

Standard 9

Assessment of Learning Outcomes



The ultimate outcome: Students graduate and launch creative and meaningful careers

Highlights

- ❖ The school assesses undergraduate student learning through three direct measures (senior exam, aggregate internship evaluations, student e-portfolios) and three indirect measures (student survey, student competitions, alumni survey).
- ❖ In the past six years, assessment and professional input have led to two new majors, an expanded capstone course, and enhanced internship and career development programs.
- ❖ Student achievements include a 2016 collegiate Emmy for best TV magazine show and overall top 10s in writing, multimedia and broadcast, Hearst Journalism Awards.
- ❖ The M.A. program assessment uses two direct measures (e-portfolios, exit exam) and three indirect measures (awards, exit interviews, graduate employment).

Standard 9. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

- 1. Provide a copy of the unit's written plan for assessment of student learning outcomes. This plan must include the dates of its adoption and of implementation of its components.**

The undergraduate assessment plan is on the following three pages. The plan was first created in 2003 and last revised in 2016. It includes a timeline for past and future implementation.

The assessment plan describes how the school determines if student learning is occurring as the faculty intends. The plan uses six assessment measures – three direct and three indirect. The direct measure of an e-portfolio evaluation was added to the plan after being pilot-tested for two years. All six measures of assessment were applied in 2016-17.

Assessment of Student Learning

School of Communications, Elon University

initial plan, 2003; revised, 2010 and 2016

Assessment is the process of determining if students are learning what the faculty intend for them to learn. While grades represent an evaluation of student learning at an individual level, assessment is the evaluation of student learning across the breadth of a program. At its best, assessment has a transforming effect through the circular process of analyzing curriculum, instruction and student learning – and then using those findings to improve future student learning. This process requires gathering information from multiple sources to analyze what students know, understand and can do as a result of their educational experiences.

A Distinctive Approach

The school endorses the professional values and competencies formulated by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

The *Elon Eleven* is the school's distinctive way of expressing the values and competencies to students, and a specific learning outcome exists for each concept in the *Elon Eleven*. Curriculum matrices for each major identify which courses emphasize which of the values and competencies. The opening core curriculum introduces every student to at least an *awareness* of all values and competencies, and subsequent courses lead to *understanding* and *application*.

The school's *Course Handbook* lists the catalog description, course goal and primary course objectives to ensure that the values and competencies are uniformly stated in syllabi and provide sufficient consistency across multiple sections. Faculty can add additional objectives for their classes as they wish.

The *Elon Eleven* is displayed in all School of Communications classrooms. The dean personally introduces the *Elon Eleven* to students in each section of the opening course (Communications in a Global Age) and explains how the curriculum and experiences such as the required internship are designed to work together to fulfill the school's mission.

Undergraduate Assessment Measures

The school applies three direct measures and three indirect measures to assess student learning at the undergraduate level. These measures are:

Senior Examination *(direct measure)*

The school expects students to master the key content of a communications program, from knowing the First Amendment to demonstrating concepts of theory and metrics. The school administers a 45-question examination to new students in the opening course (Communications in a Global Age) and to seniors in the capstone course (Great Ideas: Issues & Research) as a way of assessing student learning from the start of the program to the end. The exam seeks to measure students' grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding of the discipline's values and competencies.

Internship Evaluations *(direct measure)*

All students in the school complete one or more professional internships before graduation, and the Internship Office gathers systematic feedback from each professional supervisor. The school analyzes the internship evaluations on an aggregate basis to determine the level of student preparedness and performance in professional work settings. The aggregate analysis reveals strengths and weaknesses related to curriculum and instruction.

e-Portfolio Evaluations *(direct measure)*

The evaluation of student portfolios is ideal for assessing skill sets such as quality of writing and applying the tools of technology. Students create an electronic portfolio in the required internship course and are encouraged to keep adding to it through course projects and participation in student media and school organizations. In their senior year, students entering the job market refine the e-portfolio to support their search. Using a rubric that evaluates the *Elon Eleven* student learning outcomes, external reviewers assess a sample of e-portfolios by academic major.

Student Survey *(indirect measure)*

Elon seniors evaluate the quality of their educational experience by participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and other periodic national surveys. The school compares and analyzes Communications student responses to university and national averages to discover issues or reveal trends over time that need to be addressed to enhance student learning.

Student Competitions *(indirect measure)*

Student success can be an external indicator of the quality of the educational experience, whether originating in classes or through student media. The school compiles successes in the Hearst Journalism Awards, Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts and other national competitions, as well as Communications student research accepted for presentation in campus and national research forums. The compilation, comparison and analysis of student success over time offers insight into the effectiveness of the instruction and experiences provided to students.

Alumni Survey *(indirect measure)*

Alumni have the ability to assess their educational experiences with the benefit of perspective. The periodic compilation, comparison and analysis of alumni responses can show patterns over time of alumni judgment about curriculum, instruction and student learning and of the short- and long-term usefulness or relevance of what they learned.

Timeline

Assessment measures implemented since the preceding accreditation site visit:

	Senior Exam	Internship Evaluations	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Student Survey	Student Competitions	Alumni Survey
2011-12	X	X		X	X	
2012-13	X	X	X	X	X	
2013-14	X	X	X	X	X	X
2014-15		X		X	X	
2015-16	X	X	X	X	X	
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X	X

Anticipated future implementation:

	Senior Exam	Internship Evaluations	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Student Survey	Student Competitions	Alumni Survey
Year 1		X	X	X	X	
Year 2	X	X		X	X	X
Year 3		X	X	X	X	
Year 4	X	X		X	X	
Year 5		X	X	X	X	X

At least four measures are reported each year. Two are direct measures (the Senior Exam or e-Portfolio Evaluations in rotation with Internship Evaluations), and two are indirect measures (Student Survey and Student Competitions, with an Alumni Survey every three years).

An additional assessment measure has arisen at the university. The Writing Excellence Initiative is the university's Quality Enhancement Plan for assessment by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Each major is required to identify key writing courses and assess the quality of writing in the senior year. When fully implemented, this initiative may be added to this assessment plan as a direct measure to assess student writing.

2. Provide the unit's definition of goals for learning that students must achieve.

The school's student learning outcomes – derived directly from ACEJMC values and competencies – are provided on the next two pages.

The *Elon Eleven* is the school's distinctive way of expressing the values and competencies, and each concept is associated with a specific student learning outcome. The *Elon Eleven* is displayed in every School of Communications classroom, and the dean introduces these values and competencies to students in all 18 sections of the opening core course each year.

Curriculum matrices for each major identify which courses emphasize which values and competencies at the levels of *awareness* (entry-level required core courses), *understanding* (entry-level required courses within a major), and *application* (upper-level required courses). The curriculum matrices for the five majors are provided after the student learning outcomes.

The school's *Course Handbook*, which will be available in the site-team workroom, lists the course description, goal and primary objectives to ensure that values and competencies are uniformly stated in syllabi and implemented consistently across multiple sections of courses.



Student Learning Outcomes

School of Communications, Elon University

Truth, accuracy and fairness

Learning outcome: The student will be able to articulate the importance of truth, accuracy and fairness in the communications process and demonstrate the ability to be fair and accurate.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and ... evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness.”

Freedom of expression

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify forms of expression that are protected by the First Amendment and apply legal principles to contemporary media issues.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press ... including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.”

