

Assessment Report

2017-2018 AY

School of Journalism and Communication

University of Oregon

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHTS

- Our ACEJMC reaccreditation site visit took place in February. We were found in compliance with all standards, including—for the first time—the assessment standard.
- We lost some ground this year on the percentage of syllabi containing clear learning outcomes that align with ACEJMC priorities. While the percentage isn't much, it is a trend that needs reversed.
- Continuing problems with Canvas access prevented portfolio analysis for this year. The assessment director has worked with Canvas personnel to resolve the issue for next year's assessment efforts.
- Student exit survey results were similar to last year's. Ongoing weaknesses in mastery of media law concepts and numeracy should be addressed by the new curriculum that goes into place Fall 2018 (i.e., requiring Communication Law and the new Fact or Fiction course of all students). But we won't see the results until we have our first graduating class under the new requirements, which will be the 2019-2020 AY.
- A significantly smaller percentage of students are taking advantage of extracurricular activities to expand their knowledge and skills than in previous years. Based on the qualitative data provided, this appears to be a result of the economic climate, with students having to spend more time at paying jobs, which precludes their participation in extracurricular activities, such as unpaid internships and student-run firms.
- The graduate programs are working on curriculum maps and assessment plans for each area.

Recommendations

- Continue to incorporate as much experiential learning into classes as possible to help those students who, because of financial hardship, are unable to take advantage of many extracurricular opportunities, such as unpaid internships and student agency work.
- Work to convert the portfolio process from Canvas to another online system to avoid issues with Canvas access.
- Re-run the SOJC Values banner and slides once a year for about 2-3 months to remind students, faculty, and staff of their central place in the SOJC's mission.

INTRODUCTION

The professional undergraduate curriculum consists of three premajor courses (J100 Media Professions—2 credits; J101 Grammar for Communicators—2 credits; and J201 Media and Society—4 credits); the three-course introductory Gateway series (J205, 206, and 207, 12 credits); five or six courses in the student's major area (advertising, journalism, or public relations—20-24 credits); four context courses (16 credits); and four elective credits. The Media Studies Sequence falls outside ACEJMC guidelines, but the sequence provides one pre-major course (J201) and the context courses to students in the professional majors.

ACEJMC prescribes 12 professional values and competencies. The SOJC's assessment plan combines the domestic and diversity values/competencies into one, resulting in 11 values and competencies that students are expected to master by the time they graduate. Course learning outcomes, as listed on syllabi, should reflect these values and competencies and demonstrate consistency across sections of the same course.

1. Understand the range of freedom of expression around the world and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech to their profession/field
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how professionals and institutions shaped communications relevant to their profession/field
3. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in domestic and global society and its impact as relevant to their profession/field
4. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the use and presentation of images and information and apply them to their profession/field
5. Understand and apply ethical principles appropriate to their profession/field
6. Think critically, creatively and independently
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to their profession/field
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate to their profession/field
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate to their profession/field, including verbal and visual presentation as apt

UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the start of the 2014-2015 academic year, only 17.2% of syllabi contained learning outcomes. By spring 2017, 88.5% of syllabi contained learning objectives. That number dropped to 77.7% this year, demonstrating a need to reinforce the concepts behind learning outcomes and their utility.

The classes most often lacking learning outcomes are J408 workshops, particularly those offered on a one-time basis by a pro-tem faculty member, and courses offered for the

first time by a faculty member. The Undergraduate Affairs Committee is revisiting syllabi and student engagement inventories (SEI) for these classes to ensure adherence to standards.

The lack of consistency in learning objectives and related assignments across sections of the same class is a problem in the following classes:

- Media Studies
 - J201 Media and Society
 - J385 Communication Law

- Journalism
 - J361 Reporting 1
 - J371 Feature Writing
 - J462 Reporting 2

With the exception of J385, the classes noted above constitute ongoing problems. Learning outcomes are consistent in the advertising and public relations sequences.

