

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
College of Journalism and Mass Communications
2009-2010 Strategic Plan
March 15, 2009

Academic Priorities That Confirm Our Statement of Core Values

The College of Journalism and Mass Communications (CoJMC) has 10 academic priorities for 2009-2010. They are:

1. Further revise and enhance the college curriculum in response to changes in the industry and through ongoing course assessment.
2. Finalize preparations—including completion of a written report—for review by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications in 2010-11.
3. Expand the global perspective in the college's curriculum and enhance international teaching and learning opportunities.
4. Strengthen professional partnerships and develop new ones.
5. Support faculty in research and creative endeavors and in further improving their teaching.
6. Focus on improving writing at UNL by developing full-time faculty positions for the business and technical communication programs.
7. Seek additional partnerships with departments granting doctorates.
8. Further develop a more diverse student body and faculty.
9. Strengthen and expand interdisciplinary programs.
10. Develop additional distance education and asynchronous courses.

Strategic Plan Priorities

This strategic plan calls for thoughtful allocation of resources and careful attention to logistical details. Here are the academic priorities for 2009-2010:

- 1. Further revise and enhance the curriculum in response to changes in the industry and through ongoing course assessment.***

Description and rationale

The college has identified these areas of focus as part of this objective:

Changes to strengthen the Journalism curriculum

Dramatic changes in the industries offering students careers, primarily local television stations and daily newspapers, require that the college move beyond a combined sequence (news-ed and broadcasting) into actually converging the curriculum. The college knows that its students are still finding internships and full-time employment in the news field, but the jobs they are being offered are not necessarily the traditional ones.

Courses that currently carry BRDC or NEWS prefixes would be changed to carry a JOUR prefix, representing the combined Journalism sequence. A key organizing detail in this curriculum is that the work students do in all of the skills classes – courses in reporting, writing, editing, photography, and design – will be directed to the student news Web site, NewsNetNebraska. A faculty member will be designated as managing editor and will supervise and coordinate the creation and production of this student work. A student in a beginning reporting course might produce a story that will be published on NewsNet along with photographs from a photography course and video shot in a videography course. A student in an editing class might be assigned to edit the story and write a headline. A design student might create a graphic to help explain details of the story.

As part of the curriculum change, the college is seeking to combine the Broadcast and News-Editorial majors into a Journalism major.

The Advertising major will continue its direction toward an integrated marketing communications model, which means that the curriculum will grow in opportunities for students to develop a deeper level of expertise in areas of particular interest. These areas, in addition to the traditional advertising disciplines of research and strategy, creative and media, include coursework in public relations, sales, interactive, direct response and the other tools that comprise the full spectrum of promotional and persuasive messaging and branding.

Changes to strengthen the college's assessment plan

The college recognizes the importance of assessing student learning in order to improve the curriculum. To prepare for an upcoming Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) review, faculty developed a new assessment structure that includes assessment at the course, program, and college levels. The college's assessment plan includes both direct and indirect measures.

Course-Level:

ACEJMC Accreditation: Faculty developed a matrix of the curriculum that shows which required course(s) meet(s) each accrediting standard. The matrix serves as a foundation for new curriculum development. The competencies are clearly stated on each syllabus and faculty are developing appropriate assessment plans for each required course as part of the ACEJMC re-accreditation process. Assessment plans and results will be collected and stored online using PEARL software.

Peer Review of Teaching Project: Since 2004, eight faculty have participated in the nationally acclaimed Peer Review of Teaching Project, completing 14 course portfolios. In 2008-09 three additional faculty are in the process of collecting data to assess student learning in their courses.

Achievement-Centered Education: Twenty-one courses taught in the college are ACE-certified. Each course will be assessed regularly based on assessment criteria set forth in the ACE governing document.

Program-Level:

PEARL: In 2006 the college joined PEARL (Program Excellence Through Assessment, Research, and Learning), a university-wide assessment structure for program-level assessment, resulting in 100 percent college participation. The outcome under investigation was writing.

