Two-Year Review
Vocational Training Programs

Name of Program: Journalism

Division Chair Carmen Carrillo  Academic Year 2011-2012

Program Specific – Desired Student Outputs (Ed Code 78016(a) (1))—Meets a documented labor market demand.

What do the data indicate about the desired student outputs at the program level?

a) Documents and labor market data from professional organizations, government agencies, and community groups related to needed skills and demand for future workers. Media industries are in a state of flux with current models moving away from large, corporate organizational control and distribution of news in favor of entrepreneurship and citizen-journo models. "Power is shifting to the individual journalist and away, by degrees, from journalistic institutions," pointed out the 2009 Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism. While the economic downturn has been extremely devastating on old models, professional organizations argue that now, more than ever, is the time to teach journalism due to the proliferation of new methods of distributing news via the World Wide Web. Writing at Salon.com, blogger Cary Tennis said: "I do not think it is such a terrible thing that your journalism students are entering an uncertain world. It's the kind of world that is ripe for enterprising journalists. It is the kind of world that needs to be reported on and explained. Indeed, blogs, Twitter, social networking – these are just some of the new tools available to everyone – not just trained journalists. According to Pew: “From producing original content and commentary to sharing and ranking news produced by professionals, citizens became an even larger part of the daily news information flow in 2008.” At the 2009 Poynter Institute “Journalism that Matters” Conference “The two main questions at the conference were what elements of journalism are essential, and what elements we are ready to shed. Among those considered essential were traditional journalism values such as transparency, accuracy and truth-seeking. Journalists in the room were ready to shed the legacy model -- working for monolithic institutions based on print or broadcast.” Paul Berkow, an award-winning television producer and author won the 2001 Instructional Technology Council award as the nation’s best distance-learning instructor. He argues that, in this climate, journalism courses are more important than ever. “If every citizen has the potential to become a journalist, we need to have widespread knowledge of libel laws, invasion of privacy laws, freedom of information laws and shield laws. If news reporting is going to transfer from specialists paid by a newspaper to "amateurs" in a new "many to many" model instead of a "one to many" model, then it is more important than ever to teach the fundamentals of good journalism to the largest number of students possible.” In regards to community, trained student journalists are often sought by local publications. The Harbor Tides has had on-going discussion with the editor of the Lomita News about a joint operation of some kind, while that publication has offered paid internships to interested students.

b) Data from advisory committee regarding appropriateness of current outcomes and needs for entry and upgrade level training. LAHC does not have an advisory committee because it does not support a full-time journalism instructor. Without a full-time journalism instructor with release time to recruit and retain an advisory committee, there will not be an advisory committee. However, the following professionals have agreed to participate if one were created: Attorney and author Frank M. Poturica of Palos Verdes Estates, Joseph Lupica, Chairman and CEO of Celestron, Inc. and past president, South Bay Businessman’s Association, Mike Hiserman, Deputy Managing Editor, Sports Department, Los
Angeles Times, Robert Gourley, San Pedro, Issues Today Radio and Board President, South Bay Lutheran schools, Nancy Thyme, owner, Lomita News. In numerous conversations with each it is felt that the lack of a full-time instructor greatly hinders the ability of the program to move forward.

c) Data from employers  Many of the next generation of journalists will be unpaid, contributors of news. These people need to be trained, experts say, lest society be fooled. One need only look at CNN's I-reporters. Said Pew: "In legacy media, news organizations continued to experiment in various ways with citizen contributions, but most seemed to be leaning toward citizens as sources rather than as journalists, and some large experiments with citizen reporting failed.

d) Data from students via focus groups, & surveys/questionnaires. The most recent survey of Harbor Tides staff members took place March 19. Students listed the following items/objectives for improvement of the journalism program: 1) hire a full-time journalism adviser, 2) fund the hard copy of the Harbor Tides so it can be published at minimum every other week during the fall and spring semesters, 3) build a journalism department lab (newsroom) comparable to what other area journalism programs offer students. 4) Expand the Journalism A.A. to include more variety in journalism/radio broadcasting/production/news photography courses so they won't have to leave Harbor College to seek this training elsewhere 5) Make it possible to be on staff of the Harbor Tides four semesters, not the current three by adding a one-unit "Directed Studies" class currently in use in Humanities, among others. 6) Supply staff with enough computers, cameras, recorders and video equipment in order to do jobs effectively.

e) Review and comments from a local South Bay Workforce Investment Board (N.B.—Required by LACCD Board regulation).

