Plan for Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Plus Assessment Measures) for Journalism and Mass Communication Undergraduate Majors

September 2013

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Introduction

The Department of Communication and Journalism has crafted a comprehensive plan for the assessment of learning outcomes. The assessment plan is designed to determine whether students are meeting learning objectives and to revise curricular, service, and programmatic elements to assist the meeting of learning objectives. The Department created our initial plan in 2006 and implemented it in 2007 and again in 2010 and 2013. Improvements to the original plan have been incorporated over the years as we continue to assess the Assessment Plan after each implementation. We will use the following revised plan moving forward to our next assessment in 2016.

Overview of the Plan

We have developed a plan to assess student learning that is consistent with the standards of ACEJMC and we have established a clear mission and set of learning goals on which to base our assessment. Our initial plan was developed in 2006 and carried out in 2007 and again in 2010 and 2013. Some changes to the plan were made and approved by the faculty in January of 2013 in order to accommodate our new program format. In 2011 we changed our undergraduate major to two concentrations: Multimedia Journalism and Strategic Communication. Prior to this, we had four areas of concentration: Broadcast Journalism, Print Journalism, Advertising, and PR.

Implementation of Assessment Plan

a) Goals for Learning

In spring 2006, the Department decided to adapt the ACEJMC values and competencies into our “Goals for Learning.” These learning objectives for all of our students form the basis for our subsequent assessments.

The J & MC faculty is committed to using competencies as a way to organize these concentrations and to develop assessment of learning techniques to measure these competencies, thus ensuring the graduates acquire the skills and knowledge critical to career success and to lifelong learning.
The **Goals for Learning** for JMC students focus on the following professional values and competencies. Students shall be aware of, understand, and apply certain core values and competencies.

**VALUES**
- Truth, accuracy, and fairness
- The First Amendment and freedoms of speech and press
- Ethical ways of thinking and acting
- The history and roles of the media
- The diversity of audiences

**COMPETENCIES**
- Write and edit clearly and accurately
- Use the tools of technology
- Apply theories in presenting information
- Engage in research and critical evaluation
- Understand data and statistics
- Think creatively and analytically

**b) Assessment Tools**
The values and competencies will be used in the direct and indirect assessment of student learning. We will use two direct measures (exit exam, and internship evaluations from supervisor), and two indirect measures of our curriculum and student learning (feedback from the Advisory Board, and a student survey administered to our graduating students). We also consider the ACEJMC accreditation process an indirect measure of assessment. Currently, as of the writing of this plan, we are in the process of completing the most recent accreditation self-study and visit. (The exam, rubrics, and survey are included below.)

**Direct Measures**

1. *Capstone course exit exams:* The faculty created a 31-item standardized exam that directly measures the competencies and values of students at various points in their program. This exam was revised in the spring of 2013 from the original 55-item exam created in 2007, and the revised version is displayed below.

2. *Internships:* All students who complete an internship complete a rigorous evaluation process. The students complete a self-evaluation; the employer completes a written evaluation of the student, and faculty call the employer for additional feedback. The written evaluation from the supervisors considers the ACEJMC values and competencies as well as providing an overall rating.
Indirect Measures

3. **Student survey**: This is a self-report survey for graduating students administered in the two capstone courses (475 and 488). The survey asks the degree to which the program emphasizes the values/competencies and the mastery of the values/competencies during their studies. The survey also includes demographic information to enable comparisons.

4. **Advisory Board**: The Advisory Board is composed of professionals in each of the concentration areas. The faculty present curriculum, mission, vision, and action plans for their review. The board provides feedback for the faculty to consider in revising these elements. The board also assists the faculty with fundraising. The C&J faculty meets twice a year with the Advisory Board, with breakout sessions for each concentration and follow-up reports to the chair.

c) **Implementation of the Assessment Tools**

This section describes the process we will use to implement our assessment tools. We will assess the face, content, and construct validity of every tool except for the Advisory Board as they are qualitative responses.