E-Portfolio Project: In 2006 the college launched an electronic-portfolio assessment project. Students receive advice about their work and employment prospects from professionals. The electronic portfolio enhances students' professional skills through that direct interaction. Professionals are asked to review real student work in terms of students' ability to write and to communicate visually.

Senior Exit Surveys: After students turn in their e-portfolios, they complete a senior exit interview that measures their perceptions of how well they achieved a series of competencies and outcomes. They also attach their resumes and internship information.

College-Level

A report will be generated at the college level reflecting on the assessment results at the course and program level. The college-level report will be shared with Jessica Jonson, director of Institutional Planning

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Implement new assessment plan in preparation for ACEJMC re-accreditation and ACE implementation; adjust curriculum based on the results.
- Complete second PEARL cycle; continue to implement e-portfolios and senior exit surveys; adjust curriculum based on the results.

Timeline

- All required courses assessed under new matrix in the spring of 2009.
- New Journalism sequence curriculum in place by spring of 2010.

Metrics for success

College curriculum:

- Course assessment documents student learning and provides a framework for improvement.
- Positive evaluation of student awards, internships and jobs after graduation.
- Positive feedback provided to the college through the accreditation process.
- Enrollment in journalism major remains steady or increases.

Assessment plan:

- Positive feedback provided to the college through the accreditation process and feedback from professionals about graduating seniors' e-portfolios.

Progress to date

Journalism curriculum

- Faculty voted in early 2008 to combine the Broadcasting and News-Editorial sequences into one Journalism sequence.
- Faculty voted in late 2008 to approve proposed updated Journalism curriculum.
- In consultation with SVCAA, a proposed Journalism curriculum and a proposed major name modification is in the process of university approval.

Assessment plan

- Faculty developed accrediting standard matrix in fall of 2008.
- All required courses to be assessed in spring of 2009.

2. Finalize preparations—including completion of a written report—for review by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications in 2010-11.

Description and rationale

As part of the upcoming accreditation review, the college must organize and complete a comprehensive self-study report before a site visit by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. The CoJMC is the only journalism and mass communications program in Nebraska that is accredited by the ACEJMC.

Timeline

- Final report written: summer 2010
- Site visit expected: fall 2010 or spring 2011

Metrics for success

Re-accreditation by ACEJMC.

Progress to date

- In the fall of 2008 the college developed a new assessment structure that includes assessment at the course, program and college level and meets ACEJMC accrediting standards. Faculty developed a matrix of the college's curriculum that shows which required course(s) meet(s) each accrediting standard.
- In the spring of 2009, the college implemented the new assessment structure, incorporating PEARL software at the course level.

3. Expand the global perspective in the college's curriculum and enhance international teaching and learning opportunities.

Description and rationale

Fostering international experiences and education is an important core value for the college. The college wants to develop highly educated graduates who are aware of their relationship to the global society. Now, more than ever, journalists and integrated

marketing communications professionals need to be well versed in international issues at all levels. They need to have a keen understanding of the cultures, religions and ideologies that exist in the world.

To achieve this goal, the college focuses on these areas:

- Providing opportunities for and increasing the number of students to travel to foreign countries to study journalism and mass communications concepts, to conduct research and reporting and to learn to craft effective commercial messages directed toward different cultures.
- Developing and offering international-related media courses as part of the curriculum.
- Providing faculty with opportunities to teach abroad and learn about foreign media.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Develop and offer two new study abroad courses – an interdisciplinary course (Fine and Performing Arts and Advertising) in Japan.
- Organize and prepare for trip to Bolivia in conjunction with the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, which is providing grant money. A second trip to Canada is planned in the spring of 2011. Both will focus on indigenous peoples.
- Provide faculty with opportunities to teach media skills at the following: Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication; Universidad San Francisco Xavier in Sucre, Bolivia; a journalism institute in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- Continue to offer Virtual Town Hall meetings to provide opportunities for students and faculty from UNL, Kosovo, Ethiopia and Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication in Kristiansand, Norway, to discuss and explore current events.

Timeline

- Study abroad courses to Japan: summer 2010.
- Carnegie trip to Bolivia: spring of 2010
- Kosovo media training: fall 2009.
- First Bolivia media training: spring 2011.
- Virtual Town Hall meetings: 2009-2010.