Evidence of Students’ Attainment of Intended Learning Outcomes (Ed Code 78016(a) (3)—Is of demonstrated effectiveness as measured by the employment and completion success of its students.

How and why is the program/discipline effective? Analyze student performance indicators and patterns of student success in the course and/or the program. Provide evidence regarding progress toward and achievement of desired student outputs. Where appropriate, please indicate “not applicable.”

Select those performance indicators applicable to the program.

a) Success and retention rates.

1) What is the overall trend in success and retention in your program (have they increased/decreased)? Cite evidence from assessment of student learning outcomes. SLOs were recently implemented in the three courses currently offered and data will be tallied. Enrollment in these three courses had steadily climbed over the last three years. Students who enroll in journalism courses at Harbor College tend to be very loyal. They come back for more, usually taking more than just one.

2) How do these rates compare to the college and/or comparable programs?

3) Analyze course specific trends in success and retention. It is important to point out that many students who take journalism courses do not have career goals in journalism in
mind. They take the course(s) to expand their horizons, or learn a different writing style. In that regard, as reported earlier, over the last three years, many students take multiple journalism courses.

4) Are there any courses where the trend over the past two years deviates from the program trend? What explains any observed differences? No.

5) Do some courses tend to have higher or lower success and retention rates than other courses? Yes. Journalism 105 (Mass Media) cuts across the spectrum. It is a survey course and transferable to just about any major. The subject matter is applicable to all students and usually fills. In fact, we offer just one day section of J101, but could probably open a night section and fill it, too. Journalism 101, on the other hand, is an intense, basic news writing course, as well as a study of ethical and moral journalistic practices and principals with regards to defamation, libel, slander and plagiarism. Journalese is a different style of writing from fiction, poetry or that used in English courses. Learning Journalistic style, as opposed MMA, for instance, can be a challenge. Daily writing assignments can be taxing. Thus, more than the usual numbers of students fail to keep up and, at times, drop out.

b) Degrees and certificates

1) Describe the types of awards (degrees/certificates) available through your program. In June, 2008, the LACCD board voted approval of an A.A. degree in journalism for LAHC. A full compliment of courses to complete that degree have yet to be implemented by the college, most notably, the updating of course outlines for Journalism 108 (Article Writing) and Journalism 106 (Introduction to Broadcasting).

2) What is the general trend in program awards over the past 3 to 5 years and how does this compare to the college as a whole?

c) Certification exam results

1) Is there a governing board that provides certification exams for students in your program? No

2) What was the most recent pass rate and how does this compare to pass rates over the past 3 to 5 years? What factors affecting pass rates are relevant for program planning?

d) Job placement rates

Do you track job placement of students in your program or use external data (VTEA)? We have no formal way of tracking job placement. However, many students transfer to four-year institutions seeking degrees in communications, public relations, speech, business communications, journalism, broadcasting, photography. As journalism is a tight-knit profession, many stay in touch after leaving Harbor College. We often write letters of recommendation for them. Here's a recent sample from Feb., 2009: Dear Professor Mcleod,

How are you? I hope you remember me. I was the advertising manager for the Tides in fall 06. I am at San Jose State University but as a photojournalism student and I owe you a big Thank You. The Tides was my first experience with journalism and I wrote my first story and my first picture published that semester. In fact it
was that semester when I did a profile piece on Professor Hernandez that you mentioned I should consider being a shooter. At the time a big light bulb went off in my head because I was falling in love with photography. I will never forget that comment and it pretty much brought me to where I am now.