1. **Exam**: The exam was revised by the faculty and was piloted in Fall 2012 to assess the validity and reliability of the items. The exam was revised based on this analysis and was administered at the end of the spring ‘13 semester. We will, once again, carefully item-analyze the exam and make any necessary adjustments. It will be administered again in 2016 in the two capstone courses of graduating seniors in each of the two concentrations areas (475 and 488). The current version of the exam is included below.

2. **Student Surveys**: The graduating student surveys will be administered to every graduating student in the two capstone courses. The instructors will administer and collect the surveys. Students can choose to remain anonymous.

3. **Advisory Board Meetings (2x annually since AY 2005)**: Notes will be taken of our breakout discussions with the Advisory Board. These comments serve as assessment data and are analyzed and summarized by our department’s outcome assessment coordinator. The Department reports back to the Advisory Board about the changes made in response to their feedback.

4. **Internships**: Every student who completes an internship must be evaluated by their work supervisor at the sponsoring organization. The survey used for this evaluation was developed by the faculty and is included below. Our internship coordinator compiles the data gathered from these surveys and reports to the faculty.

Assessment of the Journalism and Mass Communication program will be done every three years. The databases will be entered into Excel and SPSS files for analysis. The Outcome Assessment
Coordinator will prepare the analysis plan and will oversee all data collection and analyses and complete final report.

Changes to Curriculum, Service, and Program

As a result of previous assessment plans, we revised the core courses to enhance certain values/competencies within courses. All syllabi are required to include the core learning objectives and will be reviewed every semester to ensure compliance. We also adopted a new supervisory process of all part-time instructors and teaching assistants to ensure that instruction is consistent across sections and that the learning objectives are being addressed in every class. At the same time, we allow instructors freedom for how they teach to the standards and objectives, but have close coordination in classes with multiple sections.

The latest assessment was completed in the summer of 2013 and shared with all J & MC faculty at the start of the fall semester of 2013. The chair and faculty reviewed the findings and identified patterns and areas for improvement. The following are changes we will implement (or have already implemented) as a result of this assessment.

With regard to assessment of the JMC program, the following observations are made:

- Although we have worked diligently to comply with the ACEJMC standards of excellence and to revise and upgrade programs in accord with previous accrediting site visit recommendations, it must be recognized that systemic issues exist within the Department of Communication and Journalism and the College of Arts and Sciences that preclude certain obvious solutions. In particular, the two JMC concentrations – multimedia journalism and strategic communication – are limited to four upper division course offerings in each concentration in order to conform to departmental structure for all concentrations and to ACEJMC accrediting requirements. In addition, budget constraints have limited the addition of tenure-track and lecturer lines sufficient to ensure that all major and elective courses can be offered every semester. The department continues to rely heavily on part-time faculty. It has been recommended that professors of practice with significant professional journalism and strategic communication experience be added to the department to reduce reliance on PTIs. This was a suggestion made by an external review team and supported by the President and Provost, and the first professor of practice has been targeted.

- With regard to internships, suggestions by the Advisory Board and the C&J Internship Coordinator for vetting of sponsor companies and closer supervision by faculty of student interns have been implemented and are already making a difference in sponsor satisfaction and student learning experience. However, the idea, as suggested by the Advisory Board, that completion of a for-credit internship by all JMC majors should be required remains beyond the scope of the department at present, primarily due to the small market in which UNM is situated and the commuter and nontraditional nature of our student body, most of whom must work part or full time to fund their educations. Furthermore, students are limited
to 6 internship credits by ACEJMC accrediting standards, thus limiting the amount of practical experience our students can obtain.

- The review by community professionals of capstone student portfolio notebooks from both concentrations to assess student professional skill acquisition and the graduating student survey used by JMC to assess student perceptions of progress on learning objectives have shown high reliability and indicate the department is doing a good job in these areas. However, the entrance/exit exam used by the JMC component of the department to assess student knowledge acquisition was not statistically reliable; thus the pre/post test design was replaced by simply a single administration of the test at the end of the program.