CURRICULUM MAPPING

The current curriculum map demonstrates improvements over the last two years, despite the fact the assessment director has applied stringent standards to the map: only well-documented, substantive evidence is accepted for putting a competency “on the map,” and subsequent assessment results have to demonstrate that the competency is indeed being covered. Curriculum changes approved by the faculty effective Fall 2018 are designed to make the map more robust.

Curriculum Map for 2017-2018AY

Professional Value/ Competency	Fulfilled by	
	Inside SOJC	Outside requirement
1. Law: freedom of speech and press	J201 (all) J350 (PR) J361 (J)	
2. History: role of professional and institutions	J201 (all) J350 (PR)	
3. Diversity: domestic and global	J350 (PR) J453 (PR)	2-course UO multicultural
4. Visual: use & presentation of images & info.	J205/6 (all) J452 (PR)	
5. Ethics: professional ethical principles	All PR classes J361	
6. Think critically & creatively	J201 (all) J342 (Ad) J361 (J) J453 (PR)	
7. Conduct research and evaluate information	J205/6 (all) J454 (PR) J462 (J) J494 (PR)	
8. Write correctly and clearly	J101 (all) J352 (PR) J361 (J) J452 (PR) J462 (J)	
9. Edit: critically evaluate own work and others	J352 (PR)	
10. Numeracy: apply basic numeracy and statistics	J453 (PR) J494 (PR)	2-course economics
11. Apply current tools & technologies	J100 (all) J205/6 (all) J452 (PR)	

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Learning outcomes and curriculum maps address where students should be exposed to particular competencies, but they don't measure if students have actually mastered those competencies. The SOJC Assessment Plan calls for two direct measures of mastery—portfolio reviews and internship supervisor evaluations—and several indirect measures: student exit surveys, alumni surveys, and awards and honors won.

Portfolios

The portfolio review process is designed to gather in-depth professional input and provide generalizable results to guide curricular development. The revised SOJC assessment plan, approved in December 2014, calls for portfolio review in each sequence. Historically, however, the sequences have been uneven in their implementation, and turnover in sequence leadership has led to inconsistent data reporting. To remedy these issues the assessment director established a new portfolio procedure inclusive of, but independent from, all sequences. Under the new process, students submit all course assignments to Canvas, the UO course management system. The assessment director then takes a stratified random pull of all graduating seniors in each sequence, and selects at least two assignments from each SOJC course the student has taken, with preference given to an early and a “capstone” assignment in the class or a substantive assignment typical of the class if a “capstone” is not available.

Putting this plan into action requires that the assessment director have access to all SOJC courses on Canvas. Unfortunately, despite having access the previous academic year, the Canvas administration system continuously dropped the assessment director from access this year, which did not allow for portfolio assessment to be completed.

Internship Supervisor Survey

A second direct measure of assessment of student competencies is the internship supervisor survey. Because not all students are required to take an internship for credit, this measure is less robust than is a portfolio review process, but it provides valuable professional input from those who work directly with our students.

Individuals supervising internships that students take for credit are directed to a link to fill out a short online survey. Twelve questions address the intern's mastery of the ACEJMC competencies (5-point Likert scale); one question asks how ready the intern is for entry-level work (5-point Likert scale); and two open-ended questions ask the supervisor to list the intern's strengths and to point out any additional preparation the intern could benefit from. Total responses for this academic year are 47: 42 provided closed- and open-ended responses, all 47 provided open-ended data. The response rate was 70.1%, up from 64.6% last year.

A total of 93.2% of supervisors thought their intern was ready for entry-level work. Two were noncommittal, and one thought the intern was not at all ready. The latter gave

the intern the lowest marks possible across the board, but the means and medians for all measures for all interns demonstrate overall quite positive evaluations. These ratings are fairly consistent with past years.

The table below shows the mean and median ratings for all competencies. The variation in N reflects the number of supervisors who marked a competency as “not applicable.” It is encouraging that the data reflect a slight upward trend in the number of supervisors who see the relevance of conceptual issues, such as diversity and ethics, and not just the relevance of skills, such as gathering information and writing.