Ethical ways of reasoning

Learning outcome: The student will be able to describe the philosophical underpinnings of ethical decision-making and apply ethical principles to contemporary issues in communications.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles.”

History and roles of media in society

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify significant milestones and individuals in the history of communications and understand the role and impact of media in society.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.”

Domestic and global diversity

Learning outcome: The student will be able to cultivate an awareness of the diversity of peoples and cultures in U.S. society and around the world and understand how to communicate with diverse groups.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society ... and forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.”

Write clearly and effectively

Learning outcome: The student will be able to demonstrate proficiency in the fundamentals of writing with the clarity, organization and style appropriate for writing in the disciplines.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve ... [and with] clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.”

Employ the tools of technology

Learning outcome: The student will be able to use the technologies appropriate for communications professions and produce content for multiple media platforms and applications.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.”

Use theory in producing media content

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify leading communication theories and aesthetic concepts and demonstrate the ability to apply them in the presentation of images and information.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.”

Engage in research and analysis

Learning outcome: The student will be able to describe qualitative and quantitative research methods and conduct research of communications phenomena leading to conclusions based on evidence.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.”

Apply numerical concepts

Learning outcome: The student will be able to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and interpret data related to communications research, public opinion and audience analysis.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.”

Demonstrate creative thinking

Learning outcome: The student will be able to independently engage in higher-level thought that imagines new possibilities and demonstrates innovation and creativity in professional communications.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “think critically, creatively and independently.”

Curriculum matrices

A curriculum matrix for each major is below, showing where student learning outcomes reflected in the *Elon Eleven* are primary objectives in required courses.

Dark rectangles indicate where the value or competency is a primary objective. For example, COM 100 builds student awareness in four areas: freedom of expression, ethical ways of reasoning, history and roles of media in society, and domestic and global diversity.

Light rectangles indicate potential supplemental content areas of a course. For example, while COM 210 and 220 (a classroom/lab combination) focus primarily on employing the tools of technology and using theory in producing media content, the course does address other values and competencies such as ethical issues related to digital media.

Since the faculty consider *demonstrate creative thinking* as applying to all courses, that element of the *Elon Eleven* is given mid-tone rectangles, as is the Communications Internship course because types of internships can vary so greatly, from writing to producing to research.

Journalism

	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking
COM 100 Communications in a Global Age											
COM 110 Media Writing											
COM 210 Web & Mobile Communications and COM 220 Creating Multimedia Content											
COM 250 Journalism in a Free Society											
COM 310 Reporting for the Public Good or COM 311 Broadcast News Writing											
COM 315 Multimedia News Production											
COM 320 Editing & Design or COM 351 Television News Reporting											
COM 400 Media Law & Ethics											
COM 450 Multimedia Journalism											
COM 495 Great Ideas: Issues & Research											
COM 381 Communications Internship											

Strategic Communications

	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking
COM 100 Communications in a Global Age											
COM 110 Media Writing											
COM 210 Web & Mobile Communications and COM 220 Creating Multimedia Content											
COM 232 Public Relations & Civic Responsibility											
COM 312 Strategic Writing											
COM 322 Corporate Publishing											
COM 362 Strategic Research Methods											
COM 400 Media Law & Ethics											
COM 452 Strategic Campaigns											
COM 495 Great Ideas: Issues & Research											
COM 381 Communications Internship											

Cinema & Television Arts

	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking
COM 100 Communications in a Global Age											
COM 110 Media Writing											
COM 210 Web & Mobile Communications and COM 220 Creating Multimedia Content											
COM 256 Entertainment Media											
COM 316 Writing for Television & Cinema											
COM 324 Television Production or COM 326 Cinema Production											
COM 355 The Documentary or COM 356 Film & Television Aesthetics											
COM 400 Media Law & Ethics											
COM 456 Producing for the Screen											
COM 495 Great Ideas: Issues & Research											
COM 381 Communications Internship											

Communication Design

	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking
COM 100 Communications in a Global Age											
COM 110 Media Writing											
COM 210 Web & Mobile Communications and COM 220 Creating Multimedia Content											
COM 258 Visual Communications											
COM 318 Writing for Visual Media											
COM 350 Web & Mobile Publishing											
COM 358 Design of Visual Images											
COM 400 Media Law & Ethics											
COM 458 Design Strategies & Solutions											
COM 495 Great Ideas: Issues & Research											
COM 381 Communications Internship											

Media Analytics

	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking
COM 100 Communications in a Global Age											
COM 110 Media Writing											
COM 210 Web & Mobile Communications and COM 220 Creating Multimedia Content											
COM 260 Understanding Audiences											
COM 319 Communicating Media Insights											
COM 329 Applied Media Analytics											
COM 359 Strategies for Emerging Media											
COM 400 Media Law & Ethics											
COM 460 Measuring Media Impact											
COM 495 Great Ideas: Issues & Research											
COM 381 Communications Internship											

3. Describe the collection and reporting of data from both direct and indirect assessment measures and how the unit used its analysis of the data to improve curriculum, instruction, etc. Provide copies of any end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available online.

The school has a long history of assessment, and the plan has been implemented annually since the last review. On the undergraduate level, the school uses six assessment measures:

Direct measures

Senior Examination
Aggregate Internship Evaluations
e-Portfolio Evaluations

Indirect measures

Student Survey
Student Competitions
Alumni Survey

At least four measures are applied and reported each year – two direct measures (Senior Exam or e-Portfolio Evaluations in rotation with Internship Evaluations) and two indirect measures (Student Survey and Student Competitions, with an Alumni Survey every three years).

Full end-of-year assessment reports for the past five years (data collection, results, and use of data for improvement), plus a condensed summary chart showing all quantitative assessments over the past five years, will be in the site-team workroom.

Here are highlights from the latest assessment efforts, followed by an overview of how these findings have influenced curriculum and instruction.

Senior Examination

The school administers a 45-question exam to students at the start of the opening course Communications in a Global Age and near the end of the senior capstone Great Ideas: Issues & Research. Students are not told in advance what the exam covers. The multiple-choice questions have five possible answers, so pure randomness should receive about 20 percent.

Seniors taking the exam in spring 2017 averaged 74.3 percent, while first-year students taking the exam at the start of fall 2017 classes scored 42.7 percent, a 32 percent gap. Five examples:

- 87% of seniors identify the five freedoms in the First Amendment, compared to 54% of entering students
- 93% of seniors know the fair-use doctrine in copyright law, compared to 51% of entering students
- 90% of seniors know what a news lede is, compared to 46% of entering students

- 91% of seniors know what demographics are, compared to 62% of entering students
- 99% know what a literature review is, compared to 47% of entering students

The school has administered a senior assessment exam since 2004-05, but the exam has evolved. An early version was 100 questions, half on core courses and half on each major or sequence. In 2009, the school shortened the exam to concentrate exclusively on core content. The exam was revised again in 2017 upon the determination that an exam was not appropriate for evaluating the *demonstrate creative thinking* outcome. In essence, an exam is best at evaluating knowledge of information, and an e-portfolio evaluation is best at evaluating student skill sets and creativity.

Aggregate Internship Evaluations

All students are required to complete a professional internship before graduation, and many students complete more than one. In 2016-17, 314 internships were completed for academic credit, with 77 percent of those occurring during summer.