Given the observations above, the department suggests that the following next steps should be taken to address issues with regard to assessment of student progress concerning the eight ACEJMC standards of excellence:

- The department should move to a post-test only design with regard to the current entrance/exit exam. In addition, further attention should be given to the reliability of instrument items; items demonstrated not to be reliable should be eliminated from the test. Consultation also should be sought with faculty from outside the department, who may bring greater expertise in test construction.

- Greater effort should be expended to insure that all instructors across multiple sections of the same course are covering the same material. This can be facilitated by closer review of syllabi and energetic classroom observation by course supervisors. Further, at present the same exam is given for both concentrations, despite differing course content being taught in multimedia journalism and strategic communication courses. It is suggested that two exit exams be prepared, one for each concentration, to reflect the particular content of the courses required in that concentration. Additionally, any replacement exams should be constructed and broken out to test each of the ACEJMC standards of excellence; it should be clear to faculty which exam items address which standard.

**Continued Assessment**

We conduct this assessment every three years because our cohort is three years. The concentrations require students to complete four courses in sequence. The other remaining requirements (7 courses) can be completed in conjunction with these sequences. Thus, the minimum time for completion is five semesters, but six semesters is the average when other requirements are considered.
Exam and Surveys
Below are the following assessment measures used in the 2013 Outcome Assessment and to be used again in the 2016 assessment:
Exit Exam
Graduating Student Survey
Internship Survey

Exit Exam 2013

1. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is rooted in philosophical principles associated with
   a. the Enlightenment revolution.
   b. the age of yellow journalism.
   c. the Elizabethan era.
   d. the period of Westward expansion and manifest destiny.

2. Which of the following could be said about the historical role of media during times of war or national crises?
   a. The media routinely expose military secrets, especially during wartime.
   b. The media do not cover military conflict during times of war.
   c. Freedom of the press contracts when the nation is at war.
   d. The media never take sides during war time.

3. The aims of the muckraking journalism that exposed U.S. government and corporate corruption in the late 19th and early 20th centuries exemplifies what model or theory of press?
   a. Libertarianism
   b. Social responsibility
   c. Authoritarian
   d. Corporate-sponsored reporting

4. The Daily Lobo runs a story on how college students spend their downtime. With that story the paper also runs a photograph of a woman sunbathing in one of the latest model swimsuits next to the Duck Pond. It turns out she is not a college student, but is a newly hired teacher playing hooky from work. Her school principal sees the photo and fires the young woman, who was still in her probationary period at her new job. The woman sues the newspaper for invading her privacy. What is likely to happen?
   a. She will win because the photo was taken and published without her consent.
   b. She will win because the newspaper made a factual error in labeling her a college student.
   c. She will lose because she was in a public place and had no expectation of privacy.
   d. She will lose because she was a public school employee and therefore was a public figure.
5. A TV station collects video footage of crowds of shoppers in a mall. A few days later during a live news broadcast, the station shows some of the mall footage while the anchor says: “One out of three Americans has contracted a sexually transmitted disease.” As the anchor says this, a woman from the mall footage is shown in close up; she is clearly identifiable and prominent in the shot. The implication is clear -- this woman has an STD. The identifiable woman retains a lawyer, who sues for invasion of privacy. What would be likely to happen in this lawsuit?
   a. She wins the suit because the TV station wrongly injured her by intrusively collecting information about her.
   b. She loses the suit because she was unable to prove actual malice and reckless disregard for the truth on the part of the TV station.
   c. She wins the suit because the TV station invaded her privacy by putting her in a false light.
   d. She loses the suit because the station had no way of knowing whether or not the woman had contracted an STD.

6. The term “the greatest good for the greatest number” is associated with which of the following philosophical perspectives?
   a. Utilitarian
   b. Kantian
   c. Aristotelian
   d. Veil of Ignorance

7. The “Golden Mean” defined by Aristotle indicates that the most ethical course of action usually will be:
   a. the greatest good for the greatest number.
   b. the most practical solution
   c. the action that will best protect the weakest in society.
   d. a point between two extremes.

