

Broadcast Journalism Major  
Annual Assessment Report  
2012-2013 Academic Year

## **1. Program Mission**

The broadcast journalism (BJ) program at PLNU exists to reinforce and support the mission of the university, which is to teach and shape students in the creative, technical, and socialization areas of professional media preparation, and to send students into media industries. These have traditionally included radio and television broadcasting.

Historically, print and broadcast journalists have worked in “silos” as distinct segments of the industry. In recent years, the emergence of online communication has precipitated the idea of convergent journalism. From a professional standpoint, convergence is the practice of print and broadcast journalists using each other’s skills in the reporting and dissemination of news, specifically applied in a Web context.

In order to more closely emulate the profession, the BJ program at PLNU has undergone curricular changes that recognize the necessity of incorporating new media in journalism courses. This has included introducing online components in a number of courses, such as in a TV news production courses and instituting a senior-level multimedia journalism course that brings together print, video and audio skills to produce online news content. In addition, the major includes trends in technology when training future journalists. For example, students need to understand the role of social networks and mobile media in news delivery.

## **2. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**

The Broadcast Journalism major is a joint program between the Department of Communication & Theatre and the Department of Literature, Journalism and Modern Languages. The PLOs listed below were developed in a collaborative effort between Dr. Sue Atkins (LJML) and Dr. Clark Greer (Communication & Theatre) during spring semester 2011.

PLO 1: Students will identify and articulate the historical development and democratic function of broadcast, print and online media in the U.S.

PLO 2: Students will write news copy clearly and accurately according to news values appropriate to a variety of formats and platforms.

PLO 3: Students will create and edit a news story based on accepted industry standards for the appropriate medium.

PLO 4: Students will employ aural and delivery skills appropriate to various news performance situations.

PLO 5: Students will demonstrate professional socialization skills in various news media environments.

PLO 6: Students will describe major ethical theories and professional codes, apply them to ethical dilemmas, and defend the application of the theory and code to a given situation as a Christian communicator.

### **3. Curriculum Map**

Please see Appendix A for the broadcast journalism program curriculum map. The courses being evaluated for the 2012-2013 academic year are COM413 Advanced TV News Production, COM150 Introduction to Media Communication and COM421 Communication Internship.

## 4. Assessment Activities

### COM413 Advanced TV News Production

Television news story packages of eight students enrolled in COM413 Advanced TV News Production were used in the assessment. The professor for COM413 selected two stories for each of the eight students to be reviewed. Stories were transferred to DVDs and mailed, along with a scoring rubric (see Appendix B), to two news professionals. One person is currently a morning news producer at a San Diego TV station. The second reviewer works in broadcast journalism at the University of Mississippi. Reviewers followed a 10-item rubric on a four-point scale (1=low; 4=high) that assessed story selection and organization, technical skills, and delivery skills. The summary of data is listed below.

This process primarily covers assessments for PLOs 3-4. The evaluation also partially covers PLO 2, but reviewers based their scores on listening to the story rather than reading a script. A news package opens with video, while the viewer hears the reporter's voice. Throughout the story are one or more interviews. Often, the reporter is seen on camera in the middle of the story. Indeed, this was the case with all but one of the stories that were reviewed. In that instance, one reviewer marked a "1" for performance and the other reviewer indicated "N/A" because of the lack of stand-up. To facilitate data calculations, the score of "N/A" was changed to "1" to match the other reviewer's score.

#### *Summary of data collected*

PLO 2 – The mean score is as follows:

Writing	2.94
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PLO 3 – The mean scores are as follows:

Organization	3.19
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Topic	3.25
Visuals	3.00
Camera	2.94
Editing	3.06
Lighting	2.97
Audio	2.75

PLO 4 – The following mean scores are reported:

Performance	2.59
Speaking	2.88

#### *COM413 Assessment Summary*

All but four of the mean scores were below 3.0, which indicated somewhat of an average ability to produce news packages. One reason might be challenges associated with gathering the stories. Starting in fall 2012, students in Advanced TV News Production were required to report all stories off-campus. In previous years, stories produced for TV news courses were primary on-campus, which resulted in light news content. Even with an off-campus story requirement, students tend to focus on feature or soft news than hard news. This often results in stories that sound more like public relations than news.

