



School of Journalism 2023 Assessment Report

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The University of Montana School of Journalism is to provide students with a professional education in journalism; to teach them to think critically, act ethically, and communicate effectively; to help them understand the challenges and changes in the news media; and to inspire them to use their talents to improve journalism and enhance a diverse and democratic society.

DEPARTMENT ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

After listing each departmental objective, indicate which of the five [Priorities for Action](#) the objective supports. In this section, you may also briefly describe any innovative or noteworthy programs/initiatives that support the Priorities for Action.

1. The school will help its students succeed academically and personally so they graduate well prepared for their careers or further education. The school has set indicators of success including target graduation rates and retention rates, a required internship (and accompanying assistance in interviewing and resume development) and student/alumni surveys. (PFA 1- Place student success at the center of all we do.)
2. The school will offer an educational experience at all degree levels that provides the foundation to make positive impacts on a world that is increasingly interconnected. The school has developed a diversity action plan, returned to offering faculty-designed study abroad classes with our 2022 reporting trip to Northern Ireland and worked with International Programs to create study abroad programs and foster opportunities for international students to study on our campus, including a 2023 journalism exchange program with German universities. (PFAs 2: Drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research, 3: Mission First - People Always, and 4: Partner with Place.)
3. The school continues to embrace experiential learning opportunities for students, allowing their reporting and that of our faculty to be seen and to benefit the state, region, nation and world. As part of that goal, the school's students and faculty regularly publish media stories written in classes that concern the public affairs of Montana, the region, the nation and the world. (PFAs 3,4,5- Mission First, People Always – Partner with Place - Proudly Tell the UM Story.)
4. The school will ensure students have access to the technology needed to develop the skills required in today's news environment. (PFA 2 - Innovation in Teaching, Learning and Research.)
5. The School will make an annual review of progress toward its goals and initiatives and develop plans to better achieve our objectives. (PFAs 1,2,3,4 - Put Students at the Center - Innovation in Teaching Learning and Research - Mission First, People Always - Partner with Place.)

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Student Learning Goals (Target objective— 90% of students scoring at top two levels)	JRNL 100 Knowledge Assessment	JRNL 170 Assessment	JRNL 270 Assessment	JRNL 400 Knowledge Assessment	Internship assessment	Capstone Professional Review	Alumni Survey
1. Demonstrate an understanding of truth, accuracy and fairness	X	X	x	X	X	X	
2. Understand and apply principles of freedom of speech	X	X	x	X			X
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of the media	X			X			X
4. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity	X			X			X
5. Possess visual literacy skills and understanding					X		X
6. Understand ethics and act ethically	X			X			X
7. Think critically and creatively		X	x		X	x	X
8. Research and evaluate information		X	x		X	x	X
9. Critically evaluate work and tailor that work for the appropriate audience		X	x			x	X
10. Write correctly and clearly		X	x		X	x	X
11. Apply basic numerical concepts	X		x	X			X

Student Learning Goals (Target objective— 90% of students scoring at top two levels)	JRNL 100 Knowledge Assessment	JRNL 170 Assessment	JRNL 270 Assessment	JRNL 400 Knowledge Assessment	Internship assessment	Capstone Professional Review	Alumni Survey
12. Use appropriate tools and technology					X	x	X

RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

Learning Goal results	Modifications made to enhance learning
In our last reporting cycle, we reported that internship supervisors said only 89% of interns fulfilled the supervisor's expectations. We focused on preparing students more for their internships and ensuring they are ready professionally. During our fall 2021/spring 2022 assessment cycle, 97% reported that they would hire additional interns in the future, down from 100%. On a positive note, 97% said the intern met the letter of the learning agreement, up from 89% in the previous cycle. In addition, employers rated 100% of interns as good in their audio, video and web skills, up from 67% in previous cycle.	We are pleased that the work we did to address intern preparedness appears to have improved the students' readiness. That said, internship supervisors said 90% ranked the experience high/high quality, down from 96% in the previous cycle. We are still monitoring the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, which may have influenced our assessment results. We are also reaching out to employers who provided internships during the last assessment period to learn more about their experiences with our students.
Our JRNL100 and JRNL400 knowledge tests continue to show the dramatic progression of knowledge our students gain over four years in our program. During our 2021/2022 assessment cycle, the JRNL100 knowledge test, which is given to all journalism majors, resulted in a cumulative 60% score. The JRNL400 knowledge test, which is given to all seniors, resulted in a cumulative 78% score. This represented a slight drop among seniors (down from 80% in 2019/2020) but still shows substantial learning by students during the four years they spend in our program.	Although our knowledge test assessment results are strong, they have not changed or improved dramatically over time. In an effort to boost student learning, our curriculum committee has decided to push some of the learning goals of our 300-level reporting classes into our required 200-level reporting classes in order to provide more repetition over the course of the major. For example, we had assess more audio reporting elements into our 100-level writing course or more documents/civics from the public affairs reporting requirements of our 300-level public affairs reporting elective into JRNL270, which is a required course for journalism majors. We hope this embedding of core civic and law issues throughout the curriculum will lead to a rise in scores on our knowledge assessment.
During our 2021/2022 assessment cycle, we received survey responses from professional media organizations that we partnered with for our capstone courses, in which students as the part of a class produce work in partnership with local and national media. As has been the case in the past, all five organizations ranked our collaboration at the top level in all categories. 100% noted that the quality of student work was high and that the quality exceeded expectations. All said they look forward to working with the School of Journalism on future projects.	The School of Journalism is increasingly recognizing the importance of our capstone courses in preparing our students for careers in media. But also there is a greater diversity of those projects and in some we do not have editor/producer partners. We are developing a method for gauging these projects as effectively as we do those with clear publishing partners. In recognition of the dramatic time commitment required of students in these classes, the faculty decided to increase the student credit hours for capstone courses from three credit hours to six in order. We are not sure if this is the right mix and continue to discuss.