Metrics for success

International courses:

- Student work is published and receives awards.
- Student work is presented at conferences
- Increase in number of students participating in an international education experience.
- Course assessment documents student learning.
- Course enrollment increases in courses.

Faculty teaching abroad:

- Media training sessions are well-attended and well-received by participants.

Progress to date

- Three study abroad courses were offered to students in 2008 – one on international media in Germany; one on digital photography in France; and one on mass communication in Mexico. Two will be offered in 2009.
- Students in two courses conducted reporting projects in Kosovo in the spring of 2008 and in South Africa in the summer of 2008.
- A graduate-level international communications course was offered in the fall of 2008 and will be offered again in fall of 2009.
- A 400/800-level Global Advertising course (ACE-certified) is being converted into an asynchronous course supported by an EE&O grant and will be offered in summer 2008.
- Two faculty members traveled to Kosovo in the spring of 2009 to provide media instruction.
- Three Virtual Town Hall meetings were held in AY 2008-2009.

4. Strengthen professional partnerships and develop new ones.

Description and rationale

Like the college's collaborations with other university departments and colleges, creating programs with media and communications professionals is an important priority. These programs offer students enriching educational experiences inside and outside the classroom.

The college is undertaking a number of professional partnerships to enhance students' educational opportunities, those include:

- The "Real World" course, in which staff members of the *Omaha World-Herald* conduct a weekly class that serves as a bridge from the classroom to the newsroom. In the second semester of this course, four students are chosen for paid fellowships in which they report and write stories for the *World-Herald*.
- The Bright Futures Foundation's Avenue Scholars, an Omaha-based organization that works with underprivileged high school students, is providing opportunities students to make short video documentaries in North Omaha that highlight some of the problems these young people face.
- ABC News in New York has asked the college to become the sixth Journalism program in the country to join an ABC News on Campus team. Four or five of our students will be selected each year to essentially become an ABC News bureau in the Midwest. The students' work will be available for all ABC programs, including World News Tonight, Good Morning America and the network's Web sites.
- A Media Sales program, designed in collaboration with the Nebraska Broadcasters Association and local media leaders, is helping develop student expertise in professional selling. Over the past four years, the program has offered coursework in print sales with the Omaha World-Herald and broadcast sales with

Three Eagles Communication and the Radio Advertising Bureau, as well as a course at the Lincoln Journal Star exploring media sales in the changing world of convergence. The fundamental course of the program, Media Sales and Promotion, addresses issues of market and audience research, client needs analysis and cross-platform sales. The most recent addition to this course is a practicum module involving sales of underwriting for the college radio station, news Web site and print materials by the students in the class.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Continue to promote the Omaha World-Herald program to maintain student interest; evaluate its effectiveness.
- Implement the ABC News on Campus program and evaluate.
- Monitor sales practicum module, assess course and evaluate.
- Seek additional opportunities to involve students in the Bright Futures program.

Timeline

- Omaha World-Herald evaluation: fall 2009.
- ABC News on Campus implementation: fall 2009.
- Sales practicum evaluation: spring 2010.

Metrics for success

Omaha World-Herald program:

- Course assessment documents student learning.
- Published student work.
- Program is renewed.

ABC News on Campus:

- Amount of student work used by ABC (equals or exceeds that of the other schools).
- Annual contract is renewed.

Sales practicum:

- Course assessment documents student learning.
- Business plan goals met.

Progress to date

- Omaha World-Herald program is in its first full year AY 2008-2009. Four students are participating in the fellowship program in spring of 2009.
- The college is negotiating contract with ABC News on Campus.
- Sales practicum program is in its first semester in spring 2009.