Especially problematic in this year's assessment were critiques associated with performance and speaking. Students need to develop a tone of voice that remains conversational, but authoritative. Technical work seems to be another area for improvement. Students learn the basics of TV field and studio production in COM243 and have weekly experience with cameras

and editing in COM313 TV News Production and COM413. However, it appears that students, overall, are not paying attention to details, such as audio, lighting and camera work.

Motivation to produce the best story possible might be another problem. As much as news courses emphasize storytelling, all components go hand-in-hand to accomplish that goal. Story topic had a mean of 3.25 and organization of 3.19, which are fairly good. However, a good story idea means little when there is bad lighting, poor shot composition and incorrect editing techniques. Students are consistently admonished to take a portable light kit for interviews, yet do not want to take the extra effort to do so. Similarly, they are reminded to shoot from various angles and perspectives to provide choices when editing, but it appears they are more interested in getting the story finished than paying attention to details.

### **COM421 Communication Internship**

Assessment of PLO 5 was achieved through internship supervisor critiques. At the conclusion of a student's internship, the supervisor provides an evaluation on a 5-point scale for nine items. Data below reports internships for 4 students who held internships in Summer 2012, Fall 2012 and Spring 2013.

PLO 5 – The following mean scores reflect evaluations of internship supervisors during the time periods noted above and are compared with results of the prior year's internship evaluations:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Attitude	5.00	4.00
Dependability	5.00	4.75
Quality of Work	4.30	3.50
Maturity/Poise	4.70	4.00

Judgment	4.30	3.00
Ability to Learn	4.70	5.00
Initiative	4.30	3.50
Relations Others	4.70	4.75
Quantity of Work	4.00	3.50

### *Internship Summary*

Compared with internship supervisor evaluations from 2012, the mean results of internships in 2013 declined in several areas. Particular problematic are attitude, quality of work, judgment, initiative, and maturity and poise, which declined from nearly a point to more than a point. In contrast, ability to learn was higher than the previous year. This suggests that students have ability, but are not applying themselves to their tasks. Dependability also decreased. Possessing skills and doing what is required by a supervisor is not enough. Students serving internships must improve in their attitude toward the work, learn to think and act quickly, take initiative and work independently. Judgment, initiative, and maturity and poise are likely part of this concern. Students must learn they cannot simply do a task only when told by a supervisor, but to seek out work. Regarding maturity, students need to act like adults and news professionals.

Comparing internship supervisor reports between years, students had lower scores in quality of work, initiative and quantity of work in 2012 than in 2011. Given this year's results, scores in those areas continue to decline. In the Advanced TV News course, students had to be reminded to consider story topics, lighting and camera work. It appears those are the same problems that carry over into their internships. To succeed in the news business, students need to accomplish their work with high quality on their own.

Relations with others increased slightly from the previous year. News is a team effort, whether it involves one other person (such as a videographer) or the entire news department, so this part of the evaluation is a good sign.

### **COM150 Introduction to Media Communication**

Students in the broadcast journalism major (as well as several other majors) are required to successfully complete COM150 Introduction to Media Communication. The course is a survey of mass media that explores the historical development and modern influence of books, newspapers, magazines, film, radio, television, public relations, advertising and the Internet. In addition, the course also considers the rights and responsibilities of producers and consumers of mass communication in such areas as media law and ethics.

PLO 1 involves the assessment of broadcast journalism students' ability to identify and articulate the historical development and democratic function of broadcast, print and online media in the U.S. COM150 is the course designated to evaluate that learning outcome. Examinations in the course feature a number of matching, multiple choice and essay questions that deal in part with historical issues. To evaluate the effectiveness of student learning, the two exam scores from broadcast journalism students enrolled in COM150 in Fall 2012 were summed and averaged. There were originally five broadcast journalism students in the course, but one changed majors and another withdrew from PLNU in spring 2013. Therefore, only the scores of the three students who remained broadcast journalism majors at the end of spring semester 2013 were included in this analysis. The scores of the COM150 exams for those three students ranged from 44 to 97 (out of 100 points for each test) across the two exams, with an average of 73.83.