



Date: March 9, 2020

To: Cathy Sandeen, Chancellor

From: John Stalvey, Interim Provost *John R. Stalvey*

Cc: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Elizabeth Arnold, Associate Professor; Chair, Department of Journalism and Public Communications
Paola Banchemo, Associate Professor
Joy Chavez Mapaye, Associate Professor
Susan Kalina, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Claudia Lampman, Vice Provost for Student Success

Re: **AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings – Journalism and Public Communications BA**

I have reviewed the dean's findings, the program's response to the dean's findings, and the completed Expedited Program Review Template for the Journalism and Public Communications BA.

Recommendations

My recommendation is to accept the decision and recommendations of the dean. The revision should be completed in AY21 for implementation in fall 2021. An interim progress report on all recommendations is due to the dean by March 1, 2021. The dean will submit a review along with the program's interim progress report to the provost by April 1, 2021. Unless otherwise noted at that time, a follow-up Program Review will be conducted in AY24.

Decision

Recommend Revision

AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

Date: February 28, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Elizabeth Arnold, Associate professor and chair

Cc: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Program Review Committee Members:
Elizabeth Arnold, Associate professor and chair
Paola Banchemo, Associate professor
Joy Chavez Mapaye, Associate professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean’s Recommendation

Program/s in this review: Bachelor of Arts, Journalism and Public Communications

Program response to dean’s findings:

In October 2013, the university was beginning a prioritization process that attempted to rank all functions to prioritize spending in an era of dwindling resources. At the time, JPC had six full-time, tenure-track faculty and 150 majors. While the prioritization process failed, the department took a hard look at what is critical and made difficult decisions about the curriculum with the limited powers we have at our disposal.

We have 101 majors and four full-time faculty members today; in short, we downsized as our student numbers declined. We reduced our concentrations from four to two. Next fall, we will have streamlined our program to the point that there are no concentrations or tracks in our unit. Yet the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s recommendation for our program is that we revise further and eliminate one more faculty position. This would be the fourth loss of a full-time faculty position from our unit in eight years: We lost a term position at the end of Fiscal Year 2013, another at the end of Fiscal Year 2016 when a tenure-track faculty member resigned, and most recently when a tenured professor retired at the end of Fiscal Year 2019 and was not replaced. Additionally, our broadcast/media support technician — previously a full-time staff position — was reduced to a 10-month position in 2013 and eliminated in FY20. This was soon after the department lost a full-time administrator in the CAS administrative reorganization. One could argue that our diminishing student base is due to the loss of essential faculty to teach core classes and the staff to support them. We are now down to four faculty, with three uniquely qualified to teach core classes in multimedia and strategic communications. These reductions have diminished what used to be a vibrant broadcast/telecommunications concentration. Annual senior exit surveys indicate students cannot get the required skills classes when they need them. Critical equipment is not serviced or explained to students as thoroughly as it previously was, leading to avoidable breakages.

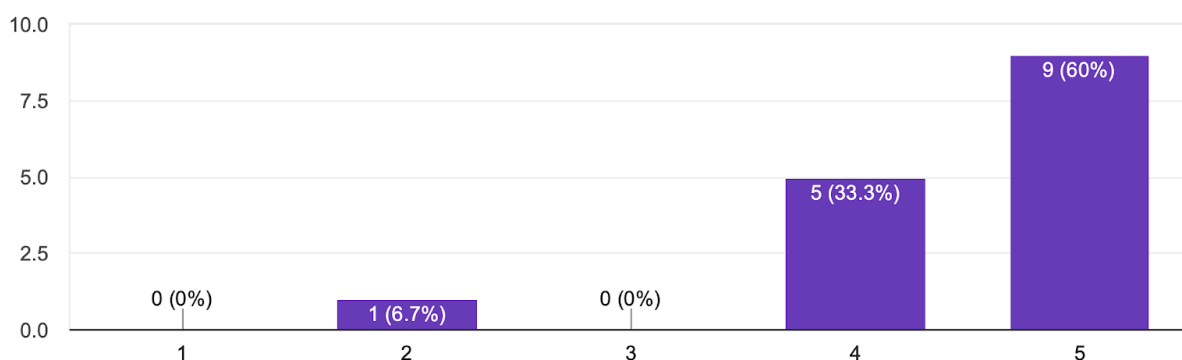
The Dean’s finding says, “The Department of Journalism and Public Communication does not contribute significantly to general education: only 30% of its student credit hours are with students outside of the JPC major, a rate that is half of the CAS average. Instead, its focus is on undergraduates who are interested in becoming professional journalists or strategic communication specialists.”