The internship director gathers evaluations from workplace supervisors, reviews student work submitted from the internship, and assigns a grade, which is an individual student evaluation. For programmatic assessment to occur, the school analyzes the aggregate evaluations submitted by these professional supervisors to identify strengths and weaknesses that student interns collectively brought to the workplace.

The annual analysis reveals a high satisfaction level with Elon communications students and strong performance on student learning outcomes. Supervisors collectively marked the top two responses (agree or strongly agree) at the 95 percent level or above in terms of student performance on all 11 of the *Elon Eleven* values and competencies (a 5-point scale, omitting ‘not applicable’). Supervisors collectively gave Elon interns a 99 percent favorable rating on two items: *ethical ways of reasoning* (85 percent marking the top response) and *employing the tools of technology* (81 percent marking the top response).

It didn’t surprise us that students are valued in the workplace for their technological savvy, and it pleases us that students are seen as ethical thinkers. Overall, 97 percent of employers indicated they would recommend their Elon intern for a permanent position with the company or organization when the time comes, up from the year before when 90 percent of employers said so.

e-Portfolio Evaluations

After being pilot-tested for two years, e-portfolio evaluations have joined the assessment mix as a direct measure. In spring 2017, a stratified sample of seniors in the Great Ideas capstone seminar were required to submit an e-portfolio at the time of their interview with one of 30 professionals participating in the school’s Internship/Career Showcase & e-Portfolio Review.

About 120 juniors and seniors interacted with communications professionals at the event, and the professionals evaluated 53 senior e-portfolios during the individual 30-minute interviews.

Professionals were highly positive when evaluating student e-portfolios. Overall, 96 percent said the portfolio was high in quality and 96 percent said the writing was clear, 92 percent said the portfolio contained an appropriate number and variety of artifacts (texts, graphics, photos, audio, video and/or multimedia), 91 percent said the artifacts exemplified ability, and 89 percent said the portfolio was well organized and easily accessible. In turn, students reported that the conversations with professionals about their portfolios were beneficial.

The school continues to refine the guidelines for e-portfolio production and procedures for implementation. In response to last year's pilot, the length of time for individual appointments was doubled in length. In the coming year, faculty will consider whether the evaluation rubric should focus more specifically on four student learning outcomes related to competencies (*write clearly and effectively, employ the tools of technology, use theory in producing media content, and demonstrate creative thinking*) rather than ask professionals to assess values, too.

Student Survey

Elon participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning. In 2016, more than 322,000 students at 560 colleges and universities participated in NSSE. At Elon, 347 seniors completed the survey, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment provided the School of Communications with a breakout of the 60 responses by Communications seniors. Below are key findings (results are the percentage of students who marked the top two of four possible responses; an asterisk marks items directly related to *Elon Eleven* student learning outcomes):

Evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution (excellent, good):

Elon Communications seniors	89%
NSSE national cohort	86%

Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions in other ways (very often, often):

Elon Communications seniors	90%
NSSE national cohort	74%

Made a course presentation (very often, often):

Elon Communications seniors	80%
NSSE national cohort	57%

* Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills (very much, quite a bit):

Elon Communications seniors	80%
NSSE national cohort	68%

* Writing clearly and effectively (very much, quite a bit):

Elon Communications seniors	82%
NSSE national cohort	73%

* Analyzing numerical and statistical information (very much, quite a bit):

Elon Communications seniors	36%
NSSE national cohort	63%

* Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics (very much, quite a bit):

Elon Communications seniors	71%
NSSE national cohort	63%

* Thinking critically and analytically (very much, quite a bit):

Elon Communications seniors	87%
NSSE national cohort	84%

Elon historically participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement every year. In 2017, the university plans instead to participate in the Higher Education Research Institute's College Senior Survey. The intent is to use other surveys with the NSSE every three years.

Student Competitions

Student success in external competitions can be an indirect measure of the quality of the educational experience, and Elon students have achieved significant recognition on the national level in recent years. Here are 18 examples spanning the breadth of the school:

- Best of Show for student television newscast, Elon Local News, Festival of Media Arts, Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas, 2017
- Cumulative national top 10s in the Hearst Journalism Awards competitions in writing and multimedia, 2016, and in broadcast, 2017
- First-place Mark of Excellence Award for photo illustration, Society of Professional Journalists, Stephanie Hays, 2017
- One of five national finalists for PRWeek Student of the Year (Hattie Hoskins, 2016, and Rachel Hobbs, 2017)
- One of five national finalists, Coca-Cola / Regal Films competition, Lillian Engel and Azzurra Catucci, 2017
- First place in sports analytics (student team from business and communications schools), Society of American Baseball Research, Phoenix, 2017
- Collegiate Emmy for best student TV magazine show, "30 Minutes" (with mentoring from CBS' "60 Minutes" staff), College Television Awards, 2016
- Gold and silver ADDYs for work by the Live Oak Communications student agency, American Advertising Federation, Triangle chapter, 2016
- Online Pacemaker Award, Associated Collegiate Press, *The Pendulum* student newspaper, 2016
- First place, international multimedia news story, International Division of AEJMC, 2016

- One of three national finalists, Coca-Cola / Regal Films competition, Eric Hernandez, 2016
- Best writer award, multimedia short course, National Association of Black Journalists, 2016
- Student photographer of the year, White House News Photographers Association, Al Drago, 2015
- National president of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and Grand Prize recipient, Arthur W. Page Society, Heather Harder, 2014-15
- National first place for multimedia package, College Media Association, Apple Awards, 2013 and again in 2014
- Bronze medal for documentary, Student Academy Awards, “Win or Lose,” Dan Koehler and Liv Dubendorf, 2013
- National champion, Sprite Film Competition, “Break the Night,” 2013
- National chapter of the year, Elon’s Communications honor society Lambda Pi Eta, National Communication Association, 2013

Later in this standard, item 5 provides a more extensive listing of student awards and achievements.

Alumni Survey

The School of Communications conducts an alumni survey every three years, asking graduates about the quality of their educational experiences at Elon and what they now are doing. A total of 503 alumni responded in the spring 2017 survey. Virtually all respondents said they are currently employed, and two-thirds of those are in a communications field. About one in five have earned a graduate degree or are currently in a graduate program.

The survey was structured around the student learning outcomes based on the *Elon Eleven*. Here are combined results of the top two categories on a 4-point scale (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

Valuing truth, accuracy and fairness	87%
Valuing freedom of expression	83%
Valuing ethical ways of reasoning	88%
Valuing history and roles of media in society	76%
Valuing domestic and global diversity	69%
Writing clearly and effectively	89%
Employing the tools of technology	84%
Using theory in producing media content	54%
Engaging in research and analysis	68%
Applying numerical concepts	32%
Demonstrating creative thinking	90%

Graduates were asked to identify the greatest strengths of the program. Given the opportunity to offer multiple responses, alumni identified the faculty and staff (85%), courses and curriculum (54%), internship program (54%), technology (54%), and student media and related opportunities (47%). Asked what needs to be strengthened for future students, alumni focused on multiplatform writing, technology, production skills, internships, emerging media, and access to alumni and professionals. They specifically cited the need for data analytics, a grasp of Excel spreadsheets, business courses, and immersive media such as virtual reality.

Using Assessment to Improve Student Learning (“Completing the Loop”)

Programmatic change can flow from many fountains – shortcomings discovered through formal assessment of student learning, insights from professionals and alumni, new initiatives at a university, and the evolving interests of faculty and the arrival of new faculty.

