Academic Program Review 2017-18
Consultant Undergraduate Program Review

Program: Journalism, B.A.

Reviewer(s) Name(s): Hardin, Gonzalez, Ulmer

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Instructions: 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* section 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.***
> It is surprising that an appreciation of diversity and a global context isn't a learning goal. Why is that? Is that embedded in another objective? Or does the program not believe it should be articulated as a learning objective?
>
> ***Recommendations, if any, in the area of program goals and planned student learning outcomes:***

Section 2 - Program Coordination, Administration, and Student Support

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 /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 support 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

2.3   Evaluate the composition of the current program advisory board (if applicable) to be able to benefit student preparation to meet industry needs

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- 2.3) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

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

Section 3 – Contributing Faculty

3.1   Quality of faculty member instruction

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary	☐ Appropriate	☐ Needs Improvement	☒ Don't Know	☐ Not Applicable

3.2   Faculty member involvement of undergraduate students in research or other creative activity

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary	☐ Appropriate	☒ Needs Improvement	☐ Don't Know	☐ Not Applicable

3.4   Minimum faculty member qualifications required for teaching in the discipline(s) (The state and our regional accrediting body require UCF to review the qualifications of our faculty members. To inform related reviews, the department/unit has developed a statement articulating the minimum qualifications necessary to teach the discipline(s) it houses. Qualifications beyond the minimum may also be sought when hiring faculty members. We would appreciate your assessment as to whether or not the minimum qualifications identified by the unit appear consistent with common practices in the field. Please refer to the document labeled *Faculty Teaching Qualifications – Statement of Good Practices in Discipline,* located in the *Faculty Information* 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 any items in this section (3.1- 3.4) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Few students in Journalism are involved in undergraduate research, according to information we received. This is understandable to some degree, given the nature of the major and the expertise/experience/credentials of the faculty. However, if undergraduate research activity is a priority for the institution, it will require an investment in the faculty resources required in the Journalism major (tenure-line; active researcher) and incentives for the faculty members in this major to engage students in such activity.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of contributing faculty:
The credentials of the faculty in this major range from appropriate to exemplary. Several are actively engaged in the professions they teach, enabling them to bring "real-world" experience to students. They are award-winning and clearly dedicated to helping their students pursue opportunities.
The number of tenure-line to non-tenure-line faculty is out of balance, however, in relationship to UCF's research-intensive mission. It is possible to find tenure-line faculty members with significant industry experience, so this is not an "either-or" scenario.

Section 4 - Program Demand and Productivity

Please evaluate the following:

4.1   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

4.2   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

4.3   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

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

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

4.5   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 (4.1- 4.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The major is controlled for the number of students it can accommodate, clearly indicating that it cannot meet student demand. It seems that it might be in the School's interest to amass the resources to meet demand, especially with the anticipated move downtown, which should make the major even more attractive. Because enrollments are controlled and faculty are constrained to teaching courses essential in the major, the major may fail, over time, to be able to compete nationally for students or to gain the attention of employers at the national level. Many journalism programs have the "running room" to ramp up their offerings in multimedia/digital/mobile reporting and storytelling and analytics in reporting, and are moving into immersive storytelling. This program has much to brag about in its daily webcasts and online NSM Today, but those programs should be poised for growth over time, with appropriate faculty resources.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program demand and productivity:
Planning to put a program that has strong student demand, yet cannot meet it because of a lack of faculty resources, into a new, high-tech facility designed to enhance demand and possibilities seems shortsighted. Further, the program will need to keep pace and have the faculty resources that align with its projected high-profile home in downtown. Recommendation: Add at least one faculty member who can help feed and energize efforts to continue to improve program quality, preferably tenure-line. The work of full-time faculty can be supported by the high-quality adjunct pool that exists in Orlando, a major media market.

Section 5 - Program Quality

Please evaluate the following:

5.1   Quality and rigor of student learning outcome targets (Refer to student learning outcomes assessment plans located in the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* section of the APR Web site.)

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

5.2   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

5.3   Student licensure pass rates (if applicable)

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

5.4   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

5.5   Quality and rigor of any affiliated combination programs (if applicable, see self-study addendum); e.g., accelerated baccalaureate-to-master's degrees, combination dual degrees, graduate degrees with external departments

Student Perceptions of their Overall Experience

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:

5.6   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

5.7   Students' perception of advising and mentoring

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

5.8   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

5.9   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 (5.1- 5.9) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.
Students expressed some concerns about access to courses in the major. However, these concerns do not seem to be translating to extended time to degree or adversely impacting graduation rates.
Students expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the collegial environment they find in the program and the dedication of faculty to their welfare and growth. Faculty members are respected for their expertise and experience.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program quality:

Section 6 - Student Characteristics and Quality

Please evaluate the following:

6.1   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

6.2   Incoming students' credentials (e.g., GPA)

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

6.3   Student diversity

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

6.4   Quality of student accomplishments compared to similar programs at other public research universities (e.g., theses, dissertations, creative works, papers presented; awards won; quality of subsequent graduate and professional programs entered; employment) (Refer to student works located in the *Student Works* section of the APR Web site as well as any additional student works you may have reviewed during your site visit.)