8. The Federal Trade Commission has certain powers that can be used to regulate truthfulness in advertising campaigns. Which of the following is not among the FTC’s regulatory measures:
   a. order companies to shut down operations and stop selling products
   b. issue cease-and-desist orders to stop an ad campaign
   c. impose fines on advertisers
   d. order the creation and distribution of corrective advertising

9. In a news release issued by a local neighborhood association, a reporter reads the following facts: “In the awards ceremony, four association members will be recognized for their contributions to improving recreational services in the neighborhood: Gina Gesualdi, a young and attractive mechanical engineer; Robert Jones, a black attorney; Sonia Suarez, an articulate Hispanic actor; and John Patterson, an assistant football coach at Madison High School.” In the interest of fairness, the reporter in charge of rewriting the release omits the words:
   a. black, Hispanic
b. mechanical engineer, attorney, actor, assistant football coach  
c. **young and attractive, black, articulate, Hispanic**  
d. association, improving

10. According to the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), persuasion occurs through what routes?  
   a. central and lateral routes  
   **b. central and peripheral routes**  
   c. central, arterial and dynamic routes  
   d. on an individual basis, no routes are involved

11. According to uses and gratifications theory.  
   a. people are passive and vulnerable receivers of information.  
   b. people only pay attention to humorous messages.  
   **c. people pay attention to the messages they can apply in their lives or enjoy in some manner.**  
   d. people do not believe advertising and other promotional messages.

12. The agenda-setting theory of media effects states that  
   a. the media tell us what to think.  
   **b. the media tell us what to think about.**  
   c. the media are relatively powerless to influence people.  
   d. television is more powerful than other media in persuading people.

13. Which of the following is **false** about media globalization?  
   a. A handful of Western media corporations control the global flow of communication.  
   b. Globalization has generated not only larger global audiences but also important regional markets in different parts of the world.  
   c. Globalization can operate through the appeals to both global and local cultures, or what has been called “glocalization.”  
   **d. Globalization has ended the debate among people abroad who argue that U.S. media content is a form of cultural imperialism that undermines the values of cultures around the world.**

14. Which of the following theories would allow you to do research on how groups of customers adopt the newest technologies and products, with “early adopters” having a faster rate of adoption and “laggards” having the slowest rate of adoption of new technologies or products?  
   a. framing theory  
   **b. diffusion of innovation**  
   c. critical theory  
   d. cultivation theory

15. Imagine that you were asked to write a 5-page paper on the following topic: “Many social/technology critics say that the “digital divide” is a major problem throughout the
world and that a variety of “digital divides” will continue to drive a wedge between our society’s “haves” and “have-nots.” What are these divides? Do you think that the federal governments should use public funds to address this problem? If so, how? Or can you propose other means of addressing this important issue?”

What do you think this assignment is asking you to do?

a. Write a personal opinion piece on the digital divide.
   b. Find several previously written pieces on the digital divide and write a brief review of each.
   c. Critically evaluate information on the digital divide to identify what solutions or alternative ways of treating the issue can be proposed.
   d. Using the questions as a platform for what your paper should really be about: the existence of “haves” and “have-nots” in late capitalist societies.

16. What differentiates quantitative from qualitative methodologies in research?
   a. Quantitative methods are more accurate than qualitative methods.
   b. Quantitative approaches use statistical analyses to deliver more generalizable results.
   c. There is really no difference.
   d. Qualitative approaches are more accurate and quality-driven than quantitative methods.

17. Which of the following is false with regard to evaluating information?
   a. Information that has achieved many “hits” on the Internet is typically reliable because of the “crowdsourcing” that “going viral” entails.
   b. In the social sciences, peer reviewed findings are generally considered more reliable than findings promoted by think tanks.
   c. Anecdotal reports can create an impression about the existence of some phenomena, but that does not necessarily mean that the phenomena are widespread or typical.
   d. Media gatekeepers who take the social responsibility seriously generally prefer to send reporters to a scene to observe a situation first-hand, than simply repeating and amplifying reports from other media outlets.