In response to assessment findings and other inputs, this section focuses on four areas of programmatic change since the 2011-12 ACEJMC review and cites two assessment results that have been shared with faculty for future consideration.

- ◆ Guided by assessment results and developments in the professions, the faculty embarked on a comprehensive full-year curriculum review that led to new and revised majors. In 2014, the school created majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics, revised Journalism into a multiplatform major, and revised the Cinema & Television Arts major to include a B.F.A. option.

The Communication Design major seeks to enhance the *Elon Eleven* competencies of *use theory in producing media content* and *demonstrate creative thinking*. In an increasingly visual world, the design of media and communication messages is important, and these messages may involve the design of print publications, advertisements, and websites or mobile media. New courses include Visual Communications, Writing for Visual Media, Design of Visual Images, and Design Strategies & Solutions.

The Media Analytics major is in response to strong professional guidance as well as a desire to improve the competency that assesses most poorly: *apply numerical concepts*. The major also supports the concept of *engage in research and analysis*. Students learn measurement procedures, analytical tools, and strategies for various media platforms by focusing on the study of audiences as creators, receivers and users of messages. New courses include Understanding Audiences, Communicating Media Insights, Applied Media Analytics, Strategies for Emerging Media, and Measuring Media Impact.

The multiplatform Journalism major merged separate print/online and broadcast sequences by creating Journalism in a Free Society as a conceptual course for all students and adding a common skills-based course called Multimedia News Production. The major concludes with a capstone course titled Multimedia Journalism.

The B.F.A. in Cinema & Television Arts was established to further develop the ability to *use theory in producing media content* and *demonstrate creative thinking*. The degree option requires additional conceptual and production courses, participation in the Elon in Los Angeles program, and a thesis project. Also, the existing bachelor's degree in this major was revised to end separate sequences. New courses include Entertainment Media, Writing for Television & Cinema, Film & Television Aesthetics, and Producing for the Screen.

- ◆ The school has made two revisions to its core curriculum. It added Web & Mobile Communications as a 1-credit-hour partner to the Creating Multimedia Content lab course. The purpose was to provide greater conceptual understanding of newer communication forms and demystify basic technology skills (such as coding) used to create web pages. Also, the school expanded the 2-hour Great Ideas: Issues & Research course to 4 credit hours, doubling the amount of classroom time for contemporary communications issues and providing greater focus on research to enhance applying numerical concepts. Each year, professors of the 15-student seminar identify common issues addressed in all sections of the course. This past year, faculty focused on ethics and law, communication technology, audiences and consumption of media, diversity and inclusion, and power and knowledge. Because students may submit their research papers for competitive blind review to the school's *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, the course now has a greater emphasis on *apply numerical concepts*.

- ◆ The school has elevated the quality of the required internship program for students, based on assessment feedback from both students and employers. Almost all employers (97%) responded in 2016-17 that they would recommend their Elon intern for a permanent position with their company or organization. In addition, a data comparison from surveys of Communications students reported in prior self-studies and the 2016-17 survey reveals an increasingly higher student satisfaction rate (agree and strongly agree on a 5-point scale):

	2004-05	2010-11	2016-17
Internship in a quality work environment	NA	85%	94%
Adequate employer training and supervision	75%	85%	91%
Given meaningful and challenging work	75%	78%	83%
Received good feedback from supervisor	74%	85%	92%
Elon prepared me for my internship	60%	77%	71%
<i>Elon did not prepare me (bottom two responses)</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4%</i>

The school's full-time internship director, Nagatha Tonkins, emails each student a list of websites tailored to their interests to aid them in the internship search, provides weekly

“Hot Internships” lists to Communications students, made 24 classroom presentations about the internship program, and conducted 405 student appointments last year. She also helps students prepare for their internships through required seminars titled *INTERNow*. The spring *INTERNow* prepares students for summer or fall internships with sessions titled “Professional Practices for a Successful Internship” and “How to Put Together a Winning e-Portfolio/Dynamic Reel.” Similar seminars are offered in December for winter term or spring internships. While the school may cringe that some students report not feeling prepared, the data from both employers and students show strong internship experiences. Twelve years ago, 12 percent of students marked the bottom two categories (disagree and strongly disagree) when asked if they felt prepared for an internship; that number is 4 percent in the latest survey.

- ◆ Career services for Communications students have been greatly enhanced. The school’s first self-study noted, “A purpose of assessment is to determine where the school needs to improve. One area appears to be career advising.” In 2008, the university added a staff position in career services, housed in the School of Communications to work specifically with Communications majors. In 2014, the university added a second position focused on corporate and employer relations to support the School of Communications. The results have been clear. In the 2004 NSSE survey data, 38 percent of Communications students reported they often or very often talked about career plans with a faculty/staff member. In the 2010 NSSE results, that number was 50 percent. In the 2016 NSSE survey, that number is now 65 percent.

Two assessment results have been shared with faculty for future consideration. One is a disappointing finding from the senior exam, namely, that only about half of seniors know how to properly interpret a public opinion poll with a margin of error. This finding was shared with the faculty at the August 2017 retreat, with a suggestion that teachers of the Great Ideas seminar consider building a better understanding of public opinion polling into their sections.

Also, a surprising finding from the 2017 alumni survey is how many alumni recommend that students be adept at using Excel spreadsheets. This relates to the *apply numerical concepts* competency that each assessment measure seems to rank last in effectiveness. This assessment result, too, was shared at the faculty retreat and will be a topic for discussion this year.

4. Describe the involvement of journalism and mass communication professionals, including alumni, in the assessment process.

The School of Communications Advisory Board consists of 25 or more professionals who come to campus each semester to interact with the school’s leadership, faculty and students. Michael Radutzky, senior producer for “60 Minutes” and an Elon parent, is board chair.

The board played a central role in Elon's creation of the nation's first Media Analytics major by advocating its need in the communications professions. Through the years, the board has interacted with faculty about the school's curriculum and programs, and each semester the professionals on the board serve as guest speakers in classes during their day-long meeting.

Professionals also are heavily involved in the assessment process. On the undergraduate level, internship evaluations by work-site supervisors and e-portfolio evaluations by professionals are valued, with aggregate data from these direct measures analyzed and reported for program assessment.

Internship supervisors evaluate student work at the conclusion of the internship using a standard rubric to analyze *Elon Eleven* student learning outcomes. As summarized in the aggregate internship assessment report, employers consistently give high scores on all learning outcomes. In addition, a high percentage of employers – between 90 and 97 percent over the past five years – said they would recommend Elon interns for a permanent position in their company or organization.

Student e-portfolios are evaluated by visiting professionals at the Internship/Career Showcase & e-Portfolio Review. Students are matched with professionals related to their academic discipline. During individual 30-minute sessions, professionals discuss career opportunities and evaluate the student's e-portfolio using a standard rubric. Evaluators are provided a link to a selected student's e-portfolio and a link to an online evaluation instrument.

The school's alumni are an increasing force to help assess the quality of the educational experience. Since the School of Communications began only in 2000 (and was a department for 12 years before that), the vast majority of the school's 4,000+ alumni are in their 20s and 30s. They are in an excellent position to bring current Elon students into their organizations as interns or as new employees. Many alumni speak in classes when they return to campus, and a number are invited to be on panels for current students at Homecoming and other times. Alumni provide the school with valuable feedback about trends in the workplace, and some have assisted as well in formal assessment mechanisms such as e-portfolio evaluation.