Yes, the Bachelor of Arts in JPC is a professional program. Our students go into journalism and public communications, largely in Alaska. A high percentage of alumni are still working in these fields years after they graduate. Our focus has always been on preparing future journalists and public communicators who understand the state. Increasingly as the voice of unethical, non-professional commentators (citizen journalists) grows louder through social media, our program and our students become even more important.

A survey released this week of 15 Alaska news organizations asked what they sought in entry-level journalists. It found that more than 90% of them said having an understanding of legal principles, as well as the importance of credibility, fairness, transparency, tone and the ethical requirements for journalists is important or the most important attribute of new hires.

...have an understanding of libel/defamation legal principles, as well as the importance of credibility, fairness, transparency, tone and the ethical requirements for journalists.

15 responses



The Department of Journalism and Public Communications has historically had one social science general-education requirement and has been discouraged from creating more. The previously mentioned prioritization process required that we discontinue our minor, which saved the university no money but meant that business, justice, art and other majors who previously combined their major with the JPC minor were closed off from that possibility. We don't have a traditional focus on service to other units in the University, the way the Department of History or the Department of Philosophy does. Our service has been and will continue to be that our students are routinely called upon to help make multimedia and create collateral strategic communications material for other units.

We have been in conversation this academic year with other units, such as the College of Business and Public Policy and the College of Health, to explain our offerings and integrate their needs into our course rotations and curriculum development. It makes sense that a climate change GER, currently under discussion, would incorporate such courses as JPC A463 Crisis Communications and JPC A443 Public Service Reporting. Our faculty have been involved in the Chancellor's climate change task force and have been working with the Environment and Society BS program and the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies on much needed curriculum in this critical area.

AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

While we recognize that the Bachelor of Arts in JPC offers a different kind of program demand, efficiency, and productivity than service-oriented units in CAS do, we do provide outreach and service to other units. JPC courses are listed in a number of other program requirements, such as the minor in International Business. As more units learn about JPC A204 Media Literacy, we believe we will attract more interest in listing this course as an out-of-major requirement.

We currently have the following courses listed for fall 2020, but would like to propose consolidating offerings by eliminating JPC A404 Global Media and dividing teaching responsibilities for JPC A210 between Professor Arnold and Professor Banchemo.

Original schedule:

JPC A201 Reporting and Writing News one section
JPC A202 First Amendment and Media Ethics one section
JPC A203 Writing and Producing Media one section
JPC A204 Media Literacy (GER) two sections
JPC A210 Infographics, Data Visualization, and Strategy (one section face to face; adjunct)
JPC A213 Digital Imaging (one section face to face; adjunct)
JPC A312 History of Alaska Media (one section face to face)
JPC A345 Web Design (one section face to face; adjunct)
JPC A362 Principles of Strategic Communications (one section online)
JPC A366 Planning and Writing for Strategic Communications (one section face to face)
JPC A382 Podcasting (one section face to face)
JPC A383 TV Studio Production (one section face to face; adjunct)
JPC A404 Global Media (one section face to face)
JPC A492 JPC Capstone (one section hybrid)
JPC A495 JPC Internships (one section online)
JPC A495 JPC Internships (one section online)

Our colleagues at UAF are going to retain the B.A. in Digital Journalism through the expedited program review process, though it produces very few graduates. This is because the degree is yoked to the Department of Communication and Journalism (COJO), a human communication unit that teaches the Tier I oral communication general-education requirements. However, this means that UAA could offer a mix of online classes to appeal to UAF students and that would help satisfy their degree requirements.