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

The School of Journalism is currently reviewing and beginning the process of updating and revising its learning goals and the assessment tools we use to evaluate our competency in meeting those goals. Specifically, we are updating goal number four to move beyond teaching an “understanding of diversity” to also include the demonstration and promotion of equity and inclusion. Rather than our end-goal being the recognition of the diverse nature our society, our new goal is for our students to equally value the contributions of all members of our society and express value of that through their work. In order to assess that goal, we are in the process of implementing a new assessment tool.

Beginning in spring 2023, we will begin conducting periodic source audits of intermedia and advanced reporting courses. The audit requires students to log the race, ethnicity and sexual orientation of all sources included in their work. We will develop a baseline in order to better understand how well our student work reflects the contributions and makeup of our diverse society. The media industry has long failed at representing the societal contributions of women, ethnic minorities and other marginalized communities, and we feel our program can provide leadership in this area.

We are also updating our assessment system to include a qualitative tool among our more quantitative tools in order to better gauge student satisfaction with our program and better assess their learning. We are preparing a student survey that will be administered to all third-year students beginning in fall 2023. As with the alumni survey, the student survey will focus heavily on issues of equity and inclusion in order to better gauge how well our program met our goal of acknowledging the contributions of students regardless of sex, race and sexual orientation.

APPENDICIES

1. Curriculum Map 2022

Curriculum-Fall 2020

[illegible]

JOURNALISM SCHOOL

Fall 2020

	Demonstrate an understanding of truth, accuracy and fairness	Understand and apply principles of freedom of speech	Demonstrate an understanding of history and role of media	Demonstrate an understanding of diversity	Show visual literacy, understanding and skills	Understand ethics and act ethically	Think critically and creatively	Research and evaluate information	Critically evaluate work, & tailor it to the appropriate audience	Write correctly and clearly	Apply basic numerical concepts	Use appropriate tools and technology
PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM OPTIONS: students must complete at least five courses from the list												
JRNL 260 Sports Journalism	X			X					X	X		
JRNL 328 Intermediate Photojournalism					X	X	X					X
JRNL 330 News Editing I	X					X			X	X		
JRNL 331 Intermediate Digital and Web Reporting			X		X			X				X
JRNL 340 Intermediate Audio	X						X		X	X		
JRNL 350 Intermediate Video Photography					x		x		x			x
JRNL 351 Intermediate Video Directing					X		X		X			X
JRNL 352 Intermediate Video Reporting and Producing	x						x		x	x		
JRNL 362 Feature Writing			X				X		X	X		
JRNL 370 Public Affairs Reporting	X					X				X		X
JRNL 410 Native News Honors Project				X	X		X	X				
JRNL 411 Reporting for Native News Project				X			X		X	X		
JRNL 412 Montana Journalism Review												
JRNL 414 Investigations												
JRNL 427 Advanced Photo and Multimedia Storytelling												
JRNL 428 Freelance Photography					X		X	X				X
JRNL 429 Documentary Photojournalism				X	X		X					X
JRNL 430 Print and Web Editing and Design					X	X		X				X

JOURNALISM SCHOOL

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JRNL 431 Online Journalism					X	X			X			X
JRNL 440 Advanced Audio							X			X		X
JRNL 470 Covering Elections	X							X	X	X		
JRNL 471 Covering the Legislature	X							X		X		X
JRNL 472 Opinion Writing		X				X	X			X		
JRNL 473 International Reporting	X		X	X					X			
JRNL 474 Magazine Freelance												
JRNL 480 Advanced Video Reporting	X						X	X		X		
JRNL 481 Advanced Video Photography and Directing	X						X	X				X
JRNL 482 Advanced Video Storytelling					X			X		X		X
JRNL 485 Griz TV	X				X		X	X		X		
JRNL 488 Student Documentary Unit	X				X		X	X				X