UCF Academic Program Review 2012-13
Consultant Undergraduate Program Review

Program: Journalism, B.A.

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<u>**Instructions**</u>: Please offer your assessment of each item below, considering when appropriate, your knowledge of other public research institutions. While a few items solicit an open-ended response, most ask you to rate a particular characteristic of the program under review as exemplary, appropriate, or needing improvement. At the end of each section, please elaborate on any items in that section identified as exemplary or needing improvement. Additional comments are optional. You may offer recommendations for improvement on the topics covered in each section at the end of the respective section and/or you may provide all recommendations for program improvement in item 8.3 at the end of this document.

Section 1   Program Goals and Planned Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Please evaluate the following:

1.1   Program goals and objectives, including those related to planned student learning outcomes (In addition to the program self-study, you may wish to consult the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* library in the UCF APR Web site.)

> *Please select only one option from the list below:*
> ☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

> *Please elaborate if you identified item 1.1 as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.*
>
> *Recommendations, if any, in the area of program goals and planned student learning outcomes:*

Section 2   Program Coordination and Administration

Please evaluate the following:

2.1   Program administrative and management structures to effectively run program (e.g., effectiveness of program coordination, process for monitoring students' progress to degree, program handbooks, process for selecting preceptors/thesis advisors/research mentors/clinical supervisors)

> *Please select only one option from the list below:*
> ☒ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

2.2   Student access to resources to enhance student success (e.g., advising, faculty members, appropriate technology)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☒ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (2.1- 2.2) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
The Academic Student Service Center handles an impressive number of student interactions and appears to do so very successfully. Advising office personnel have a "can do" attitude that is infectious and inspires confidence. Advising materials such as program "at a Glance" sheets clearly lay out the path to degree. Undergraduate and graduate students report having exceptional access to their professors, and when pressed, gave specific examples of the positive mentoring and advising they receive from their professors and the advising center.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program coordination and administration:

Section 3   Program Demand and Productivity

Please evaluate the following:

3.1   Program's ability to meet student demand for the major

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

3.2   Program's curriculum contribution toward the General Education Program

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☒ Not Applicable

3.3   Enrollment levels relative to faculty size and composition

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

3.4   Program's ability and responsiveness to meet the needs of other disciplines (e.g., program offerings that support other programs)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☒ Not Applicable

3.5   Program's ability and responsiveness to meet local, regional, and national needs

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

3.6   Student retention

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

3.7   Student time-to-degree in the program

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (3.1- 3.7) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
Journalism is a restricted access major, and experiences significantly more attrition than other mass communication programs in the Nicholson School. It would be difficult, however, to grow the major without adding faculty members. The time to degree has increased over the years, to nearly 1 1/2 years more than the ad/pr and r-TV majors for FTIC students.

The caps in skills classes have been raised to 25, which is entirely too high for classes in which students must write on deadline every class meeting. Students cannot improve their skills unless they write a lot of work and get it back before the next writing assignment is given. Faculty members can't grade that many writing assignments on a daily basis.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program demand and productivity:
The university must determine whether the journalism program should grow, and if so, provide additional personnel to accommodate more students.

It's unclear why journalism students do not complete the major in the same amount of time as other majors. It is recommended that degree plans be studied to determine whether course rotations, average credit hours taken per semester, or other factors are at play. According to the self-study, several classes were not offered in rotation, but no explanation was given.

It is strongly recommended that writing classes be limited to 20 students.

Section 4   Program Quality

Please evaluate the following:

4.1   Criteria for program admission (if applicable)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.2   Quality and rigor of student learning outcome targets (Refer to Academic Learning Compacts and student learning outcomes assessment plans located in the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* library.)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.3   Evidence of student learning consistent with stated program goals (including planned student learning outcomes) and discipline standards

Please select only one option from the list below:
☒ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.4   Student licensure pass rates (if applicable)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☒ Not Applicable

4.5   Placement rates for graduates relative to disciplinary trends at other public research universities

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Student Perceptions of Program Quality

Based upon your interactions with students in the program, please indicate how you believe students in the program view the program in the following areas:

4.6   Students' perception of the overall administration of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.7   Students' perception of advising and mentoring

Please select only one option from the list below:
☒ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.8   Students' perception of program quality and rigor

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

4.9   Students' perceptions of the academic and collegial atmosphere of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (4.1- 4.8) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
See comments about advising and mentoring in section 2.2.

It is unfortunate that the School does not track placement after graduation. It isn't possible to see a complete picture withou that data.

The assessment plan is excellent in that it clearly identifies what outcomes students should achieve. The results are not written in a consistent format (example: "89% of the faculty agreed" rather than "faculty agreed the 89% of students were rated 4 or higher…" It will be interesting to see how the faculty closes the loop and creates an action plan that fosters student creativity and initiative, both apparently needing more emphasis.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program quality:
It is recommended that the School collect job placement data and graduate school admission statistics on students after they graduate.

Use of professionals who supervised interns and faculty to assess student learning outcomes is a good way to

Section 5   Student Characteristics and Quality

Please evaluate the following:

5.1   Program's ability to attract high quality students

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

5.2   Incoming students' credentials

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

5.3   Student diversity

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

5.4   Quality of student accomplishments compared to similar programs at other public research universities (e.g., theses, creative works, papers presented; awards won; quality of subsequent graduate and professional programs entered; employment)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

5.5   Program relationship with alumni

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (5.1- 5.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
Incoming journalism students are weaker overall than students in the other mass communication program, which is surprising. The gap may explain the higher attrition rates in journalism than in the other programs.