Dean’s comment: 1. Recently the curriculum was revised, but it might need to be revised again with an eye toward more online offerings that could reach students outside of Southcentral Alaska. As part of our curriculum revision we are already in the process of designing science communication and climate change communication courses that would be offered online, along with a digital media skills course that could be offered online and face to face during hours that would accommodate working professionals. One new course, JPC A210 Infographics, Data Visualization, and Strategy, would help not just aspiring media professionals but also other professionals, such as nonprofit spokespersons and even salespeople, who incorporate market data and social media engagement in their work.

Dean’s comment: 2. The number of faculty be limited to three full-time faculty.

Our challenge with this request is that our unit has suffered severe losses in recent years, losing faculty expertise in broadcast journalism/video production. Even with four faculty members, all of whom have professional experience, not all courses can be covered with their knowledge base. The loss of even one faculty member could mean an even more dire situation in which key skills classes

go unscheduled. Like other units, some curricular offerings such as History of Alaska Media, have emerged due to faculty interest. However, this has meant at least three non-skills classes must be offered every semester. This harms our students and does not match curricular requirements, which emphasize skills courses over theory courses.

Dean’s comment: 3. Faculty workloads must be revised so that research time is greatly reduced or eliminated, allowing the remaining faculty to cover more courses while reducing the program’s overall costs. One faculty member is already bipartite with a joint appointment in JPC and AKNS. Three other faculty members are tripartite and have a range of research and service responsibilities that cannot easily be reduced or eliminated. Doing so would be a detriment to the unit, the College and the University.

Dean’s comment: 4. A tuition surcharge should be proposed for upper-division courses in JPC, thereby having students contribute more to the cost of this low-enrollment, high-impact program. The JPC faculty resist the notion that JPC students be charged a tuition surcharge. Entry-level positions in both journalism and strategic communications tend to start at around \$40,000 in the state, below the average entry-level start and well below the standard in programs that do impose a tuition surcharge, such as Engineering. Such a surcharge might have the unintended consequence of lower enrollment.

Dean’s comment: 5. Multi-year partnerships with the community and industry should be established to create a stable and significant source of funds for the program. The net result should be a program that eliminates the gap between its costs and its revenue. If these and/or other steps do not eliminate the gap, the program should be reviewed for deletion in 2021.

This year JPC was the founding member of a new fully funded community-based initiative to support and improve the quality of journalism in Alaska. The Alaska Center for Excellence in Journalism is up and running with more than 100,000 dollars available in bi-annual grants with funding for training in partnership with the Alaska Press Club. JPC is a key partner in this new initiative with the Atwood Chair and Department Chair as permanent board members. ACE-J has already received national attention and is attracting even larger grants from organizations such as the Knight Foundation and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting.

Relationships with the professional journalism community are vital. The good news is that Alaska newsrooms want to hire JPC graduates. However, they want entry-level journalists to be “capable of ‘doing it all’ one-man-band style of reporting, using video, audio, digital elements, on-air presentation, etc.,” according to the above-mentioned survey of newsrooms. And they criticize the fact that the department does not have the capability to train students in daily broadcast/digital story turnaround — a direct result of faculty and staff losses.

Relationships with the professional strategic communications industry are strong. A Public Relations Student Society of America chapter has operated at UAA almost continuously since at least 2003. The Alaska chapter of PRSA is engaged in giving the unit feedback on curriculum, mentoring students, and speaking to classes on a regular basis.

One of the goals of the department is to create a business-to-business student recruitment effort that would function for full-time workers and that could be funded by employers who want professional development for their employees. Skills courses such as podcasting, video production, and digital imaging are applicable and valuable to any organization. Courses in strategic communications and journalistic storytelling also help organizations and brands communicate with key stakeholders.

In conclusion, the Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Public Communications has responded to budget cuts. It has absorbed faculty and staff losses. It has streamlined curriculum repeatedly. It has worked diligently to help students navigate the program and graduate. It has reached out and cooperated with professionals to create opportunities for students and to improve journalism statewide. Its faculty have been engaged scholars and active media creators. However, we cannot continue to be the journalism and mass communications program of choice in the state with fewer and fewer resources and without the support of administrators who understand the needs and challenges of the Department of Journalism and Public Communications.