Internship Supervisor Survey: Interns’ Competencies

ACEJMC Competency	Mean	Median	N	Rank
Gather & analyze information to complete tasks	4.41	5.00	41	1
Thoughtfully convey information	4.40	5.00	42	2
Working knowledge of professional ethics	4.39	5.00	41	3
Produce visually effective work	4.38	5.00	39	4
Write clearly, in correct style	4.35	5.00	40	5
Mastery of appropriate tools & technology	4.29	5.00	36	6
Awareness of global diversity issues	4.19	4.50	32	7
Creative problem solving	4.17	4.50	42	8T
Sensitivity to domestic diversity issues	4.17	4.50	35	8T
Familiarity with historical context of the profession	4.09	4.50	38	10
Use numbers & statistics as necessary	4.07	4.50	29	11
Working knowledge of apt legal issues	4.04	4.00	24	12

As opposed to previous years, when very little written feedback was provided, all internship supervisors provided comments. The following themes emerged from asking what the interns’ strengths were: passion, proactive, professional, work ethic, can-do attitude, energetic, asked good questions, enthusiasm. The themes of proactive, work ethic, and asked good questions are new themes this year. Fewer weaknesses were noted: the two most common were a lack of confidence and a wish for some stronger skill sets—although no particular skill set was stressed. Interestingly, two respondents wanted stronger foreign language skills: one in Japanese, one in Hebrew.

Student Exit Survey

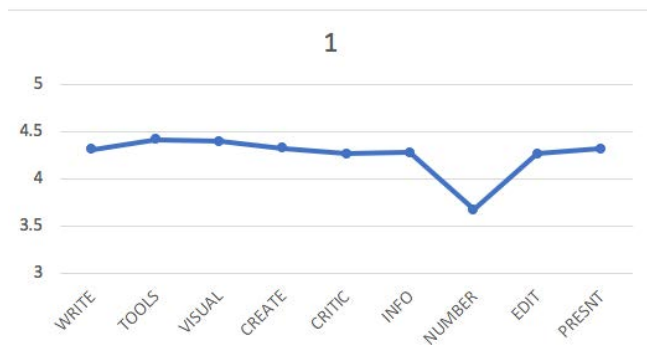
All students who have received a degree from the School in any given year are asked to take an exit survey, summarizing their experiences. A link to the exit survey was made available to all 2017-2018 AY graduates in May 2018. To encourage participation, a drawing for a GoPro Hero package was used as an incentive. This year, 279 responses were received, for a response rate of 44.4%, down about 16% from the previous year and similar to the response rate of two years previous.

The “typical” respondent, as in past years, was a 22-year-old female who graduated in 4 years and plans to work in the media/communication industry in the Pacific Northwest or West Coast region. She graduated having had at least one internship.

ACEJMC Competency Areas. The first questions used a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) to determine how much students thought their abilities in nine of the ACEJMC competency areas had improved throughout their time at the School. Similar to previous years, the results demonstrate that the vast majority of students believe their skills markedly improved in all but numeracy.

During my time at the SOJC, I improved my

Skill Area	Mean
Writing	4.32
Use of digital tools/technologies	4.42
Visual communication	4.40
Creative problem solving	4.33
Critical thinking	4.27
Gather & evaluate information	4.28
Understand & use numerical data	3.68
Edit my own & other’s work	4.27
Presentation skills	4.32