5. Support faculty in research and creative endeavors and in further improving their teaching.

Description and rationale

Faculty in the college are generally teaching a 3/3 load and in many service and outreach capacities. Many faculty are simultaneously working on advanced degrees while also

pursuing creative and research activities. At the same time the college is in the process of preparing for an accreditation visit, which requires courses to be assessed. In order to give tenure-track faculty an opportunity to develop a meaningful creative or research agenda, course-load reductions are necessary so that faculty can use their limited time effectively.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Provide course-load reductions to give tenure-track faculty an opportunity to develop a meaningful creative or research agenda.
- Encourage faculty to apply for grants.
- Encourage increased participation in Peer Review of Teaching Project. With faculty producing 13 course portfolios in the nationally acclaimed project, the college has become a campus leader in peer review participation.
- Provide funding for travel to present papers at conferences
- Provide graduate assistants to help with research projects

Timeline

One tenure-track faculty from each sequence would get a significant course-load reduction so that he or she can establish a research/creative agenda.

Metrics for success

- Increases in number of publications, conference papers, exhibitions, documentaries, etc.
- Increases in number of grants and grant dollars.
- Increases in participation in Peer Review project.

Progress to date

Since 1991, tenure-track faculty have been granted a semester without teaching assignments. With increased pressure on faculty, this type of development leave is necessary for faculty to pursue meaningful research/creative activities.

6. Focus on improving writing at UNL by developing full-time faculty positions for the business and technical communication programs.

Description and rationale

The college's commitment to writing excellence has expanded as the college has been designated the home for courses in business communication and technical communication. More than 40 sections of these courses are offered each semester, including two communication courses in the Jeffrey S. Raikes School. The courses, which are ACE certified, are required by several colleges across campus, including CBA, CASNR and Engineering. Developing full-time faculty positions would strengthen the business and technical communication program by offering stability and continuity to these important and relevant service courses. Hiring a full-time technical communication faculty member is the immediate goal; hiring a full-time faculty member in business communication is a long-range goal.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Hire a full-time technical communication faculty member.
- Work closely with faculty and administrators of the other colleges to improve the courses.
- Launch a program to address the concerns of Engineering and CASNR about ways to help remedial writers prepare for the technical communication writing courses. Should this program prove successful, Engineering, CASNR and perhaps CBA may seek to have additional sections taught to help remedial writers.

Timeline

- Search for technical communication faculty member: November 2009.
- Remedial writers identified by Engineering and CASNR will be encouraged to enroll in JGEN120, Basic Business Communication, an ACE course that focuses on fundamental writing skills, beginning in fall of 2009.

Metrics for success

- Full-time technical communication faculty member is in place.
- All business and technical communication courses are assessed and retain ACE certification.

Progress to date

- A business communication instructor who serves as coordinator of both business communication and technical communication has been working with faculty and administrators of the other colleges to improve the courses. A proposal that developed from these discussions directs remedial writers to a basic business communication class.
- The business and technical writing program just finished its first assessment cycle through PEARL.

7. Seek additional partnerships with departments granting doctorates.**Description and rationale**

The graduate program has several opportunities for growth that are in line with at least two of its core values: freedom of expression and the international emphasis.

Ph.D. Programs with Media Specialization

Many of the college's international graduate students hail from developing countries and are interested in pursuing advanced degrees in the college so that they can return to their countries and promote a democratic society in which the media play a significant role (Ethiopia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, etc.). The college is currently not offering a Ph.D. in journalism and mass communications, but it is establishing partnerships with other Ph.D. granting units on campus that would offer a media specialization as part of their Ph.D. programs. The college has formalized one such partnership with political science and has identified history and education as two additional areas that interest students.

J.D./M.A. and Ph.D./M.A. Partnerships

Two other partnerships that will appeal to students are a joint J.D./M.A. in journalism and mass communications and a Ph.D./M.A. agreement with Communications Studies and Marketing.

Assist Graduate Programs in Developing Countries

Similar to its efforts at the undergraduate level to support democracies in developing countries, the college can also contribute to this effort at the graduate level. The college has been helping to develop an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Communication Arts at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. The college is also in the process of developing a partnership with KIJAC in Kosovo to provide strategic communication training to small business owners and professional communicators via distance education. One immediate goal is to develop a certificate in strategic communications.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Seek partnerships with History, Education and English.
- Continue developing partnerships with foreign partners.
- Finalize agreement for joint J.D./M.A. program.
- Develop formalized partnership with Communications Studies and Marketing.

