



2017-18 Academic Program Review Results

College of Sciences Nicholson School of Communication Programs

School-level Recommendations

- Identify and pursue additional opportunities for interdisciplinary faculty collaborations in teaching, research, and service.
- Increase grant funding among current faculty.
- Develop hiring plan to increase tenure/tenure-earning and grant-getting faculty.
- With move downtown:
 - Capitalize on new collaboration opportunities. Consider establishing a “community liaison” position to facilitate faculty connections with the local community and businesses; to identify high impact experiences in niche areas for students in each major
 - Update strategic plan in the context of the new school
 - Consider revisions to and alignment of academic programs to suit the new urban context it will now share with the Orlando community
 - Work with central administration to ensure all NSC programs are promoted at the main campus to help avoid enrollment declines due to move

Advertising/Public Relations, B.A. (09.0903)

Strengths

- Diverse student population with highly employable skillset
- Robust alumni network and program advisory board that supports student opportunities with programming, internships, and job placement
- 100% student pass rate of APR student certification through 2015

Weaknesses

- Need for tenured/tenure-earning faculty who support student, program, and industry needs.
- Confusing sequencing of course requirements
- Limited student engagement in and opportunities for undergraduate research
- Insufficient opportunities for students to develop skills in data analytics and video/immersive storytelling, thus being more competitive
- Unable to meet student program and course demand

Recommendations

- Map curriculum and consider revising program to address mix of courses (fundamental v. advanced), availability of courses, content (e.g., data analytics and video/immersive storytelling), and hands on learning experiences (e.g., course clients).
- Develop a program specific plan to increase number of tenured/tenure-earning faculty with industry experience.
- Explore and include additional research and experiential opportunities in the major.
- Develop a plan that identifies resources needed to increase student capacity.
- Ensure students regularly have an opportunity to sit for APR student certification.

- Explore possibility of ACEJMC accreditation; develop plan to address class size, faculty diversity, faculty credentials, and faculty research and creative activity. If ACEJMC accreditation is not pursued, align program learning goals with ACEJMC standards.

Communication and Conflict, B.A. (09.0101)

Strengths

- The program responds to community needs in conflict management and corporate communication.
- Niche program area desirable to employers
- Online offering of the degree makes it more diverse and accessible to students

Weaknesses

- Too few faculty to meet student demand

Recommendations

- Develop a program specific plan to increase number of faculty with industry experience
- Develop a plan to promote program and gain recognition to compete regionally and nationally
- Monitor first student cohort groups with attention to graduation rates, learning outcomes and assessment; review and assess curriculum for possible revisions

Human Communication, B.A. (09.0101)

Strengths

- Planned curricular changes that include well defined tracks
- Sufficient faculty to support student demand
- Diverse student population
- Relevant, experiential and research-based courses
- Student access to high-impact learning experiences including undergraduate research, Honors in the Major, debate (including competitive speech), and global activities (including study abroad and student exchange)

Weaknesses

- Threats associated with the move downtown include a potential reduction of majors and uncertain staffing needs or changes to staffing
- Lack of culminating applied and tangible student work products

Recommendations

- Identify appropriate high-impact learning experiences with corresponding work products required of all majors.
- Consider additional ways to increase global communication and intercultural initiatives.

Journalism, B.A. (09.0401)

Strengths

- Faculty with industry and professional experience and connections
- Hispanic Media (Knightly Latino), NSM (Nicholson Student Media) Today, Knightly News and other media initiatives provide immersive experience and skills that employers seek

Weaknesses

- Insufficient tenured/tenure-earning faculty supporting program, thus limiting growth and competitiveness
- Cultural diversity and global context of discipline are not represented in program learning goals.
- Limited student engagement in and opportunities for undergraduate research

Recommendations

- Map core curriculum and consider streamlining program to address additional foci of cultural diversity and global context in learning goals and ensure basic content is delivered (e.g., newsgathering, writing, law and ethics, and history, with foundational instruction in media/digital literacy)
- Explore and include additional research and experiential opportunities in the major
- Develop a program specific plan to increase number of tenured/tenure-earning faculty with a focus on diversity and industry experience
- Develop and implement a plan to improve program profile and reputation, including incentivizing ongoing professional development for faculty
- Explore possibility of ACEJMC accreditation; develop plan to address class size, faculty diversity, faculty credentials, and faculty research and creative activity

Radio/Television, B.A. (09.0701)

Strengths

- Students benefit from major media market placement via internships, speakers, and programming
- Intense student involvement in hands-on learning experiences via Knightly News and other student run media

Weaknesses

- Potentially limited curricular focus on technical skills opposed to higher-order critical thinking about media literacy, management, messaging/storytelling, ethics, etc.
- Cultural diversity and global context of discipline are not represented in program learning goals.
- Limited student engagement in and opportunities for undergraduate research
- Consistent and renewable resources must be identified to ensure continued access to emerging instructional technology/equipment/facilities in order to compete and properly prepare students for careers

Recommendations

- Map core curriculum to ensure critical thinking and interdisciplinarity are addressed; consider streamlining program to address additional foci of cultural diversity and global context in learning goals
- Explore and include additional research, service learning, and experiential opportunities in the major.
- Develop a financial plan to address the costs of sustaining technology, equipment, and facilities
- Assessment outcomes should be reevaluated given the removal of Broadcast Journalism.
- Develop and implement a plan to improve program profile and reputation, including incentivizing ongoing professional development for faculty
- Explore possibility of ACEJMC accreditation; develop plan to address class size, faculty diversity, faculty credentials, and faculty research and creative activity

Communication, M.A. (09.0102)

Strengths

- Faculty are well-qualified and dedicated to student success and mentoring.
- Faculty use ongoing self-assessment and experiences of faculty and students to guide curricular changes.
- Student diversity.
- Students receive high quality training and mentorship in teaching and research.

Weaknesses

- Student recruitment and consistently attracting high quality applications.
- Ongoing concern that graduate faculty should seek more external funding and support for research.
- Faculty should be building more partnerships within the community to leverage these partnerships for grant applications.
- Ensure scheduling of appropriate courses.

Recommendations

- Encourage faculty to attend grant-writing workshops held at regional or national communication conventions to increase potential for securing grant funding.
- Consider relationship between M.A. and proposed Ph.D. to ensure number of faculty and foci of faculty research areas continues to be sufficient.
- Conversations as how to recruit students from the professional workforce in the greater Orlando region should continue. Faculty should develop an action plan to initiate new recruitment strategies.
- Communicate course offerings and changes to students as early as possible and explained as appropriate.