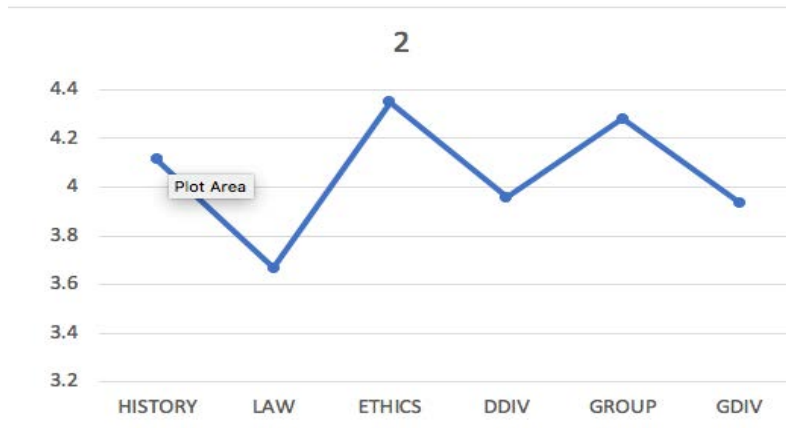


Performing an ANOVA on these measures, two significant difference emerged. Advertising majors were significantly less likely to think that their writing skills had improved than were Public Relations majors. Journalism majors were significantly less likely to think their presentation skills has improved than were Public Relations majors. Otherwise, no significant differences emerged among majors on these measures. Two significant differences emerged by gender. Men were significantly less likely than women to say they improved their information gathering skills and their presentation skills. (Note: gender differences were determined by *t*-tests, which on a sample size this large are extremely sensitive. Both significant results found were small effects sizes.)

Students also rated how much their understanding of conceptual areas increased during their time in the SOJC. Ratings on these measures tend to be lower than those noted for the skills above, and only one significant difference emerged across the majors. These values do not reflect any notable changes from the previous year, although understanding of ethics and group dynamics is trending upward.

During my time at the SOJC, I increased my understanding of

Conceptual Area	Mean
Media history	4.11
Legal issues apt to field	3.67
Professional ethics	4.35
Domestic diversity	3.96
Group dynamics	4.28
Global diversity	3.94

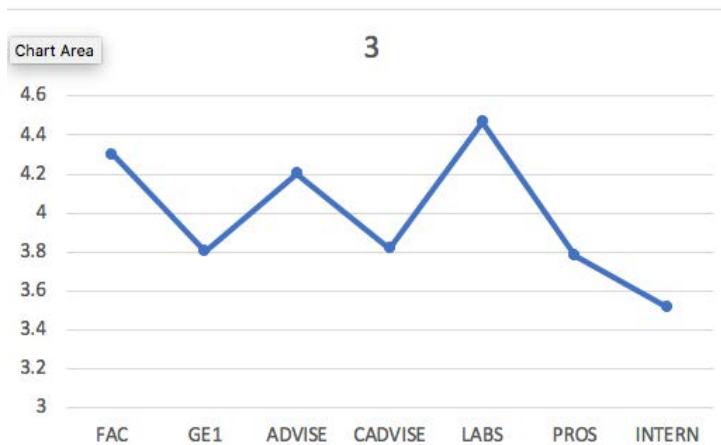


An ANOVA found that Media Studies majors were significantly less likely than were Advertising majors to believe they improved their knowledge of global diversity. Men were also significantly less likely than women to say they improved their knowledge of group dynamics (t-test; small effects size).

SOJC Resources. Seven questions addressed access to School resources. The mean for computer lab access increased 0.15 over last year and represents a notable upward spike. All other measures remained similar to previous years. No significant differences among the majors were noted.

While taking SOJC classes, I found the following easy to access

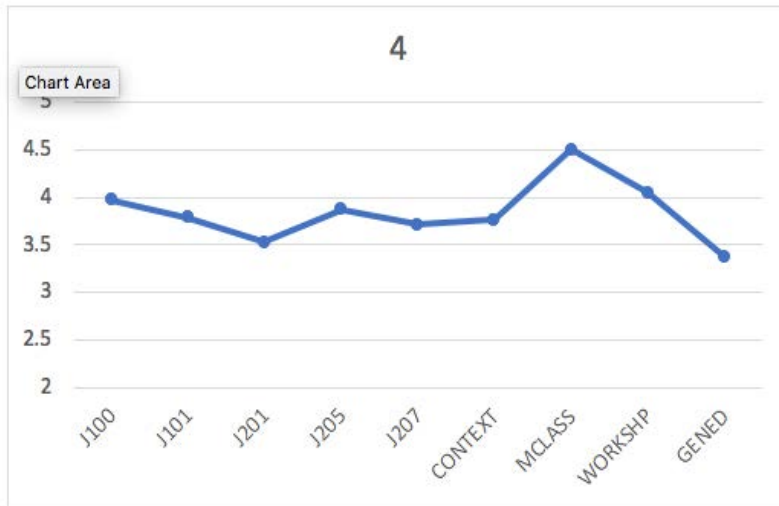
Resource	Mean
Faculty	4.30
GEs	3.80
Academic advising	4.20
Career advising	3.82
Computer labs	4.47
Professionals in my field	3.78
Internship opportunities	3.52



Curriculum. Nine statements addressed how much students valued different parts of the curriculum. Overall, the results are similar to last year’s results. The vast majority of students highly valued their major courses but not the required J201 Media and Society class or the gen-ed requirements (non-journalism).