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Elizabeth Arnold, Associate Professor; Chair, Department of Journalism and Public Communications
Paola Banchemo, Associate Professor
Joy Chavez Mapaye, Associate Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Journalism and Public Communications BA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Elizabeth Arnold, Associate Professor and Department Chair
Paola Banchemo, Associate Professor
Joy Chavez Mapaye, Associate Professor

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,

2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The Department of Journalism and Public Communication does not contribute significantly to general education: only 30% of its student credit hours are with students outside of the JPC major, a rate that is half of the CAS average. Instead, its focus is on undergraduates who are interested in becoming professional journalists or strategic communication specialists.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

As stated, students who take JPC course are disproportionately JPC majors instead of students in other majors.

Since 2013 many CAS programs experienced a decrease in the number of awards; JPC, however, was relatively unique in that time period and experienced a notable increase, and in the past two years it increased from 19 graduates to 26-27. It is unclear, however, if this trend will continue because the program has seen a 33% drop in the number of majors. Of CAS's 19 baccalaureate programs, JPC is CAS's 7th most popular program with 101 current majors, and 6th most declared major among incoming first-year students. Clearly, the program is in demand.

However, the program is not efficient and has excess capacity. Its student credit hour total is far below average in CAS and its credits hours per faculty is also well below average. As a result, in 2019 it only covered half of its instructional costs with tuition, necessitating CAS to cover the other half with state appropriations. Furthermore, when the full salaries and benefits for everything faculty do (instruction, research, and service) are considered, the Department has the steepest deficit of any undergraduate program in CAS, and a steep deficit that required state appropriations. Contributing to this is the fact that JPC courses have class sizes that are well-below average (just 13.8 in 2019), and that the courses draw relatively few students from other majors, doing so at a rate that is half the rate across CAS. Overall, the program is relatively insular and while having a respectable number of majors, it does not have enough majors to sustain the program without steep help in state appropriations.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

Small class size is a fiscal challenge, but also is a benefit for student success. JPC majors have small classes (by CAS standards) that are taught by faculty with real-world professional experience and that give students hands on experience with reporting and strategic communications.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAF offers a BA in the Department of Journalism and Communications. While there is overlap, there are differences and UAA's program graduates about nine times the number of graduates per year.

Commendations and Recommendations

The program is commended for generous support from the community, and the careful mentoring its professionally-experienced faculty provide students. The faculty also should be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Revision.

To its credit, the program draws students to UAA and graduates quite a few more. To its detriment, however, it is not sustainable with the level of state appropriations CAS receives. Therefore, I recommend that this program undergo major revision in the following ways:

1. Recently the curriculum was revised, but it might need to be revised again with an eye toward more online offerings that could reach students outside of Southcentral Alaska.
2. The number of faculty be limited to three full-time faculty.
3. Faculty workloads must be revised so that research time is greatly reduced or eliminated, allowing the remaining faculty to cover more courses while reducing the program's overall costs.
4. A tuition surcharge should be proposed for upper-division courses in JPC, thereby having students contribute more to the cost of this low-enrollment, high-impact program.
5. Multi-year partnerships with the community and industry should be established to create a stable and significant source of funds for the program.

The net result should be a program that eliminates the gap between its costs and its revenue. If these and/or other steps do not eliminate the gap, the program should be reviewed for deletion in 2021.

Submission date: January 31, 2020, resubmitted Feb. 11, 2020 per dean's request

Program/s in this review: Journalism & Public Communications, BA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

- Elizabeth Arnold, Associate professor and chair, Anchorage
- Paola Banchemo, Associate professor, Anchorage
- Joy Chavez Mapaye, Associate professor, Anchorage

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

Relevancy

"After graduating, I entered my professional career with a diverse and profoundly useful skill set that led to my success as an owner of a strategic communications agency with nine full-time staff including three UAA alumni."

