

2003-2004
Quality Enhancement Program Summary
Office of Institutional Research,
Planning and Effectiveness



Department: Journalism & Telecommunications

Award Amount: \$6,450

Award Recipient: Dr. Beth Barnes

Project Focus:

Students in the School of Journalism and Telecommunication are to participate in a capstone experience. The goal of this project is to add a professional review component to an existing capstone project, extending the assessment information and simultaneously enhancing the learning experience for JAT majors.

Assessment Method:

The department proposed to develop and implement a portfolio-based assessment system for all three of the School's majors, including Integrated Strategic Communication, Journalism, and Telecommunications. Review of the portfolios would be conducted by media professionals.

Results as of Fall 2004, provided by Dr. Beth Barnes:

We used some of our QEP funds to survey other accredited programs in journalism and mass communication about their use of student portfolios. A graduate student developed a web-based survey that was administered to other ACEJMC-accredited programs. The results, along with articles on portfolio assessment, were shared with faculty to help them in their planning.

Our Integrated Strategic Communications program developed guidelines for a required portfolio and faculty voted to institute an internship requirement for all ISC majors. We anticipate that the first group of ISC portfolios will be ready for external review by December 2005. The TEL faculty decided that the existing internship program met many of the goals of the portfolio requirement, including the professional review component. We are working to develop a more systematic evaluation system for gathering comments from TEL internship supervisors.

Journalism refined its portfolio requirement, and began external professional review with a sample of portfolios from May 2005 graduates. During late spring 2005, the school held two assessment sessions with outside professionals to review the portfolios of senior Journalism majors. A primary learning from the sessions was that we need to do more to systematize the portfolio preparation process. Student portfolios were somewhat uneven in terms of content, and several of the evaluators mentioned that they are increasingly accustomed to seeing portfolios in electronic format (CD-ROM or web-based) rather than paper copies.

We also developed a portfolio review form to be completed by a second set of evaluators. Five evaluators, all working journalists, reviewed a sampling of portfolios from senior journalism majors. The group discussed their impressions of the portfolio and comments on the review process with faculty. They indicated that the best student portfolios were very competitive with others they had seen and that those students should be able to find jobs in medium-sized or even larger markets while the middle group of students showed some promise, but needed either more experience or better editing; The reviewers also identified several students whose work was not acceptable.

Future Plans:

Plans include the exploration of electronic portfolio software systems. An alternative e-portfolio strategy will also be discussed with a consultant from TASC with expertise in this area. Discussions are also being held on ways to restructure both the portfolio requirement and the expectations within our journalism writing courses. This summer broadcast journalism students' portfolios will be reviewed. Also on the docket is resolution about instituting an ISC portfolio requirement once the internship decision is made.