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

6.5   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 (6.1- 6.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of student characteristics and quality:

Section 7 - Curriculum, Course Offerings, and Student Engagement Opportunities

Please evaluate the following:

7.1   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

7.2   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

7.3   Availability and timeliness of required courses

Please select only one option from the list below:

| ☐ Exemplary | ☐ Appropriate | ☐ Needs Improvement | ☒ Don't Know | ☐ Not Applicable |

7.4   Adequacy of student professional development opportunities (e.g., research, clinical experience)

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

7.5   Balance between coursework and research, practica, independent study, etc., (e.g., too many or too few courses)

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

7.6   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 |

7.7   Degree to which the program's course/activity/experiences sequence is appropriate to achieve the program's outcomes and student learning objectives.

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 (7.1- 7.7) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Please use the space below to provide recommendations, if any, in the area of curriculum, course offerings, and student engagement opportunities. Please offer any specific suggestions to further enhance the curriculum (e.g., internationalize curriculum, add interdisciplinary components, expand high impact practices)

Section 8 - Comparative Advantage

8.1   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 program is not a standout, but it does, by our assessment, have a curriculum that is designed to align with its learning objectives and give students current, relevant, professionally oriented opportunities through its NSM Today, Knightly News and emphasis on internships. The opportunities it provides to students interested in Spanish-language journalism can help distinguish it from some competitors and has likely helped fuel the growth of Hispanic students in the program in recent years.

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

No.

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

The program could seek ACEJMC accreditation. Among other priorities, it would need to align its learning goals with ACEJMC's values and competencies; ensure that its skills courses do not exceed 20 students; ensure its faculty (part- and full-time) are sufficiently diverse, given its location and student body; and ensure that it is contributing to UCF's mission as it relates to research. It would also need to demonstrate that its public service activities (including scholastic journalism) are strong and its facilities and technology are relevant and current. About 120 programs, including several in Florida, are accredited.

Section 9 - Analysis and Recommendations

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

Dedicated, experienced faculty; attention to journalism's core values in its curriculum; strong in-School media opportunities, including its Hispanic Media initiative.

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

Lack of faculty to meet current student demand or to position it to compete beyond the region. A threat to this program is that it will be underprepared and under-resourced, from a "human capital" perspective, to adequately meet the increased expectations and demand it will face in its new, high-profile downtown home.

9.3 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 (including program rankings) and/or help enhance performance key metrics identified in the university's collective impact strategic plan

Seeking ACEJMC accreditation would provide this program the standards, values and competencies integrated by almost all of its similar-sized peers – and certainly all programs to which it aspires, including Newhouse and Cronkite. It would also help the program become a stronger contributor to the University's priorities around research and student engagement.
The program can and should take full advantage of its position in a major media market by connecting its students and faculty to highly qualified professionals in the classroom and through workshops that focus on "value-added skills" like mobile journalism, data journalism, short documentary, drone journalism, etc. These don't have to be in for-credit classes, but instead, in the form of workshops. But high-quality adjuncts could be recruited to develop and

teach cutting edge courses. Of course, this is a Band-Aid on the bigger issue of insufficient full-time faculty to meet student demand or to find ways to distinguish the program more strongly from its competitors.

If not already, the School may also want to consider ways it can invest in the ongoing professional development of its faculty in a fast-changing media environment, through support to attend workshops, participate in "externships" or other fellowship programs during the summer, etc. This is not to suggest that the current faculty are not highly qualified or sufficiently versatile, but instead to suggest that current faculty demonstrate a desire to stay powerfully connected to the profession, and this should be rewarded and cultivated.

Section 10 - 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, graduate education, the broader higher education landscape, and/or industry trends within the field.

The Journalism program in the Nicholson School has significant strengths, most notably a core group of full-time faculty members who bring energy, dedication, experience and expertise to their teaching roles. The move of broadcast news from RTV to Journalism also positions the program to better integrate print/digital/broadcast in a way that prepares students for the job market. The core curriculum for the major seems to be appropriate although it likely could be streamlined while ensuring the basics in newsgathering, writing, law and ethics, and history, with foundational instruction in media/digital literacy.

A reading of the program's learning objectives, assessment plan and results indicates that the faculty have set high standards and are willing to continually retool their courses to help students meet them.

The program's opportunities through NSM Daily, Knightly News and other initiatives are outstanding resume builders for students. The NSM Dailiy website is current and indicates active student journalists. The Knightly News webcast is a smart way to provide students with experience without committing studio resources every day.

These opportunities are essential and must have the dedicated resources they need. However, these kinds of opportunities are "standard-operating-procedure" for a program situated at a university of UCF's stature and size. This is not to be critical, but simply to encourage the program to keep innovating and growing opportunities if it aspires to a higher profile and national reputation.

The program must also look ahead to what its new home will mean for it, in terms of visibility and expectations. It would be regrettable to move into a new, high-end, bells-and-whistles facility without having planned and resourced appropriately in terms of an adequate, cross-trained faculty that can take advantage of all of its possibilities.