Timeline

Fall 2009: Law

Fall 2010: Communication Studies; Marketing

Spring 2011: English, History, Education

Metrics for success

- Increase in the number of partnerships with Ph.D.-granting departments.
- Increase in the number of students enrolled in each program.

Progress to date

- The college has formalized a partnership with Political Science and is exploring the possibility of developing a shared post-doctoral fellow position.
- The college is in the process of finalizing an agreement that would let students pursue a law degree and a master's degree at the same time.
- The college has started discussions about developing a Ph.D./M.A. agreement with Communications Studies and Marketing.

8. Further develop a more diverse student body and faculty.

Description and rationale

Diversity of opinions and viewpoints is one of the college's core beliefs. Only through respecting others' opinions and viewpoints can students learn to understand the true value of freedom of expression. Because of this core belief, the college is committed to developing a more diverse student body and faculty.

The college's recruiting coordinator, hired in July 2005, continues to work on attracting minority students to the college and increasing the quality of the incoming freshman classes. A newly hired faculty member is increasing efforts with regard to placement.

A recent relationship developed between the college and Bright Futures Foundation's Avenue Scholars program in Omaha may help the college recruit inner-city Omaha students who are interested in studying journalism. The relationship with the group, which works with underprivileged high school students, was established as a result of a documentary created by a lecturer in the college. The college's students and faculty have provided expertise and guidance in the creation of media and concepts for the project.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Increase efforts to recruit students of color, including continued involvement in the Bright Futures Avenue Scholars program.
- Continue to target Omaha and other regional cities identified by Admissions by sponsoring recruiting trips for faculty and current students; redesigning the college's Web site for the posting of recruiting materials; and design and production of recruiting information.

Timeline

- Increase placement activities: spring 2009
- Increase recruiting trips: fall 2009/spring 2010.

Metrics for success

- Additional student projects completed in conjunction with Bright Futures.
- Increase in number of Omaha students of color enrolled at UNL.
- Increase in number of students of color enrolled in the college.
- Increase in job placements.

Progress to date

Several faculty hiring benchmarks were met this year, including:

- The hiring in August 2008 of an African-American woman as associate professor in the news-editorial sequence. The college now has two African-American women teaching full-time.
- A Hispanic lecturer completed his M.A. degree and was named assistant professor in 2008.
- A woman from Sri Lanka was hired as a full-time lecturer in the advertising sequence in January 2009.

Student enrollment:

- The number of students of color enrolled in the college has increased since the fall of 2002.
- A newly hired faculty member has two placement events planned in spring of 2009: a job fair and an entrepreneurship workshop.

9. Strengthen and expand interdisciplinary programs.

Description and rationale

A priority for the college is to assure its students are well-versed in science, history, philosophy, economics, business, political science, law, the arts and statistics so that they can be effective critical thinkers. The emphasis continues to be using an interdisciplinary approach to educating future journalists. The college has a variety of programs and courses that are the result of collaboration with other colleges, departments and units at this university.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Fully integrate into the campus-wide Visual Literacy consortium by modifying course structure and including more students from partner colleges in this media-oriented, audience-focused approach. This will impact equipment budgets, as the college's studio/lab components utilize digital still and video cameras as well as editing and design software. The Visual Literacy program now provides all of the college's majors with this critical foundation. Since joining the Program of Excellence in 2004, the program has grown to the point that each semester approximately 180 students complete the college's Visual Literacy course, JOUR 142, before moving into coursework that builds on this grounding.
- Work with the Math Department to develop an assessment tool for Math 203J, which was designed to teach journalism students the mathematical and critical thinking skills they need to be accurate and ethical.
- Develop an additional science writing course to supplement JOUR 444/844 Science Writing, which includes undergraduate and graduate students. The additional course would help us reach the goal of creating an interdisciplinary program, a science writing emphasis and a science and health writing specialization in the master's degree program. The additional course will focus on a single subject; students in the course will develop stories for publication on NewsNetNebraska and elsewhere.
- Develop additional courses to create a documentary filmmaking specialization in the master's degree program.
- Implement and promote a new concentration in Fine and Performing Arts that allows journalism students to pursue a concentration or minor that encompasses a variety of the arts taught across the college's departments instead of one restricted to a single department.
- Implement and promote interdisciplinary study abroad program (Japan) that is being developed by two faculty members in JMC and FPA.
- Continue discussions with the English Department about developing a creative non-fiction specialization in the college's master's degree program.
- Develop an interdisciplinary program in marketing, communication and advertising similar to the graduate-level MCA program