18. What research method best enables us to measure the positive or negative reactions of a large audience to a media message?
   a. content analysis
   b. focus group
   c. textual analysis
   d. survey

19. Psychographic research and niche marketing have contributed to ____________.
   a. the homogenization of audiences.
   b. the mainstreaming of audiences.
   c. deceptive marketing practices.
   d. demographic segmentation of audiences.
20. When delivering messages to Latino audiences which of the following is true?
   a. We can expect the Latino audience to be more individualistic than other cultural groups in the U.S.
   b. **We can expect the Latino audience to be culturally diverse.**
   c. We can expect that the majority of Latinos will prefer information in Spanish.
   d. We can expect Latino audience members to be homogeneous in their views.

21. Which of the following sentences uses standard grammar?
   a. Eric badly felt about the situation.
   b. Eric felt about the situation badly.
   c. **Eric felt bad about the situation.**
   d. Eric felt badly about the situation.

22. Which of the following uses standard punctuation?
   a. The Austrian flag has only two colors, red and white.
   b. The Austrian flag has only two colors; red and white.
   c. **The Austrian flag has only two colors: red and white.**
   d. The Austrian flag has only two colors red and white.

23. Which of the following sentences does not use standard punctuation?
   a. It is too soon to tell whether Aaron’s foot broke her nose.
   b. **Womens’ dreams are theirs to fulfill.**
   c. Coaches’ instructions should be carefully followed by their players.
   d. Edna and Bob’s house was built in 1889.

24. In a recent poll of 500 likely voters in the Albuquerque Area reported in the *Albuquerque Journal*, 45 percent of those polled said they would vote for Candidate A, 42 percent said they’d vote for Candidate B, and 13 percent were undecided. The poll reported a margin of error of 4 percent. Based on this information, which of the following would be the most accurate headline?
   a. Candidate A has a lead over Candidate B.
   b. Candidate B can catch Candidate A if the undecideds go for Candidate B.
   c. **The race is too close to call.**
   d. The polling is flawed because of the margin of error.

25. Which of the following is true?
   When something is proven to be statistically significant, we can conclude that
   a. **it is highly unlikely that the result could be due to chance.**
   b. we can conclude that the result is important.
   c. we can conclude that other people would find the same result even if using a convenience sample.
   d. we can conclude that the results will be published.

26. In a newspaper article, the following information was presented about sales of single-family homes.
These properties sold last month for the prices listed below:

- 2323 Smith Avenue  $250,000
- 19 Mountain Drive  $780,000
- 22 Loma Linda Street  $220,000
- 111 West End Lane  $590,000
- 378 South Boulevard  $360,000

**Question:** What was the median household price?

- a. $250,000
- b. **$360,000**
- c. $440,000
- d. $590,000

27. Which of the following would **not** be a good strategy for stimulating creativity when originating an advertising campaign for a product?

- a. Account for the benefit, as well as the characteristics of the product.
- b. Adopt and left brain-right brain strategy for the ad
- c. **Avoid prior audience research to create a more novel approach.**
- d. Consider how both words and images can be used to communicate about the product

28. Effective creativity in advertising or public relations

- a. aims to produce humorous ads or news releases.
- b. is more important that selling products or transmitting information.
- c. **focuses on achieving the objectives of a particular campaign.**
- d. is not concerned with selecting appropriate media to transmit messages

29. What would be the most common way for prospective employers to measure an applicant’s creativity?

- a. Conduct a personal interview with the applicant.
- b. **Review a portfolio of work done by the applicant.**
- c. Ask applicant to provide her or his SATs, ACTs, or other standardized test scores.
- d. Perform a left brain – right brain analysis of the applicant.