Once I got to SJSU I enrolled in a fine art photography class. From there I found my way to photojournalism and am in my third semester as a PJ major looking to graduate in fall 09. I am a staff photographer for the Spartan Daily, attended a multimedia bootcamp in Mexico City where I was a photo editor for a student produced newspaper, am interning for a small magazine right now and am a Chips Quinn Journalism Scholar finalist awaiting to be placed as a summer intern at a major newspaper. I also am planning to apply for another internship in the winter and the summer of next year. More recently I just got back from a working journalism trip through the South and up to Washington D.C. for Obama's inauguration. We traced the footsteps of the Civil Rights Movement and culminated with the inauguration of the first African-American president. I was one of ten students selected and received national attention. We visited Memphis, Jackson, Montgomery, Birmingham, Atlanta, Greensboro and more....

I had my work published in the San Jose Mercury News, Silicon Valley Community Newspapers, Santa Cruz Sentinel and Jet Magazine. I also had my photographs shown on NBC-Bay Area, KTVU and CNN. I was interviewed live with Keira Phillips when we stopped at one of their headquarters in Atlanta.

I just want to thank you for that comment you made that day at critique. When people ask me on how it is I got into photojournalism I always tell them about you and how you mentioned I should become a "shooter." You may not remember saying it but it was exactly what I needed to hear.

1)

2) How do your rates compare to external criteria or standards?

Duplication—(Ed Code 78016(a) (2) Does this program represent unnecessary duplication of other manpower training programs in the area? Please describe any relevant differences between your program and the college and/or other programs. Just about every community college in Southern California offers a journalism program. We just do less of it than any other. We’re operating this program on smoke and mirrors compared to what everyone else has.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
(Validation Team Report)  

(Journalism)  
(2009-2010)  

Team Members: Robert O'Neil (Los Angeles Pierce College), Pat McKeen (Long Beach City College), Mark Shannon (LAHC Adjunct, Speech), Abeel Barakat (LAHC Kinesiology), Jonathon Lee (LAHC Librarian – did not attend)  

MAJOR FINDINGS  

The Los Angeles Harbor College Journalism program was a thriving part of campus and included a weekly newspaper and campus radio station until 1994 when it was eliminated. It reappeared on a limited basis about six years ago, producing a newspaper sporadically from an article writing class (Journalism 108). It now includes three courses: mass media (Journalism 105), basic news writing (Journalism 101) and an editing course (Journalism 218) that is repeatable four times and is used to produce the student newspaper and web site without proper equipment or funding.  

Strengths regarding the program/discipline:  

1. The Harbor College journalism program, like any college discipline, is as good as its professors. All journalism classes, including those geared toward the production of a campus newspaper, are taught by adjunct instructor Paul McLeod. He brings a wealth of experience to his classrooms and labs:  

   The strength of a lengthy, award-winning professional career with the Los Angeles Times and other publications.  
   An abiding belief in the importance of accuracy, deadlines, and the journalistic ethics of fairness and always seeking the truth.  
   An understanding of the mechanics of covering and writing about events and people, including interviewing techniques, observance of Associated Press Style and awareness of libel laws and other legal aspects of the profession.  
   A proven ability to work with a broad range of students and impart the teamwork skills necessary to produce timely campus coverage of news, sports, entertainment and other stories chronicling college life.  

   He was named 2009 two-year college instructor of the year by the California Journalism Education Coalition.  

2. The three journalism courses being taught at LAHC utilize recently constructed "smart classrooms," which allow the instructor to present material from a variety of sources in real time. This has enhanced instruction.
3. Allowing the student newspaper class to utilize the Communication Department's recently completed Language Learning Lab has improved the flow of copy for the student newspaper. (However, it should only be considered a stop-gap measure – see concerns below)

4. Establishment of an A.A. degree, once it is implemented, will attract students to the discipline. (see comments below)

5. The hctides.com web site has allowed the instructor to continue instruction in, and student journalists to continue to publish, quality journalism, despite a lack of campus financial support for the print product (see comments below)

Concerns regarding the program/discipline:

1. The program has no full-time instructor. A full-time instructor is critical to the viability of any discipline. This is all the more important in journalism, where advising a publication involves many extra out-of-class hours.

   Student journalists require direction and advice as they gather and prepare news, interfacing with faculty, staff, administrators, fellow students and the community. In addition, a full-time faculty member is able to undertake the recruiting, career counseling and internship placement so vital to a viable program.

   Although the faculty position priority committee has recognized the need for this position, it has been repeatedly cut from the college budget. This is a severe detriment to a program which prepares students for the job market.