— JPC graduate and owner of strategic communications firm.

The Department of Journalism and Public Communications (JPC) prepares students for one of the most important roles of a global society: free expression and communication. An informed citizenry is critical to a functioning democracy. This is the guiding principle of the program. The program fosters in students a strong resolve to ensure that news and information is accurate, informative, fair and ethical. Through research, writing development, creative activities, and community engagement the program strives to meet Alaska's communication needs. The program has graduated 139 students from fall 2013 to December 2019, the period since our last comprehensive program review. We have graduated well over 900 students since our founding.

The Bachelor of Arts in JPC prepares students for a range of opportunities, evidenced in this recent pool of graduates. Many have gone on to work in local and statewide journalism organizations such as Alaska Public Media, Anchorage Daily News, Juneau Empire, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Peninsula Clarion, KTUU Channel 2 and KTVA Channel 11. Other graduates have moved directly into strategic communications roles for Doyon, the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Game, First Alaskans Institute, Alaska Native Heritage Institute, and Thompson and Co., and for the Anchorage Mayor's office and U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's office. Several graduates were hired immediately by the UAA's own development and communication offices, unequivocal testimony to the program's relevance and workforce development.

Support

While the majority of JPC students are majors, the department's course offerings increasingly attract students from other Departments and Colleges simply -- and importantly -- because communications skills are essential across disciplines. For example, a Biology or Computer Science major needs to learn to effectively communicate research goals, or a Health Sciences major needs the skills to design a dissemination strategy for a communicable disease alert.

The program also offers a general education requirement in the social sciences, JPC A204 Media Literacy. This class was developed to address the urgent need for students to navigate the exponentially complex media and technology ecosystem.

Partnerships

“My JPC internship at Alaska Public Media led to a full-time position as web editor/education reporter and my current position here in rural Alaska.”

- JPC graduate who is now a news director at a radio station in rural Alaska

The department is routinely contacted by prospective employers in media and communication fields in Alaska. A robust internship program channels JPC students into television, radio, online, print and strategic communications jobs. Currently, three JPC students who interned at Alaska Public Media now hold full-time on-air positions. The department has similar partnerships with other news and strategic communications organizations.

Extramural Funding

At a ceremony this past year, Rasmuson Foundation Chair Ed Rasmuson awarded Chancellor Cathy Sandeen the final payment of a 2.5 million dollar endowment for the Atwood Chair of Journalism. The endowment pays for a full-time faculty position within the department. Atwood Chairs from international, national and statewide media organizations have provided students with a range of perspectives and experiences. Professionals such as Mark Trahant, the nation's foremost Native American journalist, and Larry Persily, a highly respected journalist and public policy expert have recently occupied the post.

High-Demand Designation

“The JPC program fully prepared me for a career in public relations and managing crisis communications. It opened the door to job opportunities I would have never thought possible.”

- JPC graduate, GCI public relations team

Public relations and strategic communication programs are high-growth areas for university. High demand jobs in Alaska tend to be clustered in health and natural resource industries. While a JPC major may not be the first degree that comes to mind in preparing to work in these sectors, the ability to craft, communicate and disseminate a message, campaign or create a comprehensive strategic communications strategy is of essential importance in both. Health care providers and workers in engineering and tech industries are increasingly aware of the communication skills they need to build an audience with digital media.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend; 1400 words or less)

JPC is a professional program within CAS, and as such, demand for the program has remained strong. In addition, it has historically offered services to other departments informally, along with offering a way for students to meet a social science general-education requirement. Students from a variety of degree programs within CAS and outside the college have sought out JPC courses to augment their communication competencies.

JPC is a nimble academic unit. It has the endowed Atwood Chair position, which allows for a lot of flexibility and variety in course offerings. The department also has three tenured faculty members with tripartite workloads, one tenured faculty member with a bipartite workload with a joint appointment in JPC and AKNS, and adjunct faculty members who are subject-matter specialists in their area.