I found the following classes of benefit

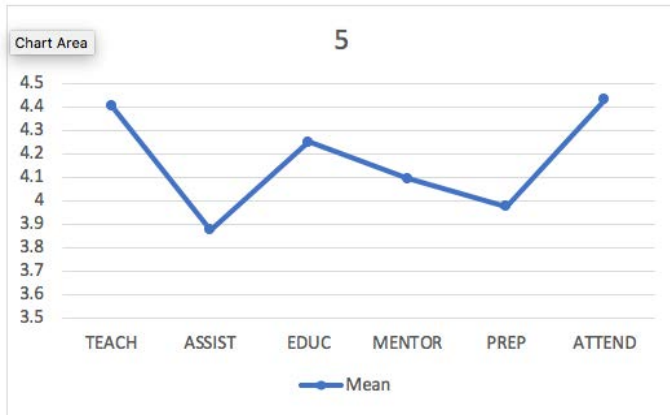
Class	Mean
J100 Media professions	3.97
J101 Grammar for communicators	3.79
J201 Media and society	3.53
J205/6 Gateway I and II	3.87
J207 Gateway III	3.72
A & B core context courses	3.76
Courses in my major	4.50
J408 optional workshops	4.05
Gen eds—non journalism req.	3.38



Overall Evaluation. Six summary questions asked students to rate their overall SOJC experiences. The vast majority of respondents believe they had effective teachers, received an excellent education, and would recommend the SOJC to other students. Approximately three-fourths of respondents believed they received excellent advising and mentoring and were well prepared to enter their chosen professions. These percentages did not vary significantly from the previous two years. The percentage who believe GEs are effective classroom assistants showed a slight increase this year, reversing what had been a downward trend. No significant differences among the majors were found. This is a large change from last year, when students in the advertising sequence were significantly less satisfied on these measures. Three significant differences emerged along gender lines, however. Men were significantly less satisfied with the J100, J101, and J207 courses.

Overall, when I think of my SOJC experience, I believe

Construct	Mean
Professors were effective teachers	4.41
GEs were effective classroom assts	3.87
I received an excellent education	4.25
I received excellent advising/mentor.	4.10
I was well prepared to enter prof.	3.97
Others should attend SOJC	4.43



Of note this year is that approximately 20% of respondents did not indicate any involvement in extracurricular activities, such as a student club or internship. The qualitative data suggest this large jump from last year—when all respondents indicated some outside activity—is a reflection of the economic climate and students’ need to work to support themselves financially.

Almost all respondents contributed written feedback as well, some of it quite extensive. The strongest themes to emerge as strengths were the caring faculty and their depth of professional experience, the strong professional and alumni networks that students could tap into, the sense of community and comradery in Allen Hall, and the advising team’s support.

Almost all respondents also wrote about what they saw as the weaknesses of the program. The one theme that spread across majors was wanting fewer outside required classes and more skills classes. A number also thought there was too much overlap in the premajor and core courses. Journalism students wanted more entrepreneurial approaches to the field; public relations students wanted more writing and media relations training, and advertising students felt that opportunities were limited to a select group of students, resulting in cliquishness. Actions taken, such as changing outside course requirements to a minor and establishing the position of Pathway Coordinator should help address some of these issues. The new required writing class (J212) should provide a better foundation for media relations for public relations students.

Alumni Survey

An alumni survey was conducted in summer 2017. The survey had 638 respondents, for a response rate of 30.0% of those who opened the email message and actually received the invitation. A total of 88.7% of respondents received an undergraduate degree from the SOJC only, and it is those responses that are reported here. The respondents graduated between 1953 and 2017/8, representing a wide spread of alumni experiences.

