements in 11 out of 12 SLOs. There was no significant improvement in **Critical Evaluation**, although the post-test score (M=2.17, SD=.89) is higher than in the previous AY. The School needs to address this SLO in its classes next year. The comprehensive results 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		ALL Post-test		NSM Post-test		Ad&PR Post-test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 – Freedom of Speech	1.12	1.00	1.74*	.98	1.90*	1.11	1.65*	.90
2 – History	1.97	1.13	2.32*	.99	2.05	.94	2.47*	1.00
3 – Domestic Diversity	2.50	.87	2.91*	1.01	3.1*	.107	2.81	.98
4 – Global Diversity	1.68	1.10	2.15*	1.10	2.25*	1.2	2.10	1.06
5 – Theories	2.50	1.27	3.12*	1.37	3.15	1.46	3.10*	1.35
6 – Ethics	2.26	1.17	3.20*	.83	3.20*	.83	2.81*	1.03
7 – Critical Thinking	2.38	1.03	2.72*	.89	2.65	.87	2.76	.91
8 – Research	1.87	.98	2.53*	1.02	2.55*	.88	2.52*	1.10
9 – Writing	1.83	.97	2.18*	1.03	2.50*	1.10	2.02	.97
10 – Critical Evaluation	1.95	1.04	2.17	.86	2.10	.71	2.21	.93
11 – Math and Stats	1.45	.96	1.74*	.98	1.70	.80	1.76	1.07
12 - Technology	2.29	1.25	3.12*	1.14	3.35*	1.03	3.00*	1.18
	<i>N=91</i>		<i>N=58</i>		<i>N=20</i>		<i>N=38</i>	

*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 the ALL post-test groups were analyzed with independent-samples t-tests. Differences between the pre-test group and the NSM and Ad&PR groups were analyzed with one-way ANOVA with Tukey post-hoc analysis.

- In the Ad&PR program, ANOVAs with Tukey post-hoc analysis show several SLOs with significant improvements in the senior cohort compared to the freshman class: Freedom of Speech, History, Theories, Ethics, Research, and Technology. The scores in Domestic Diversity, Global Diversity, Critical Thinking, Writing, Critical Evaluation, and Math & Stats did not change significantly between the freshman and cohort classes. The Ad&PR program needs to address these SLOs more closely in its coursework. See the last column in Table 1 for the Ad&PR post-test scores.
- In the NSM program, ANOVAs with Tukey post-hoc analysis show several SLOs with significant improvements in the senior cohort compared to the freshman class: Freedom of Speech, Domestic Diversity, Global Diversity, Ethics, Research, Writing, and Technology. Lack of statistical significance in the other SLOS may be due to the small sample size, but the NSM program needs to address the apparent lack of improvement in student learning, as imperfectly as it may be reflected in these scores, in History, Theories, Critical Thinking, Critical Evaluation, and Math & Stats. Or perhaps the School needs to change the measurement tool -- the assessment committee should lead a discussion next year to evaluate the face validity of the items used in the assessment exam. The post-test score means for the program are presented in the fourth column of Table 1.

II. **Internship evaluation:** Evaluations received from 82 internship supervisors indicated overwhelming satisfaction with the skillsets of the juniors and seniors, as shown in Table 2. Many used adjectives such as “amazing,” “exceptional,” “fabulous,” “reliable,” and “outstanding” to describe the interns. Some described the interns as “total rockstars” or “assets” and “joys” to work with or as someone bringing “a mindset that we do not have.” The spectrum of intern qualities mentioned by supervisors ranged from “enthusiasm” to “curiosity” to “creativity” to “maturity.” In areas of growth, a few supervisors noted that some students could work on improving their sense of initiative, their assertiveness in expressing opinions and knowledge, and their promptness in meeting deadlines.

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 120 hours of work to earn every credit hour earned. Fall 2022 saw 13 evaluator comments returned, Spring 2023 saw 16 supervisor comments returned, and Summer 2023 saw 53 supervisor comments returned (for a total of 82 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. The strongest score (M=4.94, on a 5-point scale, where 5=Excellent) was in **Respect for Diversity**, while the lowest score (M=4.58) was in **Critical Evaluation**. While the score for this SLO was still in the good-to-excellent range (4=good, 5=excellent), the finding that Critical Evaluation is a potential area for growth aligns with results from the assessment tests. Overall, however, internship data indicate that students graduating from the NSM and Ad&PR programs are well prepared for jobs in the industry.

Table 2. Internship supervisor ratings of students’ skills

SLO	N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Concepts and theories	82	3	5	4.84	.40
Professional ethics	82	3	5	4.90	.37
Respect for diversity	80	4	5	4.94	.24
Critical and Creative Thinking	81	2	5	4.63	.60
Research skills	78	3	5	4.62	.60
Writing and Oral Communication	82	2	5	4.63	.57
Critical Evaluation	79	2	5	4.58	.63
Statistics	53	3	5	4.72	.53

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

- **Indirect measure used in AY2022-23:**

A senior satisfaction survey was administered by the university Office of Assessment in AY2022-23, allowing graduating students to evaluate their own learning under several SLOs. The survey indicated overall satisfaction with the rigor of instruction and positive experience received by the respondents. Without discussing the results under individual SLOs, it may still be noted that the response rate in the survey was relatively low. The senior satisfaction survey had a response rate of 25 percent, with 18 of the School’s 72 graduating seniors participating. It was administered in Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023 to seniors who had applied or were approved for graduation in those semesters. The university measures 5 SLOs that are loosely aligned with some of the A.Q. Miller School’s 12 SLOS.

SLO 1 (critical thinking) corresponds to the School’s SLO 7 (critical thinking). SLO 2 (A. written communication, B. oral communications) corresponds to the School’s SLO 9 (writing). SLO 4 (A. ethical development, B. personal ethical standards, and C. professional environment ethics) aligns with the School’s SLO 6 (ethics). Finally, SLO5 (A. ability to interact positively with people who are different, B. learning and understanding others’ abilities, interests, and perspectives) aligns with the school SLO 3 (Domestic diversity). The only SLOs where a few students reported “below average” preparation were **critical thinking** (5%) and **learning and understanding others’ abilities, interests and perspectives** (12%).

Table 3. Student responses to the senior satisfaction survey – Perceived improvements

<i>SLO</i>	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent
Critical thinking	5%	28%	44%	23%
Written communication		33%	33%	33%
Oral communication		16%	54%	28%
Ethical development		28%	72%	
Personal ethical standards		12%	47%	41%
Professional environment ethics		12%	44%	44%
Ability to interact with people who are different		16%	54%	28%
Learning and understanding others’ abilities, interests and perspectives	12%	24%	64%	

In the future, the School faculty should discuss employing its own exit survey of graduating seniors, to be able to capture all 12 competencies that its two programs aim to develop.

As the School consolidates its strengths and surveys post-merger opportunities, a refined assessment plan in AY2023-24 will encourage faculty members to submit automatic Canvas data for measuring SLOs and further align the assessment process with the mission of the merged unit.