30. When manipulating digital photos or video, which of the following is **false**?

- a. To make the imagery have more vibrant colors, an editor would increase the saturation of imagery.
- b. To make an image that had a slight yellow cast appear to have normal colors, an editor would adjust the hue to have more blue or cyan in the image.
- c. **To maintain the highest possible resolution for the imagery, an editor would decrease the ppi while holding the image dimensions stable.**
- d. When an editor “crops” imagery, the editor changes where the edges of the frame lie.
Journalism and Mass Communication Majors: Graduating Student Survey (2013)

This survey is designed to help the C & J faculty better understand how people in the capstone courses (and thus at or near graduation) feel about the quality of their education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Your responses can help the students who follow you. Please take a few minutes to reply. Please return this to your instructor.

1. Concentration area
   a. Multi-media Journalism (or Print & Broadcast Journalism)
   b. Strategic Communication (or Advertising and Public Relations)
   c. Other

Using the following scale, to what extent do you feel your coursework in your journalism and mass communication program emphasized the following?

   a. Not at all
   b. Somewhat
   c. For the most part
   d. Completely
   e. Not applicable or unable to rank

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For the following statements, please use this scale:

   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neither agree nor disagree
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

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<td>social communicators in a culturally diverse, democratic society.</td>
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<td>21. My studies in journalism and mass communication have prepared</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
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<td>me well for my chosen career.</td>
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**Please complete the following open-ended information**

Did you have any trouble registering for your JMC courses? If so, which ones did you have trouble getting into?

Please tell us how you feel about the academic advising the Department provides.
Please tell us any other thoughts you have about the program and how we can improve it.

**Demographics:**

Ethnic Identity: 1___White; 2___African American; 3___Hispanic; 4___Asian American; 5___American Indian; 6___Other/Mixed

 Male _____ Female ______

Age: Under 25 _____ 25–45 ______ 46+ ________

We would like to stay in touch with you. Please log on to our Alumni Sign-In page at [http://www.unm.edu/~cjdept/department/pages/alumni_form.html](http://www.unm.edu/~cjdept/department/pages/alumni_form.html) and fill in the form. Thanks, and best of luck in your career and personal life.
Department of Communication & Journalism  
Internship Exit Survey - Supervisor

Supervisor’s Name: _____________________________________________

Organization and Title: __________________________________________

Intern’s Name: _________________________________________________

Please give this survey to the intern in a sealed envelope.

Reviewing the student’s work during this internship, please indicate how well the student has mastered each of the competencies below. Please use the following scale:

1  Not at all  
2  Somewhat  
3  For the most part  
4  Completely  
NA  Not applicable or unable to rank

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<td>1. In selection of topic and information, focus and organization, the work shows effective critical judgment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. In range and selection of people interviewed and of other sources of information, the work shows thorough, balanced, and fair research and reporting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3. The writing is correct, clear, and concise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4. The writing conforms to an appropriate style for the discipline.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5. In use, interpretation, and presentation of numbers, the work applies basic numerical and statistical concept correctly and effectively.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6. In presenting images and information, the work shows effective understanding of visual concepts and theories.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>7. The work demonstrates an understanding of the needs and wants of the audience for which the work is intended.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>8. The work illustrates effective use of technology in its preparation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>9. The work demonstrates creative thinking.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>10. The work displays a consideration of ethical thinking and presentation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>11. The work is truthful and accurate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The work demonstrates analytical thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>13. The work demonstrates an understanding and accurate application of First Amendment principles.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>14. The work was of high quality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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Please rate the following statements by circling the answer which best reflects your position.

15. The student had the appropriate basic skills in preparation for the duties for this position.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

16. The student performed well during the internship.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

17. I was satisfied with the intern.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Please answer the following open-ended questions.

18. What were the strengths of the intern?

19. What were the weaknesses of the intern?

20. What, if anything, could the Department of Communication & Journalism do to improve the internship experience for you?

21. Anything else you would like to add?