



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2015

TO: John Shepherd
Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)

FROM: Susan Harada
Associate Director / Program Head – Journalism
School of Journalism and Communication

Re: Update on Master of Journalism program

As requested, I am providing an update to items delineated in the January 20, 2014 memo, “Action plan regarding the outcome of cyclical review of 10-credit Master of Journalism program.”

As noted in the memo, it is the Journalism program’s practice to engage in ongoing review of the Master of Journalism curriculum and other program elements, and the past 15 months have been no different.

Program Foundation

Program objectives and philosophy are currently being updated as part of the larger strategic plan for the Journalism program’s degree offerings, and includes both the Bachelor of Journalism and the Master of Journalism programs.

Program Identity

Work to redesign and reorganize the content and navigation of the current website for the School of Journalism and Communication was delayed due to external circumstances beyond the control of the School. As a result, the original delivery date of winter term 2014 for a fresh digital presence was not met. The university’s Computing and Communication Services (CCS) has now made the School’s website a priority item. Design conceptualization is expected to begin in late May, with implementation scheduled to take place over the summer months. The next target is September 2015. In the meantime, updated content has been generated under the direction of a faculty member. This work continues. It is imperative that the Journalism program has a 21st century digital presence.

Program Elements

The Associate Director / Program Head – Journalism convenes regular meetings of faculty teaching in the program as outlined in the recommendations to ensure course content stays on track with program content and identity and to ensure the program's courses continue to function as a cohesive whole.

Program Fundamentals - updating our offerings

In Fall 2013 the Journalism program completely revamped the content of its foundational reporting workshop course JOUR 5200 to include significant modules on multimedia, new media and current reporting practices in newsrooms. Curricular adjustments have been made annually since then. This workshop course has now been transformed, and successfully enables students to learn journalistic fundamentals across media formats.

Continuous monitoring and updating are key to the program's evolving Data Journalism Storytelling course, which was first offered in Fall 2013. The program also made significant updates to JOUR 5705 Advanced Reporting (Online Publishing), an intensive digital workshop. Future plans could see the integration of the digital and print-based workshops, a move that would more accurately reflect industry realities.

Several new special topics courses open to both Master of Journalism students and Bachelor of Journalism fourth-year students – including a War Correspondents course in partnership with the Canadian War Museum, and a joint workshop-based venture involving Journalism and Bachelor of Information Technology students – were successfully offered in the past academic year. Future plans include Sports Journalism and Journalism in the Peripheries.

The School's enormously successful Africa internships program run by Professor Allan Thompson's Centre for Media in Transitional Societies expanded this year, and will now also offer internships in developing nations in parts of Asia and Latin America. As of summer 2015 it will partner with Farm Radio International and Farm Radio's partner Students Without Borders. Both organizations will play a greater role in administering placements on the ground for our students, which will make our internship program more sustainable over the long term.

Program Requirements

As noted above the School is developing additional electives that it will offer as resources are available.

The revamped Master's Research Project process and revised standards have ensured more consistency in grading these major works of journalism. Since Winter 2014, MRPs have been graded by an oral examination in addition to the assessment of the video, audio, multimedia or print product produced by each student. Student and faculty

feedback indicate this is a successful addition to the MRP process. It has been subject to continuous monitoring and review. The next scheduled review is mid-May 2015.