In terms of how respondents viewed their increased mastery of ACEJMC skills competencies during their time at the SOJC, results are virtually unchanged from the 2015 alumni survey, although presentation skills and mastery of digital tools and technologies switched ranks.

Competency Area	Alumni (undergrad only)		
	% agree/ strongly agree	Rank	Mean
Writing	94.3%	1	4.50
Gather & evaluate information	92.5%	2	4.44
Edit my own & other's work	88.3%	3	4.31
Critical thinking	86.0%	4	4.21
Creative problem solving	81.8%	5	4.09
Visual communication	78.2%	6	4.04
Presentation	73.6%	7	3.95
Digital tools & technologies	70.8%	8	3.92
Numeracy	44.8%	9	3.37

Note: rank is based on the mean values.

As in previous years, significant findings resulted from correlations of year of graduation with perceived mastery of these skills. More recent graduates were significantly more likely than were those who graduated less recently ($p \leq .05$) to believe they gained mastery of digital tools and technology, visual communication, and presentation skills, suggesting that the curriculum is evolving to keep pace with a changing industry.

Respondents were also asked to rate how their SOJC education had contributed to their understanding of six more conceptual areas. Again, the results are quite similar to those from the 2015 survey, although the mean values show slight increases across the board.

Competency Area	Alumni (undergrad only)		
	% agree/ strongly agree	Rank	Mean
Professional ethics	88.7	1	4.25
Media history	87.1	2	4.18
Legal issues	71.7	3	3.87
Group dynamics	68.4	4	3.82
Domestic diversity issues	45.9	5	3.37
Global diversity issues	43.0	6	3.30

As in previous years, significant findings resulted from correlations of year of graduation with perceived increased mastery of these concepts. More recent graduates were

significantly more likely than were those who graduated less recently ($p \leq .05$) to believe they gained mastery of domestic and global diversity issues and group dynamics. In line with previous results, they were significantly less likely to believe they had increased their mastery of media law.

Also of note is that recent graduates were significantly more likely than those who graduated less recently ($p \leq .05$) to have studied abroad, had an internship, and participated in a student group, such as PRSSA, SPJ, Ad Club, etc.

Awards and Honors

Awards and honors won by students constitute another indirect measure of student mastery and competency. The following list represents some of the major awards and honors won by undergraduate students this year, but it may not be complete.

Student Awards and Honors for 2017-2018 (Partial List)

- 1st Place, Enterprise Writing, Hearst Awards (Kenny Jacoby)
- Paper acceptance, "Controversies around Al-Jazeera," National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Arunima Bhattacharjee
- National Winner, Best Use of Multimedia, "Closed Doors: Open Questions," Staff of OR Magazine, SPJ Mark of Excellence Awards
- Finalist, Best Independent Online Student Publication, OR Magazine, SPJ Region 10 Mark of Excellence Awards
- Finalist, Online Feature Reporting, "When Corporations Move In," OR Magazine, SPJ Region 10 Mark of Excellence Awards
- Finalist, Best Use of Multimedia, "Environmental Protection: It's on Us," OR Magazine, SPJ Region 10 Mark of Excellence Awards
- 3rd Place, In-depth News/Feature Story, "When Corporations Move In," Jeff Dean and Emma Henderson
- Certificate of Merit, "Environmental Protection: It's on Us," Abby Beach
- Certificate of Merit, "Closed Doors; Open Questions," Ian Mullin, Mackenzie Moran, Morgan Krakow, Helen Werner, Jason Yun
- 3rd Place, Computer Generated Art/Illustration, "Closed Doors; Open Questions," Jason Yun
- 3rd Place, Video Feature Package, "Closing of the Roseburg Oregon Libraries," Helen Werner

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important not to overgeneralize from annual results—some fluctuations are normal and are not meaningful in the larger picture. The observations and recommendations made here are based on four years of trends and triangulation of data from multiple assessment measures.