Content, continued

Communication Design

Writing Samples

- Advertisements, promotional & public service materials
- Mock-ups, wireframes, user profiles & workflows
- Scripts, site maps & storyboards
- Articles & professional writing
- Newsletters & documents
- Brochures & pamphlets
- Multimedia presentations
- Information graphics
- Critique statements
- Research papers
- Contracts

Produced Works

- Book, magazine, poster, newsletter, brochure, flyer & pamphlet design
- Signage, way-finding & instructional design
- Brand extension & logo development
- Mock-ups & user interface design
- Website & multimedia designs
- Photography & package design

Media Analytics

Writing Samples

- Research reports
- Media usage measurement analyses
- Social media insights reports
- Brand & competitor audits
- Policy briefs & proposals
- Metrics & methodology descriptions
- Executive summaries
- Research papers

Produced Works

- Excel data spreadsheets
- Graphic visualizations of data
- Written reports & proposals
- Powerpoint & multimedia presentations
- Campaign analytics
- Basic survey research reports

... More than four in five employers (83%) say an electronic portfolio would be useful to them in ensuring that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their company or organization."

— Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)
Hart Research Associates, 2013 Survey of Employers

ePortfolio checklist

- Choose a platform. We suggest Weebly, Wix or WordPress.
- Choose a website name — it should be professional. Use your own name, if possible
- Each section of an ePortfolio should be its own page; bio page, resume page, contact page and content pages
- Build a site map — think about how you will organize your content
- An "About Me" section should be written as a concise business bio in the third person. Be sure to protect personal and confidential information.
- Get prior written approval for included client work
- Provide context for work you have completed. List your role, the client and technology used
- Match your ePortfolio with your profession
- Keep it simple: a white background, simple font choices and let your work be the showcase
- Embed videos instead of linking to YouTube, etc.
- Buy a hard drive to archive your ePortfolio work

Getting Started

For content assistance, contact Amber McCraw, amcraw@elon.edu, assistant director of career services, School of Communications.

For technical assistance, contact Kenny Wilson, kwilson30@elon.edu, coordinator of interactive projects, School of Communications.

ePORTFOLIOS
Stand apart in the resume crowd

ELON UNIVERSITY | School of Communications

ePortfolios: Building Your Brand, Showcasing Your Skills

Wednesday
Sept. 14, 6:30 p.m.



Katherine Nolan

Account Executive
Trone Brand Energy



Joy Daniels

HR Generalist
Capstrat

Sponsored by the Student Professional Development Center and the School of Communications

McEwen Communications Building, Room 212 — Free Pizza for Attendees

5. List major awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years. Limit to five a year.

School of Communications students have been successful in competitive settings. A short list of student awards for the past five years is provided below. A full list will be provided in the site-team workroom.

2017

“Best of Show,” Elon Local News (ELN) for best news show airing three days a week or less, Festival of Media Arts, Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas

National Top 10, broadcast news competitions, Hearst Journalism Awards

One of five national finalists, Coca-Cola and Regal Films student filmmakers competition

Recipient (Elon's first-ever), Eaton Foundation Scholarship, presented by BEA to students studying electronic media

Journalism student selected, Carnegie-Knight News21, summer journalism initiative, Arizona State University

2016

Collegiate Emmy, TV magazine show, for “30 Minutes” production, College Television Awards

Online Pacemaker Award (first-ever), The Pendulum, presented by Associated Collegiate Press

National Top 10, writing and multimedia competitions, Hearst Journalism Awards

First Place, International Multimedia News Story Contest, International Communications Division, AEJMC

Best Writer Award, Multimedia Short Course, National Association of Black Journalists

2015

Student photographer of the year, White House News Photographers Association, “Eyes of History” competition

National Top 20 overall, Hearst Journalism Awards

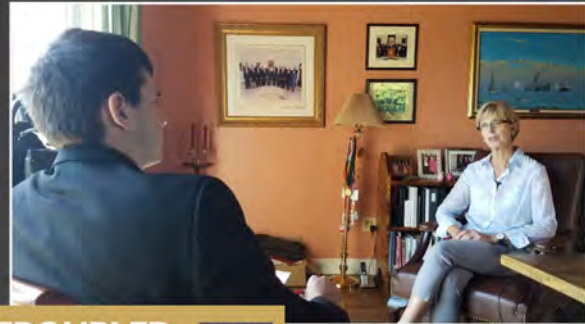
First place awards, national Society of Professional Journalists, for breaking news (under 10,000 students), breaking news photography, general news photography, and feature news photography

Second place, Elon Local News (morning newscast), College Television Award

Second place, narrative student video and student interactive multimedia, Festival of Media Arts, Broadcast Education Association

Our News21 Fellows

The **Carnegie-Knight News21 Initiative** brings together the nation's top journalism students each summer to produce a multimedia, investigative reporting project. Hosted at the **Cronkite School** at Arizona State University, News21 has covered topics ranging from food safety to gun rights and regulations and the challenges facing veterans returning home.



AS PART OF HIS SUPERFUND REPORTING, Anderson contacted former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrators and landed a sit-down interview with Christine Whitman, former governor of New Jersey.

In summer 2017, Elon University journalism and media analytics double major **Bryan Anderson '18** (top picture, left) and 29 students from 18 universities collaborated on "Troubled Water." Anderson investigated the Superfund program, a U.S. federal government initiative designed to fund the cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances and pollutants.

Past Elon Participants



2016
Max Garland '16
Voting Wars



2015
Michael Bodley '16
America's Weed Rush



2014
Kate Murphy '15
Gun Wars: Rights & Regulations in America



2012
Caitlin O'Donnell '13 & Kassondra Cloos '13
Voting Rights

2014

National Top 20 overall, Hearst Journalism Awards

National president, Public Relations Student Society of America. Strategic Communications senior Heather Harder was elected as the first Elon student to lead this national organization.

Grand Prize, case study competition, Arthur W. Page Society. A student received a \$5,000 award for her case study of an anti-obesity campaign.

Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper, *The Pendulum*, Society of Professional Journalists

Second place, Elon Local News (ELN) morning show, Alternative Competition, College Television Awards

2013

National fan vote and judge's award, Sprite Films Competition, for a 60-second branded spot titled "Break the Night." First time the competition has had a double winner since it began in 1998.

National Chapter of the Year Award, Elon chapter of Lambda Pi Eta communications honor society, presented by the National Communication Association

Chapter of the Year (second time), Elon chapter of PPJ, Region 2, Society of Professional Journalists

First place (4,000-10,000 students), Newspaper Website Competition, *The Pendulum*; also first place, Best Multimedia Package, College Media Association

First Place, (interdisciplinary team), Deloitte Case Competition that provides students with an inside look at the world of consulting by provided the opportunity to simulate project preparation, solutions and client presentation

Full assessment reports of student awards also include university awards and honors such as induction into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society for arts and sciences students; Omicron Delta Kappa, which recognizes students who provide outstanding leadership; Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline academic honor society; and the Lumen Prize, the university's top award to celebrate academic achievement. The reports also include summaries of scholarly presentations and publications in the *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, school awards that recognize outstanding seniors in each curriculum area, and sponsored distinctions that recognize a consistently high level of academic performance.

6. List online by specialty each member of the graduating class of 2014 and those graduates' current jobs. If practical, please give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list. Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the professions and to improve curriculum and instruction.

