

OUTCOMES DATA

Department of Journalism & Communication, 2005-06

The department anonymously polled 50 graduating seniors using an online survey in the spring of 2006. The results of the survey were tabulated by the department head and shared in summary form with the faculty. At two JCOM faculty meetings, in March and April 2006, the results of the survey were discussed with a focus on suggesting changes in the department to better serve students.

The students comprised six in broadcasting, 16 in print, and 28 in public relations. Thirty-two of the 50 students worked an average of more than 20 hours a week during their most work-intensive semester. Sixteen said they had a job waiting for them after graduation, 15 said they did not, and 18 said they were not sure.

Asked to rate their education at USU on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent,” students’ mean score was 3.857. Most common reasons for score were the quality of teachers and classes.

Asked to rate their education in the JCOM department on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent,” students’ mean score was 3.735. Most common reasons for score (in rank order, with the No. 1 reason first) were effective/friendly instructors, real-world/hands-on experience, ineffective instructors, inadequate physical facilities, and comments about particular courses.

Asked to name their favorite JCOM classes, the students replied, in rank order: 1. PR Agency, JCOM 5320. Typical comment: “The real-life experience was the best thing for me and Troy is a fabulous teacher as well as someone who has experiences that back him up and make him more credible I believe. Not that a doctorate degree is not credible, it’s just that it is nice to have a fresh business perspective.” Tied at No. 2: Media Smarts (JCOM 2000/2010), Newscast (JCOM 4210 and 4220), and Intro to PR (JCOM 2300): “They were all very interactive and fun and that’s the best way to learn.” . . . “Media Smarts got me thinking about the world in a different way.” No. 3: Beyond the Inverted Pyramid (JCOM 3110). “He pushed me to be a better writer. We did different kinds of writing. I felt like I could turn in a draft and he would help me become a better writer, not just by telling me what was wrong with my paper, but by helping me find some of things on my own. He taught in a way that I was able to translate the things he taught on one paper, to other assignments I was working on.” Others mentioned: Mass Media Law, Reporting Public Affairs, Opinion Writing, Beginning Newswriting, Writing for PR, Integrated Marketing Communication, Website Design.

Asked to name their least favorite JCOM classes, the students replied, in rank order: 1. Mass Media Law (JCOM 4030). Tough class/instructor, subject matter not focused enough on “nuts and bolts” necessary for working journalists to apply in daily life. 2. Introduction to Mass Communication (JCOM 1000/1500). Class size too large/subject matter or instruction method boring. 3. Media Smarts (JCOM 2000/2010) Dislike of subject matter/teachers’ expectations. 4. Introduction to Online Journalism (JCOM 2110/2160). Not sufficiently challenging. Others mentioned: Corporate Communication, Copy Editing, Beginning Newswriting, Beyond the Inverted Pyramid, Writing for PR.

Asked what they would do to improve the JCOM program, the students overwhelmingly said the department needs to get more money to fix the computers, add faculty, and add new class sections or topics. Students also suggested deleting particular classes. As for curriculum, students asked for more writing courses, including more basic grammar instruction.

Asked what JCOM should do to better prepare students for life after graduation, the most common answer was more writing. Other students said the department should emphasize the importance of internships. Many students – the third most common answer – said things are pretty good as they are.