From fall 2013 to May 2019, JPC faculty secured more than \$800,000 in extramural support and funding outside the Atwood Foundation support. JPC faculty have served prominent roles in establishing the Atwood Foundation initiative for the new Alaska Center for Excellence in Journalism and leading a UA system-wide smoke- and tobacco-free policy campaign. Faculty routinely present research at Harvard University, Williams College, and at national and international journalism and public health conferences.

In January 2020 meetings with personnel from core programs for UAA in the College of Health, College of Engineering and College of Business and Public Policy, associate deans of those schools expressed support for JPC program offerings, which include media literacy, infographics/data visualization and strategy, strategic communications and video production. The areas of health communications, science communications and business journalism provide opportunities for collaboration on curriculum and projects.

Data from IR reports show that the JPC program's internal demand includes service to other programs such as Art, English, Psychology, Justice, Legal Studies, Management, Marketing and more. While most of the student credit hours skew toward majors, especially for upper-division classes, CAS numbers show lower-division courses are primarily taken by non-majors. That same student credit hour data show opportunities for attracting new JPC majors to grow the program. A bulk of student credit hours generated by non-majors came from those in the undeclared, exploratory major/undeclared, or general program categories.

Data from IR reports also show JPC program external demand has increased, with more JPC graduates enrolled in graduate schools in recent years from 2013 to 2018. Most graduate degrees awarded to JPC graduates were from graduate programs at UAA.

IR data show JPC degrees awarded from 2013 to 2019 increased while the number of CAS degrees awarded declined overall. Program enrollment trends show a decline that is reflected in both JPC and CAS. Course pass-rate numbers show the grade-passing rate by course level is higher in JPC than in CAS and that grade D, F and withdrawal rate by course level is lower in JPC when compared to CAS as a whole.

Data on instructional productivity will show smaller JPC class sizes compared to CAS. Other metrics related to cost, tuition revenue, student credit hours, and FTEF also appear to indicate less productivity. However, given the tripartite workloads of the three JPC faculty members, which include course releases for co-curricular activities, research and approved research leaves, the data require more explanation. Many JPC courses are skills-based, with specialized equipment and software, which require smaller classes. A current hands-on videography class, for example, has exceeded its cap, but cannot be successfully taught as a lecture to a hundred students. JPC also has one primary classroom/lab, with an

occupancy of 25. For non-majors, JPC courses are optional and not required. Many CAS programs have required courses for majors and non-majors alike, which translate into higher instructional productivity metrics. Changes in the JPC curriculum, along with increased collaboration with core UAA programs, will help boost numbers in this area.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

The B.A. in JPC is the journalism and mass communications program of choice in Alaska. Our graduates work in journalism and communications across the state and country, holding high-profile positions in top private and public sector employers such as ConocoPhillips Alaska, KTUU, GCI, MSI Communications, and Special Olympics.

The B.A. was externally accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications from 1990 to 2018. The program was fully re-accredited in 2016. However, the program voluntarily withdrew from the accreditation process in 2018. The reasons the faculty decided to voluntarily give up accreditation are 1. A lack of financial support for the university meant keeping up accreditation standards and costs was increasingly difficult, 2. A trend among journalism and mass communications programs to reconsider or withdraw from external accreditation because of the rigidity of accreditation standards at a time that industry demands are changing rapidly. Prestigious programs such as Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications and the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, have recently given up their accreditator.

The curriculum is undergoing a revision this academic year. A new course, JPC A210 Infographics, Data Visualization, and Strategy, addresses an industry demand for data-knowledgeable workers who can analyze and visualize information graphically.

The B.A. has scaled back from half a dozen concentrations in the mid-'00s to four concentrations in 2005-2006 to two concentrations beginning in 2015-16. At that time, we reduced the number of credits needed to graduate from 126 to 120 to conform to other B.A./B.S. degrees. This latest revision that goes into effect in fall 2020 eliminates specific concentrations — a benefit to students. For example, strategic communications students should be versed in video production. Similarly, students destined for careers in journalism should understand the audience-driven methods that undergird strategic communications.