Timeline

- Modify Visual Literacy course structure by spring 2010 to fit the model of the rest of the consortium members.

- Begin development of the first capstone course in the new Fine and Performing Arts concentration in spring of 2010.
- Offer additional science course in the spring of 2010.

Metrics for success

Math 203J

- ACE assessment demonstrates student learning.
- Course enrollment increases.

Science writing

- Course developed and offered.

Documentary filmmaking

- Course developed and offered.

New concentration in Fine and Performing Arts

- Capstone course developed and offered.
- Increase in number of students enrolled in the concentration.

Creative non-fiction

- Plan for specialization developed in collaboration with English Department.

Progress to date

- The hiring of an assistant professor who will teach three classes per semester at the graduate and undergraduate levels as part of the Visual Literacy Program of Excellence. Visual Literacy courses are taught and administered by faculty from four colleges: Architecture, Hixson-Lied Fine and Performing Arts, Journalism, and Education and Human Sciences. In the fall of 2008, the college offered eight sections of Visual Literacy I and II and nine Visual Literacy I labs.
- Math 203J developed and made available to the college's majors in fall 2008. The course, designed for journalism majors, was developed through collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences Mathematics Department and the College of Education and Human Sciences.
- A junior-level honors seminar on arts, politics and media team taught in partnership with the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.
- Faculty approved the new concentration in Fine and Performing Arts. Journalism faculty are developing a capstone course that will be team-taught with Hixson-Lied faculty.
- An advanced documentary course taught by Nebraska Educational Television (NET) will be in its sixth semester. The partnership with NET and the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts has enabled the college to share NET facilities and specialists. An ongoing part of the curriculum involves screenings of the long form documentary, listening to presentations from NET staff in production techniques and producing a 15-minute documentary-style piece.
- Faculty are continuing discussions with the English Department to develop creative non-fiction courses for a master's degree specialization.

10. Develop additional distance education and asynchronous courses.

Description and rationale

The college has been a leader in distance education for 15 years and wants to expand its efforts both at the graduate and undergraduate level. The distance program has been growing (especially in the new professional journalism specialization) and many prospective students inquire about the largest specialization (MCA), which is not currently available online. An online specialization in strategic communications has probably the largest potential for growth. In addition, many students are looking for professional development but may not necessarily be interested in pursuing a full-fledged M.A. Thus, the college would like to develop a certificate in strategic communications.

Most of the current distance courses are taught synchronously in real-time, which makes it difficult for the college's growing body of international students and students on the East and West Coast to take the college's courses. The college has begun to develop asynchronous courses to maximize the flexibility of the graduate program and to serve media professionals pursuing an advanced degree.

Strategies for 2009-2010:

- Develop a strategic communication distance certificate leading to a specialization as part of the online professional program for advertising and public relations students. The interdisciplinary MCA program attracts by far the most students but is currently not available online because marketing and communication studies are reluctant to develop online courses. The college is working toward other possible partnerships with units on-campus that are offering appropriate online courses. Asynchronous distance courses will need to be developed to accommodate international students and full-time professionals pursuing the degree.

Timeline

- Develop certificate program: fall 2009.
- Develop online strategic communication specialization: fall 2010.

Metrics for success

- Increase in number of students enrolled in courses and program.
- Increase in number of students in certificate program.

Progress to date

Three faculty have recently received EE&O grants to convert existing courses into asynchronous distance courses. One additional faculty member is planning to convert his course into an asynchronous course. Most of these courses are advertising courses.