   That an adjunct advisor is only on campus for a set number of hours means a loss of the richly diverse student population – from Carson and San Pedro to Lomita and the Peninsula – to colleges such as El Camino and its satellite campus in Compton.

2. There is no printing budget for the college newspaper or campus magazine. Print copies remain important, especially at community colleges, where yearbooks no longer exist and walk-ons include not only students, but visitors and community members who avail themselves of non-credit classes, athletic facilities and cultural events.

   This expense, which needs to be part of a line-item printing budget, can have its educational and even monetary dividends.

   Despite the current economy, ad revenues remain steady or are actually increasing for printed newspapers community college papers. Such revenue, as mentioned above, can be used to supplement journalism student attendance at conferences and printing. Online advertising is not yet a strong source of income.

3. Harbor needs to staff the classes it already has on the books to support a well rounded program, particularly in convergence curriculum. News media employment is rapidly transitioning from compartmentalization – you either write stories, or take photographs, or broadcast over the airwaves, or shoot film and announce for TV.

   Today’s journalists need to do it all: record the interview with tape recorder or digital video camera, shoot the still photos, write a story for print, edit the video and do a report for the online radio station.
Few veteran reporters or photographers have those skills, but college students, especially those at California community colleges flexible enough to adapt their curricula, are picking them up quickly and getting jobs, in computerized page design, PhotoShop, Garage Band video editing, along with the traditional, solid fundamentals of news writing classes.

4. Equipment. The newspaper at present has a single tape recorder and one camera for use by its staff to gather news. Other schools are acquiring such equipment, not always in the necessary quantities, but with a few thousand in VTEA grants, a camera bought by ASO here, some ad revenue there.

The Journalism Dept. was approved for a $5,500 VTEA grant, which was then pulled back.

Computer support. Apple computers are no longer just the preferred tool of news writers. They are the computers of choice for graphic artists, professional photographers, music composers (electronic and conventional) and cinema editors.

Support for this vital technology must be incorporated into computer maintenance.

5. Facilities. Throughout much of its history, the Harbor Tides has been housed in a variety of locations, but usually had a “home” -- a single dedicated lab space for media production.

While lab space is available at certain hours on certain days, the vagaries of gathering and disseminating news at any time in a 24/7 period necessitate a secure location where journalism students can meet to plan and produce content.

Note: the college has a TV facility, currently unused, created some 30 years ago. It would be an ideal place to house multi-media journalism.

6. Conference attendance. A highlight for community college journalists year is participation in two conferences, a SoCal regional each fall at Cal State Fullerton and, more critically, at a statewide 4-day gathering each spring in Sacramento or Los Angeles.

Earlier this year, more than 600 student journalists gathered to attend workshops conducted by professionals, compete against each other in writing, photo, editing and design contests. Their portfolios were reviewed by professionals and they had the opportunity to interface with those with whom they will be competing for jobs in the future.

Harbor College students were not able to attend. Typically, a school will ask its students to pay a portion of the conference accommodation fees, whose costs are supplemented with advertising revenue and/or funds allotted by student government.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hire a full-time journalism instructor. This is critical to the survival of the program.

2. Establish a line item printing budget sufficient to publish a student newspaper at least 10 times in a 15-week semester, as well as three editions of a campus magazine per semester in any semester that the Journalism 108 (Article Writing) course is offered.

3. Establish at least one multimedia course specific to the needs of journalists as part of the A.A. program.

4. Establish a beginning photojournalism courses as part of the A.A. program.

5. Consider re-establishing the campus radio station. Incorporate its use into the journalism course of study.

6. Establish an annual equipment budget, perhaps supplemented with Perkins funding, for the Journalism program.

7. Create a newsroom dedicated solely for the Harbor Tides. It should be in a secure location where journalism students can meet to plan and produce content. Outfit it with 20-25 Apple/Mac computers and other necessary equipment, as well as a dedicated server for journalism programs. Provide technical support and computer maintenance.

8. Provide adequate funding, perhaps by tapping sufficient student government revenue, to allow Harbor College to join journalism organizations so that its students can travel to, attend and participate in, journalism conferences as the department sees fit.