The SOJC was re-accredited this year, passing the assessment standard for the first time since that standard was enacted. This is a major achievement, demonstrating that the SOJC has made measurable strides in addressing assessment needs and processes. Key to moving forward on this standard is finding a reliable way to perform portfolio reviews that meets standards and leads to regular, centralized data collection and generalizable results.

The response rate for the internship supervisor survey suggests that measures taken to increase response rates (direct, repeated messaging) have had an effect. The number of comments mentioning poor writing skills declined again this year to just one, showing definite improvement in response to measures taken to strengthen student writing, such as Writing Central. Of note is the number of internships of a more global nature, with two internship supervisors requesting more robust language skills in languages outside the Romance Languages domain.

Moving forward, it is important not to lose the momentum gained leading up to our site accreditation visit. The “SOJC Values” campaign proved to be effective with students, faculty, and staff, and this campaign should be revived for a few months each year to keep the ACEJMC core competencies and values fresh in everyone’s mind.

APPENDIX A

Curriculum Revision—passed Spring 2017/effective Fall 2018

Pre-Major requirements (8 credits)

- J100 Media Professions (2 credits)
- J101 Grammar for Communicators (2 credits)
- J201 Media & Society (4 credits)

Major Gateway (16 credits)

- **J212 Fact or Fiction (4 credits)**
- **J211 Writing for the Media (4 credits)**
- J205 Gateway to Media I* (4 credits)
- J206 Gateway to Media II* (4 credits)

SOJC Context Courses 300/400-level (20 credits) Three required

courses:

- J320 Gender, Media and Diversity (4 credits)
- J385 Communication Law (4 credits)
- J397 Media Ethics (4 credits)

Two required courses from 300/400 lists:

- J396 International Communication (4 credits)
- **OR**
- J387 Media History (4 credits)

AND

ONE from:

- J412 Issues in Communication Studies [Topic]
- J467 Issues in International Communication [Topic]
- J494 Strategic Communication Research
Methods (*Required for PR students. Open to PR and Advertising students only.*)
- J495 Research Methods [Topic]
- J496 Issues in Communication Ethics and Law
[Topic]

SOJC sequences courses 300/400 level (24 credits)

As determined by each sequence

Curriculum Map for Revised Curriculum, effective Fall 2018

Professional Value/ Competency	Fulfilled by	
	Inside SOJC	Outside requirement
1. Law: freedom of speech and press	J201 Media & Society (all) J350 Principles of PR (PR) J361 Reporting 1 (J) J385 Communication Law (all)	
2. History: role of professional and institutions	J201 Media & Society (all) J350 Principles of PR (PR) J387 Media History (or may take J396)	
3. Diversity: domestic and global	J320 Gender, Media, Div. (all) J350 Principles of PR (PR) J453 Planning & Cases (PR)	2-course UO multicultural
4. Visual: use & presentation of images & info.	J205/6 Gateway to Media (all) J452 Strat PR Comm (PR)	
5. Ethics: professional ethical principles	All PR classes (PR) J361 Reporting J397 Media Ethics (all)	
6. Think critically & creatively	J201 Media & Society (all) J212 Fact or Fiction J342 Creative Strategist (Ad) J361 Reporting 1 (J) J453 Planning & Cases (PR)	
7. Conduct research and evaluate information	J205/6 Gateway to Media (all) J212 Fact or Fiction J454 PR Campaigns(PR) J462 Reporting 2 (J) J494 Strat Comm Research (PR)	
8. Write correctly and clearly	J101 Grammar for Comm. (all) J211 Writing for Comm. (all) J352 Strat Wri & Med Rel (PR) J361 Reporting 1 (J) J452 Strat PR Comm (PR) J462 Reporting 2 (J)	
9. Edit: critically evaluate own work and others	J211 Writing for Comm (all) J352 Strat Wri & Med Rel (PR)	
10. Numeracy: apply basic numeracy and statistics	J212 Fact or Fiction (all) J453 Planning & Cases (PR) J494 Strat Comm Research (PR)	
11. Apply current tools & technologies	J100 Media Professions (all) J205/6 Gateway (all) J452 Strat PR Comm (PR)	