Of the 235 Communications students in the 2014 graduating class, the school was able to identify 96 percent of jobs and locations. Only 10 are unknown. A list of 2014 graduates and their current job titles is provided in the appendix and will be in the site-team workroom.

The school maintains regular contact with alumni through four electronic newsletters a year. The e-newsletters are full of stories and links about current students, faculty and alumni and has an introductory column by the dean.

The school's webpage also provides graduates with the opportunity to maintain contact with the school. Every three years, the school administers an alumni survey. In 2017, 503 of the 4,516 graduates for which the university has contact information responded to the school's alumni survey.

Professional master's program

7. **Attach the unit's written assessment plan for the master's program. Provide end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available online.**

The assessment plan for the M.A. in Interactive Media degree is on three following pages. The plan was created in 2010, shortly after the graduate program began, and updated in 2017. On the graduate level, the school uses five assessment measures, all administered in 2016-17:

Direct measures

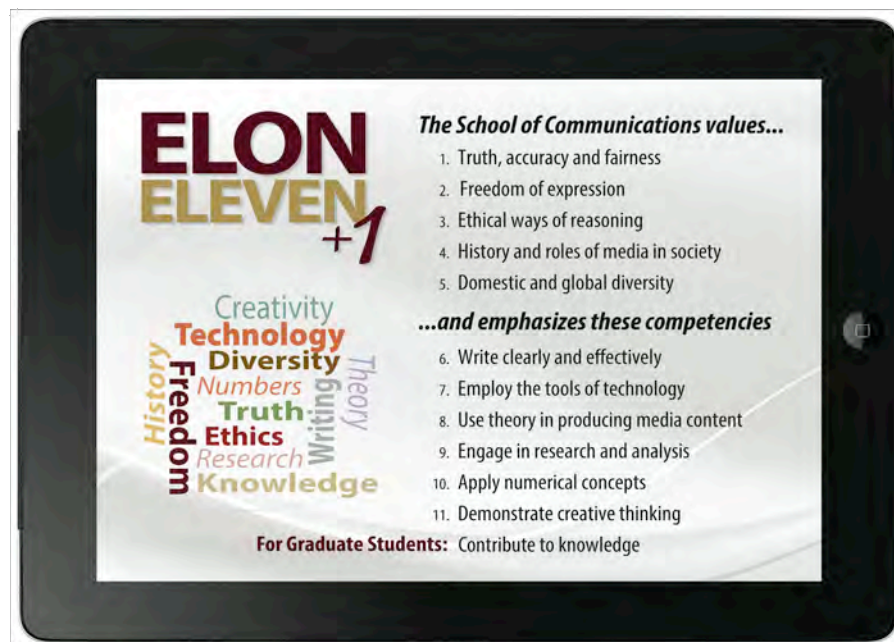
- e-Portfolio Evaluations
- Entry and Exit Examination

Indirect measures

- Awards and Presentations
- Exit Interviews
- Graduate Employment

End-of-year assessment reports (data collection, results, and use of data for improvement) will be in the site-team workbook.

Consistent with ACEJMC expectations, the graduate program added *contribute to knowledge* to the *Elon Eleven*. The learning outcome is “Contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the abilities to strategically plan and create interactive content for the public good.”



M.A. in Interactive Media curriculum matrix

A curriculum matrix for the graduate program in interactive media is below, showing where student learning outcomes reflected in the *Elon Eleven+1* are primary objectives in required courses.

Dark rectangles indicate where the value or competency is a primary objective. For example, COM 550 Producing Interactive Media focuses in four areas: roles of interactive media in society, tools of technology, theory in producing media content, and numerical concepts. One square should be specifically noted. Interactive Writing & Design focuses on “writing code” as a central component of interactive media. Other courses where writing is a primary objective have the more traditional meaning of putting words together clearly and effectively.

Light rectangles indicate potential supplemental content areas of a course. For example, while COM 560 Interactive Media Strategies focuses primarily on research and numbers, the course may address other values and competencies such as communicating to diverse audiences.

The additional expectation in professional master’s programs – *contribute to knowledge* – is accomplished through the fly-in course Interactive Project for the Public Good in winter term and the Interactive Media Capstone in spring term.

	We value...				...and emphasize these competencies							Graduate only	
	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking	12 Contribute to knowledge	
COM 500 Seminar in Law and Ethics*													
COM 510 Seminar in Media Writing*													
COM 520 Digital Media Workshop													
COM 530 Theory & Audience Analysis													
COM 540 Interactive Writing & Design													
COM 550 Producing Interactive Media													
COM 560 Interactive Media Strategies													
COM 565 Visual Aesthetics													
COM 570 Interactive Project for the Public Good													
COM 590 Interactive Media Capstone													

* preparatory seminar courses required only for students who did not complete equivalent undergraduate courses

Assessment Plan, M.A. in Interactive Media

School of Communications, Elon University

The mission of the M.A. in Interactive Media degree is to prepare students to think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.

Assessment is the process of determining if students are learning what the faculty intend for them to learn. While grades represent an evaluation of student learning at an individual level, assessment is the evaluation of student learning across the breadth of a program. At its best, assessment has a transforming effect through the circular process of analyzing curriculum, instruction and student learning – and then using those findings to improve future student learning. This process requires gathering information from multiple sources to analyze what students know, understand and can do as a result of their educational experiences.

A Distinctive Approach

The school endorses the professional values and competencies formulated by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

The Elon Eleven is the school’s distinctive way of expressing the values and competencies to students, and a specific learning outcome exists for each concept in the Elon Eleven. Graduate programs have an additional ACEJMC expectation: contribute to knowledge. The learning outcome is, “Contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the ability to strategically plan and create interactive content for the public good.”

A curriculum matrix for the M.A. in Interactive Media program identifies which courses emphasize which of the values and competencies. The school’s *Course Handbook* lists the catalog description, course goal and primary course objectives of graduate courses to ensure that these are uniformly stated in syllabi and provide sufficient consistency across multiple sections. Faculty can add additional objectives for their classes as they wish.

The Elon Eleven, with the additional graduate program expectation, is displayed in iMedia classrooms. When new iMedia students arrive, the curriculum is explained in terms of how it is designed to fulfill the program’s mission and the accreditation values and competencies.

Graduate Assessment Measures

The M.A. in Interactive Media program uses two direct measures and three indirect measures to assess student learning. These measures are:

e-Portfolio Evaluations (direct measure)

Graduate students prepare an online portfolio as part of their course of study, and the school sends a representative sample of student portfolios from the capstone course to professionals in the interactive media field for an assessment of the quality and usability of the portfolio. The e-portfolios typically include team projects from the Interactive Projects for the Public Good course when all students go abroad during winter term.

Entry and Exit Examination (direct measure)

Students need to grasp key concepts in the interactive media program. The school administers a pre- and post-test to measure the learning of students and their grasp of knowledge and degree of understanding of interactive media. The exam is given to students poised to graduate and then, a few months later, to the class of entering students, ensuring that no student contaminates results by taking the exam twice.

Awards and Presentations (indirect measure)

Awards and other forms of recognition reflect on the quality of work by interactive media students. This measure can include creative activity of high merit as well as scholarly works accepted for presentation or publication.

Exit Interviews (indirect measure)

The graduate program director conducts individual exit interviews with members of the graduating class to learn their perceptions and to gather ideas for program improvements. The exit interviews probe whether courses and experiences collectively achieve the program's student learning outcomes as intended.