Core classes JPC 201, JPC 202, JPC 203, JPC 204 have all been offered online or as hybrid courses. Upper-division courses including JPC 362, JPC 463, JPC 314, and JPC 403 have been offered regularly online. The faculty members teaching online have gone through Quality Matters training and continue to invest in professional development.

From 2005-2006 on our Program Student Learning Outcomes have been as follows. Students graduating with a B.A. in Journalism and Public Communications will be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Academic assessment has employed an array of tools to determine how well students exit the program with these outcomes. Pre- and post-tests measure the first two outcomes. We use internship workplace evaluations and feedback from a panel of professionals in the community to determine how students perform in other outcomes with the exception of the application of basic numerical and statistical concepts. We are introducing a course (explained above) that students may take to help them understand data and statistical basics. We also offer a research-oriented capstone and a professionally oriented capstone. This has made assessing the numerical and statistical outcome more complex. However, senior exit surveys have asked students to assess their own abilities in these areas and they have responded positively, as have internship supervisors. Sixty-six percent in the most recent senior exit survey said they agreed that the courses in the program prepared them in this regard. We also conduct periodic alumni surveys to learn how alumni regard their degree with the hindsight of years in the field. (Results below).

Student success

Faculty in the program have worked diligently to identify and remove barriers to students. This has led to an uptick in graduation success rates and retention rates.

Part of this effort included the curriculum revision that scaled back concentrations from four to two in 2015-2016. It also involved personal contacts with students to help them resolve financial or academic issues to get them graduated. Sometimes the effort involved explaining to students what steps were needed to help them finish. The faculty in the department used degree completion information to focus efforts on students who had completed 75 percent of the degree requirements or more. One student who returned to college after a health scare said, "Being a student in the Department of Journalism and Public Communications meant the world to me. My professors and fellow students gave me the strength to keep going after a bout with cancer, and each day I'm in the field I think of my time at UAA with fondness and gratitude." She is now a reporter in Las Cruces, New Mexico, who has had front-page stories in USA Today. The result of the focus on degree completion is that the program graduated 17 students in 2013, 19 students in 2014, 19 students in 2014, 22 students in 2015, 19 students in 2016, 19 students in 2017, 26 students in 2018 and 27 students in 2019. These graduation rates have occurred while the overall number of majors in JPC has decreased. Our graduation rate for the 2013 cohort was 50 percent after seven years, much better than the university's rate for baccalaureate degrees for the 2013 cohort, which stood at 34.7% after seven years. Other student success initiatives we've undertaken include reducing the number of textbooks we require of students or to finding affordable alternatives.

We conducted an alumni survey of post-2000 graduates of our program. We sent the survey via email to addresses provided by the UAA Office of Alumni Relations to 425 graduates and received 67 responses, an almost 16% response rate. We were pleased with this rate of return considering many emails bounced back as undeliverable. Of the 67 respondents, 55 were employed full time. Three were employed part time by choice. Only three were unemployed. The majority (40) were employed in Alaska and 46 were employed in a position related to mass communications or media. The majority (39) made more than \$55,000 per year, while 13 made between \$35,000 and \$54,999 per year. 58 of the 67 respondents, or 86.5%, said they were moderately or extremely satisfied with the education they received in the program.

Advising students

JPC faculty have reached out to students to ensure they have the correct information to navigate the degree. Since 2013, students have also had assistance from CAS academic advisors and now by first-year advisors. But we still recommend students meet with us every semester when they become JPC majors. It is a student-centered process shared among the faculty. We discuss courses, but also advise on internships, graduate school applications, job searches and other post-undergraduate experiences.