The lopsided gender mix (more than 70% female) is unfortunate and is out of line with the overall mix of the undergraduate population (approximately 54% female). The percentage of minority students is low (32%) as well

Recommendations, if any, in the area of student characteristics and quality:
It is recommended that the journalism program collaborate more with the radio-TV program and try to cross-pollenate a bit to raise student performance in journalism.

The program would be served by accepting more male and minority students to achieve more diversity and to prepare a group of graduates more like the general population to produce the news. The program should produce more journalism graduates who view the world through a variety of lenses to give readers and viewers more perspective when reporting the news.

Section 6   Curriculum, Course Offerings, and Student Engagement Opportunities

Please evaluate the following:

6.1   Current curriculum's alignment with program goals

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

6.2   Design of core courses' to provide students a solid foundation in the discipline

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

6.3   Availability and timeliness of required courses

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☒ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

6.4   Adequacy of student professional development opportunities (e.g., research, clinical experience, student teaching, service learning)

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☐ Appropriate   ☒ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

6.5   Overall quality and rigor of current curriculum

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

6.6   Incorporation of appropriate pedagogical and/or technological innovations into the curriculum

Please select only one option from the list below:
☐ Exemplary   ☒ Appropriate   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Don't Know   ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (6.1- 6.6) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
While students have opportunities to gain professional experience through internships, producing the Centric magazine, and submitting articles to professional newspapers such as the Orlando Sentinel, the lack of a student newspaper is a glaring weakness. The sheer burden of production is one that students should feel before they graduate.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of curriculum, course offerings, and student engagement opportunities:
It is recommended that the University begin a student-run newspaper.

Section 7   Comparative Advantage

7.1   If applicable, please identify features that distinguish the program from similar programs at other institutions (e.g., curriculum, faculty member expertise, student engagement opportunities)

The Nicholson School is considering creating a center for investigative journalism, and doing so will give students a competitive edge in the journalism industry.

7.2   Does the program fit a disciplinary niche? If so, please elaborate.

See 7.1.

Adding courses

7.3   Please discuss the program's potential for achieving discipline (re-)accreditation or (re-)certification, if available.

ACEJMC accreditation is not possible with the current class sizes in the major.

Section 8   Analysis and Recommendations

8.1   Please identify up to five areas of greatest program strength.

Converged tracks.

Internship program that requires students to successfully complete prerequisite courses before enrolling.

8.2   Please identify up to five areas of greatest concern for the program (e.g., program weaknesses, barriers, threats, unique vulnerabilities).

Class sizes in skills classes.

Lack of student newspaper.

Low faculty morale; insular environment.

8.3   Please reflect on program centrality, cost, comparative advantage, demand, and quality. Keeping these factors in mind, please offer your recommendations for program improvement considering each of the following, as appropriate:

- improvements necessary for successful continuation of program operation (if applicable)
- improvements that are not resource intensive, but that are likely to enhance program quality
- improvements that, if resources permit, could help take the program to the next level of prominence

It appears that the journalism program may be struggling to determine an identity. Is it comprehensive program? A professional program? Once the appropriate direction is identified, the School can determine whether more tenure-track or lecturer faculty should be added when funds become available.

Section 9   Executive Summary

In one to two pages, please provide your overall impression of the program, emphasizing key aspects of the review. As appropriate, contextualize your assessment in relation to best practices in the discipline of study, undergraduate education, the broader higher education landscape, and/or industry trends within the field.

The mass communication programs at UCF include majors in advertising/public relations, radioTV, and journalism. The faculty has a good mix of academic credentials and professional experience. Faculty members are engaged with their students, and students met by the review team were enthusiastic about the quality of education they receive in each of the programs.

Students in each program have opportunities to participate in internships because of the University's location in a major media market. The journalism internships appeared to be more strategic and managed than those in the other majors, which benefits students. While practical experience is critical in today's tight job market, students should participate in internships that extend and complement what they learn in the major, and they should be far enough along in the program that they have something to offer the professional organizations.

UCF's public television station and public radio station give the University visibility in the community, and the academic programs should be more involved in their operation. The review team was pleased to learn that the Nicholson School and the public television station plan to share a full-time employee, which should help bridge the two entities. The radioTV students could be involved in locally originated programming and production; advertising/public relations students could be involved in promotions; and journalism students could be involved in news and public affairs.

All of the mass communication programs are limited access programs, and students are admitted on the basis of their grade point averages, essays, and test scores. The attrition rate of transfer students is much higher than the attrition rate of First Time in College (FTIC) students, and the review team suggests exploring reasons why. One point to investigate is whether the practice of considering grade point averages equal regardless of where the courses are taken gives transfer students an edge over FTIC in admission decisions. Students who start as freshmen at UCF and have a 3.5 grade point average by end of sophomore year may be performing better than transfer students coming in to UCF with a 3.5 grade point average from elsewhere.

The lack of diversity in all of the programs needs to be addressed. If the media frame the messages received by audiences, then those creating the frame need to have characteristics more similar to the population.

It is very curious that a school so well known as the Nicholson School of Communication and a university as large as UCF does not have a student-run newspaper. The absence of the newspaper casts doubt on whether or not the journalism program is taken seriously by either the school or the university.

The Nicholson School is out of space. It is understood that space is a premium at most universities, but the review team

finds it difficult to defend instructional space allocation to a service entity such as the public radio station. The allocation isn't consistent with a "student first" mindset.

The best example of appropriate use of space is in the radioTV program, in which students gain experience with a variety of formats and up-to-date high definition technology.

All of the undergraduate mass communication programs offer a quality educational experience to students. The review team suggests looking for ways to collaborate among the programs to create more efficient course rotations.

Most impressive is the dedication with which the School director, faculty, and staff serve their students.