Graduate Employment (indirect measure)

The success of graduates in the marketplace is a measure of program quality. The school collects employment data on its graduates to assess if the graduate program is successfully preparing them for positions in media or other roles that use interactive media skills.

Timeline

Assessment measures implemented since the preceding accreditation site visit:

	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Entry and Exit Exam	Awards and Presentations	Exit Interviews	Graduate Employment
2011-12	X	X		X	X
2012-13	X	X		X	X
2013-14	X	X		X	X
2014-15		X		X	X
2015-16	X	X		X	X
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X

Anticipated future implementation:

	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Entry and Exit Exam	Awards and Presentations	Exit Interviews	Graduate Employment
Year 1	X	X	X	X	X
Year 2	X	X		X	X
Year 3	X	X	X	X	X
Year 4	X	X		X	X
Year 5	X	X	X	X	X

Two direct measures (e-Portfolio Evaluations and Entry/Exit Exam) have been reported each year along with at least two indirect measures (Exit Interviews and Graduate Employment, with periodic Awards and Presentations), except for only one direct measure in 2014-15.

An additional assessment measure has arisen at the university. The Writing Excellence Initiative is the university's Quality Enhancement Plan for assessment by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Each major is required to identify key writing courses and assess the quality of writing nearing graduation. When fully implemented, this initiative may be added to this assessment plan as a direct measure to assess student writing.

*The M.A. in Interactive Media program began in 2009.
The initial assessment plan was adopted by the faculty
in 2010 and updated in 2017.*

Here are highlights from the latest assessment efforts of the graduate program, followed by an overview of how these findings have influenced curriculum and instruction. Annual reports and evaluation instruments will be in the site-team workroom.

e-Portfolio Evaluations

Since 2011, professionals have been asked on a near-annual basis to evaluate end-of-year portfolios of interactive media students. The e-portfolio is a collection of digital artifacts accessible online that may include text, graphics, photographs, audio, video and multimedia documents and projects. In spring 2017, evaluations were completed and returned for 18 of the 25 total students.

Overall, iMedia students produced good to excellent portfolios, according to the professionals who evaluated them. For example, 94 percent of e-portfolios were judged to have employed the tools of technology well. (It should be noted here that one professional gave a portfolio all “strongly disagree” marks. The evaluator’s comments were not critical, so he may have been confused about the direction of the evaluation scale and meant to mark “strongly agree,” but we decided to report the responses as submitted.) In another example, 78 percent marked the top two categories of a 5-point scale on whether the portfolios demonstrated creative thinking.

To assess contribution to knowledge, the iMedia program combined four items: research and analysis, number and variety of artifacts, organization and accessibility of artifacts, and high quality and attractiveness of artifacts. Professionals marked the top two responses 70 percent of the time on this combination of categories. One takeaway is that student portfolios need to be more descriptive in what students learned and did in creating the artifacts. As an example, almost a quarter of the evaluations marked “not applicable” when asked if portfolios reflected using theory in producing media content.

Entry and Exit Examination

Incoming graduate students took an exam on concepts and skills related to interactive media on their first day of class in August 2016 and again in May 2017 at the completion of the course of study. The purpose is to learn what students know when they enter the program and what they know when they are on the verge of graduating.

Overall, graduating students averaged an 80 percent on the exam, compared to 40 percent when they entered the program. A few examples from the exam:

- 96% of exiting students understand the conceptual framework of media users having a more interactive role in the creation and distribution of content, compared to 41% as entering students
- 92% of exiting students understand information architecture of an interface, compared to 37% as entering students

- 100% of exiting students know of website URL icons, compared to 31% as entering students
- 80% of exiting students grasp interactive design techniques associated with gamification, compared to 40% as entering students

The greatest differences understandably were in *employ the tools of technology* (an average of 39% entering, 93% exiting) and *demonstrate creative thinking* (44% entering, 100% exiting). The smallest difference was in *apply numerical concepts* (48% entering, 70% exiting).

The assessment exam is based on knowledge that faculty believe students should obtain during the 10-month course of study. Some students (or entire cohorts) come in with a sizable body of knowledge in an area such as web design while other students or cohorts do not, causing a fluctuation in entering scores. Also, students may know a concept but not the term. “Leading” is an example of this. The term is derived from the days of hand-setting type and providing extra lead spacers between letters in words to justify lines or for readability. Students quickly learn and retain how to create “leading” within their digital work, but the archaic term may be lost on them.

Awards and Presentations

Student awards and presentations at conferences provide anecdotal evidence of the knowledge and experience that students gain in the graduate program. The website that an iMedia team created for a nonprofit in the Dominican Republic through the winter term fly-in course won first place for interactive multimedia at the 2017 Broadcast Education Association convention. Another Elon team project tied for third place in the same BEA competition. In spring 2017, five iMedia students presented research at the Global Communication Association conference in Greensboro, N.C.

When considered in the context of a 10-month graduate program with a modest number of students enrolled, two national production awards and five conference presentations are impressive. These competitions and scholarly presentations provide anecdotal evidence that graduate students value and have a high level of competence in student learning outcomes and achieve the three major goals of the graduate program: think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.

This is the first year that awards and presentations have been used as an indirect measure of assessment. The graduate program will continue to explore ways to encourage students to submit their creative works for external review and provide opportunities for students to produce scholarly works that *contribute to knowledge*.

Exit Interviews

To learn student perceptions of the iMedia program and gather ideas for improvements, the graduate director conducted individual exit interviews in May 2017 at the end of the program,

as he does each year. In these candid and informal interviews, students are asked to assess the program’s strengths and weaknesses and where they see the program taking them as they move into the professional world.

Students said the best part of the program is the breadth of knowledge and skill they gained in a 10-month period. One student said, “We learn a lot, and we learn it well.” Another student added, “There was not one best thing about the program, but it was the program in total. It gave me the ability to turn around my career goals in a short time.” Students also cited the January-term course Interactive Project for the Public Good as a program superlative. While students appreciated the out-of-country experience, they talked more about the ability to work with real-world clients on projects that offer the potential for real impact. Students lauded the faculty, the variety of courses offered, and their ability to master software and solve problems in creating interactive projects. One student said, “I am confident now that whatever I encounter, I can figure it out and do it.”

The program’s length also is seen as a weakness, with many students saying they would have liked the option of extending the program into the summer or longer. (The school plans to explore ways to expand iMedia by making it part of a longer and more immersive MFA.) Students also wished they had learned JavaScript and had more time on video instruction.

The School of Communications has established learning outcomes that reflect the Elon Eleven values and competencies plus the graduate program expectation of *contribute to knowledge*. Students were asked to indicate whether the learning outcomes were achieved through the iMedia curriculum. Given the option to answer yes/maybe/no, every student said yes in terms of four outcomes: *employ the tools of technology*, *use theory in producing media content*, *demonstrate creative thinking* and *contribute to knowledge*. The outlier was *apply numerical concepts* with 16 yes responses, 5 maybe and 4 no responses. It was the only learning outcome that received negative responses; others had one or more maybes.