High-impact practices

Many courses offer service learning, community-based learning experiences. JPC A362 Principles of Strategic Communications students have worked with the Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education to reimagine a social media campaign. Students in JPC A366 Planning and Writing for Strategic

Communications rebranded local small businesses and nonprofits in collaboration with local public relations/marketing firms. JPC A465 Strategic Communications Campaigns produced a winning student ballot initiative that banned tobacco and e-cigarette use at UAA and later, the entire UA system. Approximately 45 percent of our students complete internships during their undergraduate years. The program requires students complete either a research-oriented or professionally oriented capstone project. Professional projects have evolved into real-world entrepreneurial ventures, such as the hyperlocal magazine *The Spenardian*. Research projects, for example a media literacy education study in Alaska public high schools, have been recognized for their impact in undergraduate research symposiums and beyond.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

JPC is one of two programs in the University of Alaska system that awards a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism/Mass Communications. The second program is at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Our program dates from 1979 when CAS Dean Saradell Ard introduced journalism courses at UAA. Ard was responsible for hiring Dr. Sylvia Broady as the first chair of the Department of Public Communications. When Robert B. and Evangeline Atwood established the Atwood Professor of Journalism, the department changed its name to Journalism and Public Communications. Our program, in the media and economic center of the state, teaches courses in journalism, digital media, and strategic communications (blending advertising, marketing, and public relations). This multifaceted program prepares students for a range of careers. Comparatively, UAF's B.A. in journalism graduates a fraction of the students UAA does each year. In 2019, JPC awarded 27 degrees compared to UAF's three degrees awarded. While the B.A. at UAF offers courses in photojournalism and investigative reporting, the majority of students in the Department of Communication and Journalism (COJO) are in human communication (interpersonal communication, public speaking, small group communication). However, we seek to build on existing collaboration with UAF. JPC exchanges the Atwood Chair of Journalism with the Snedden Chair of Journalism at UAF for a few days every year.

We are also focused on instructing with an eye on global diversity. This perspective is essential for our profession. This means journalists and strategic communications practitioners have to think globally, beginning with the simplest of steps: understanding that practice varies with borders, cultures, and languages. Our faculty have reported and worked abroad or with organizations that are engaged in global business. This helps us connect to our students, who often have diverse backgrounds and indeed, deserve this kind of instruction.

5. Summary Analysis

"I am the first generation of my family to attend university, not unusual for people of the Alaska Native Community. The communications skill set I gained from JPC has enabled me to effectively influence policy, create organizational change and work with professionals from all industry sectors. I can't say enough how crucial my undergrad degree has been from where I sit today."

- JPC graduate who credits the program for her communications positions at Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Federation of Natives, CIRI, Shell and others.

The Department of Journalism and Public Communications takes seriously the responsibility to prepare ethical, globally aware communications practitioners. We offer a professional program deeply rooted in the liberal arts, with the flexibility to complete a minor in a complementary field.

We are exceptionally proud of our students, who are devoted to UAA, serving as leaders in student media, in student government, and in a variety of clubs and organizations. They continue to support the institution as graduates, returning to give career talks and to serve as advisory board members and mentors. What unites our diverse student body is a passion and commitment to contributing to the public square. Most of our students remain in Alaska and give back to the communities they are from. For example, one student distinguished herself as the fall 2018 commencement speaker, the first deaf person to do so. She had also conducted much-needed research into the overall effectiveness of Disability Support Services. A recent graduate produced a comprehensive multimedia website to preserve and protect Alaska native languages as her capstone project that was lauded by several Native Corporations. Another student produced a critically important public service magazine about Alaska's food security issues, while another explored the marketing effectiveness of the Anchorage Museum. JPC students are key members of community programs and Alaska institutions. They shape and contextualize public policy and private sector messages. Our graduates are not only members of the Alaska workforce, they are *highly visible* members of their communities as writers, broadcasters, videographers, speechwriters, and nonprofit and industry spokespersons. In short, they are the people Alaskans trust and depend on for reliable news and information across media platforms and industries.

We accomplish our mission with a lean, but highly experienced and diverse faculty. As current and former practitioners and researchers, we are able to teach a wide variety of courses, media ethics, and media literacy, science communication, health communications, political reporting, crisis communications, podcasting, and videography. We pride ourselves on staying well-versed and skilled in the latest technologies and platforms of a rapidly changing media landscape.

In sum, JPC is the journalism and mass communications program of choice in Alaska. The faculty and graduates of this department give voice to the reality and aspirations of our state's residents, from those who lack the agency to be heard, to the policymakers and leaders who shape Alaska's future.