Responses of students asked if values and competencies are addressed in curriculum and instruction	1 Truth, accuracy and fairness	2 Freedom of expression	3 Ethical ways of reasoning	4 History/roles of media in society	5 Domestic and global diversity	6 Write clearly and effectively	7 Employ the tools of technology	8 Use theory in producing media content	9 Engage in research and analysis	10 Apply numerical concepts	11 Demonstrate creative thinking	12 Contribute to knowledge
Yes	20	23	21	20	24	24	25	25	24	16	25	25
Maybe	5	2	4	5	1	1			1	5		
No										4		

Graduate Employment

Because the master's degree program is a professional one, its aim is to prepare students to enter the world of media or in a profession that uses interactive media skills. The success of graduates in finding positions is an indirect measure of program quality.

The school seeks to stay in touch with all graduates, and Career Services continues to work with students in job searches after they graduate. In 2017, the school reported 9-month-out employment data on the 36 students who graduated in May 2016. All but three (92%) had full-time positions after nine months (and all but one who has lost contact are now employed). Below is a table of students from the 2016 graduating class, their job title, company, and city of employment.

Salma Altantawi	2016	Bilingual Content Editor	Microsoft	Dubai, UAE
Tyler Anderson	2016	UX Designer	Amazon Web Services	Seattle, WA
Timothy Babiasz	2016	Digital Marketing Specialist	ShopBot Tools	Durham, NC
Francis Badger	2016	Jr MultiMedia Designer / Video Producer	Lenovo	Morrisville, NC
Hunter Barnhardt	2016	Associate Director of Digital Strategy	Chatham Hall School	Chatham, VA
Lauren Brame	2016	Mobile UX / UI Designer	Punch Technologies	Charlotte, NC
Parker Brown	2016			
Haley Burton	2016	Marketing Coordinator	Nintex	Bellview, WA
Richard Clegg	2016	Digital Media Designer	Compass Group	Charlotte, NC
Bethany Coats	2016	Digital Designer	Blue Corona	Charlotte, NC
Chiara Costanzo	2016	Corporate Trainee Brand Strategist	Loop It	NYC, NY
Carolyn Crenshaw	2016	Graphic Designer	Direct General	Nashville, TN
Catherine Donick	2016	PR & Marketing Director	Proof Eyewear	Boise, ID
Carolyn Fonzi	2016	Graphic Designer	Fifth Letter	Winston-Salem, NC
Kelly Foran	2016	Incubator Program	Groundwork Labs	Durham, NC
Victoria Foxwood	2016	Instructional Designer	Genworth Financial	Raleigh, NC
Michael Garland	2016	UX/UI Designer	The Call Box	Dallas, TX
Jacob Grady	2016	Web Designer	BB&T	Raleigh, NC
Olivia Gray	2016	Teacher	Young Rembrandt's Franchise	
Caranita Harrelson	2016	Freelance		Atlanta, GA
Tarah Holland	2016	Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions	Elon University	Elon, NC
Nicole McEwan	2016	Graphic Designer	Health First	NYC, NY
Jordynn McKnight	2016	Freelance		Woodbrodge VA
Stephen Moffitt	2016	Assistant Strategist	Horizon Media Inc	NYC, NY
Jacob Moser	2016	Web Developer Designer	BB&T	Raleigh, NC
Michelle Murphy	2016	User Experience Specialist	Brandeis University International Business School	Waltham, MA
Tira Murphy	2016	Public Relations and Broadcast Writing instructor	NC A & T	
Tereza Novatna	2016	UX Designer	FMSystems	Raleigh, NC
Tyler Parrott	2016			
Courtney Penezic	2016	SEO Analyst	Townsquare Interactive	Charlotte, NC
Artaeza Poole-Gwinn	2016	Adjunct Instructor	NC A&T State University	Greensboro, NC
Sayantana Purkayastha	2016	Interactive Designer	Centre Line Digital	Raleigh, NC
Taylor Smith	2016	Home Away!	Sales	Austin, TX
Kaitlyn Stahl	2016	Web Designer	BB&T	Raleigh, NC
Erin Turner	2016	Assistant Digital Editor	OWN	Los Angeles, CA
Alexandra Veara	2016	Digital Media and Creative Coordinator	Energy Muse Jewelry	Los Angeles, CA

Using Assessment to Improve Student Learning (“Completing the Loop”)

The M.A. in Interactive Media program benefits from multiple assessment measures designed to help the school analyze curriculum, instruction and the overall program in order to improve future student learning. Assessment addresses all *Elon Eleven* student learning outcomes, plus the additional expectation for professional graduate programs of *contribute to knowledge*.

In response to assessment findings and other inputs such as professional and alumni feedback, this section focuses on three areas of programmatic change since the last ACEJMC review.

- ◆ Professional evaluation of e-portfolios through the years suggested the need for iMedia students to better demonstrate the ability to think critically and analytically and conduct research to contribute to knowledge. In response, the program began encouraging students to submit their creative projects and scholarly works for competitive review, and the graduate assessment plan added Student Awards and Presentations as an indirect measure. In the past year, a website created by an iMedia team working with a client in the Dominican Republic won first place for interactive multimedia at the 2017 Broadcast Education Association convention, and another iMedia team whose client was in Belize won third place. In addition, the scholarly projects of five iMedia students were accepted for presentation at the 2017 Global Communication Association conference. These results indicate that iMedia students are fulfilling the mission to *contribute to knowledge*.

- ◆ In 2014-15, exit interviews with students indicated the need to improve video instruction to support interactive projects. In response, the school heightened video training as part of the opening Digital Media Workshop “bootcamp” course and created a 1-credit-hour Digital Video Production course, now required in fall term. For students wanting even more video instruction and practice, the iMedia curriculum includes a 1-hour advanced video production course in spring term. The result has been an improvement in the quality of video elements that are inherent to interactive media production.

- ◆ The iMedia program maintains currency by continually innovating, and this requires technological currency. In recent years, the program has purchased four drones to provide an overhead visual perspective for context in storytelling; they have proven useful in the winter-term fly-in courses abroad. The program also has purchased immersive media production equipment, including three 360-degree cameras, two Oculus Rift (virtual reality viewing headsets), and supportive gear for responsive design multiscreen viewing. The school now encourages student research on the interactive user experience by having measurement tools such as eye-tracking hardware and software.

8. Show that the unit has defined outcomes in the professional master's program appropriate to such a program, such as a professional project, a thesis or a comprehensive exam demonstrating development of analytical and critical thinking abilities appropriate to the profession.

The Interactive Media Capstone is a 6-credit-hour course where students demonstrate their mastery of the elements of the interactive media program. In almost all cases, capstone projects represent independent work by each student. That work includes a digital portfolio and any other assignment given by the capstone instructor.

Because the capstone is the equivalent to two iMedia courses, it requires extensive preparation before the spring term and concentrated work during the spring. If students do not finalize their plans for the capstone until a few weeks into the spring semester, they run the risk of not being able to complete such an intensive project. For these reasons, students usually finalize proposals and begin preparing for the capstone in the fall semester. For instance, students produce a literature review on a subject relevant to interactivity in the fall course Theory and Audience Analysis in an Interactive Age. That literature review is the first element of the capstone. Here is a timeline sequence of the capstone's written elements:

Mid-October: Literature review due

Friday before Thanksgiving break: Capstone pre-proposal draft due. This element will distill the literature review into "major findings" guiding thinking about the capstone project

November/December: Individual discussions with capstone professors on direction of pre-proposal ideas

Mid-to-late February: Capstone proposal due

May: Capstone final documentation due, to be evaluated by iMedia faculty

On the graduate level, professionals provide e-portfolio and team project evaluations and make a judgment on program quality when choosing to hire interactive media graduates.