

# **Communication/Journalism**

**2004-2009**

**Academic Plan  
October 1, 2003**

**College of Arts & Sciences**

## **COMMUNICATION & JOURNALISM PLAN FOR 2003-08**

Since the implementation of the Academic Plan in 1999, the Department of Communication & Journalism (CMJR) has experienced huge growth both in the number of majors and in the number of student credit hours. In 1999, the Communication and Journalism majors had roughly 200 students between them. Today, we have roughly 300 majors. Our student credit hours have increased by roughly 10% over the same period.

This growth in the demand for our courses should continue due to the new oral communication requirement in the recently implemented University Studies plan. CMJR is the major provider of oral communication courses at UW, and this new “O” requirement will have a huge impact both on our Public Speaking courses and on our Oral Communication Lab.

Not only does CMJR serve a large number of majors and students at UW, but we serve an important and highly visible external constituency—the state’s media. While strong ties already exist between the department and this constituency, further relationships need to be created both to open new development possibilities and to strengthen the department through utilization of the expertise of many of our accomplished alumni and friends.

In a sense, CMJR has been more reactive than proactive in the past five years due to this growth and the demand for our courses resulting from student interest and new UW requirements. Due to the expectation of continuing growth and the need to pursue new development opportunities, this plan does not represent a radical departure from the document contained in the original academic plan. Nor does it propose any major restructuring of the department’s mission or curriculum. Rather it demonstrates our intent to meet the University’s demand for excellence in oral communication through our courses, our Oral Communication Lab, and our Debate Team. It shows our continuing desire to meet student needs by proposing new programs that utilize existing coursework but allow students to receive formal recognition for the credits that they complete. And it indicates our desire to strengthen existing bonds with external constituencies both to create new development opportunities and to increase UW’s visibility in the region.

### **Progress on 1999 Academic Plan Items**

Five items in the Academic Plan relate to CMJR—three directly and two indirectly. The three that relate directly to the department include:

- **#117. Oral Communication Laboratory:** The Academic Plan recommended the establishment of “walk-in” student instructional centers, including one in oral communication. The Oral Communication Lab has been established and is currently serving the UW community. As this plan indicates, CMJR will attempt to continue to evaluate and develop the lab to meet the demands of the new University Studies O requirement (CMJR 1).
- **#73. Joint Video Production Partnership with Theatre & Dance:** In response to a call in the Academic Plan for a joint program between the two departments, both currently share video equipment that allows interns from the CMJR department to tape Theatre & Dance productions. If funding for the new equipment necessary to maintain the program can be obtained, a concentration will be proposed in the coming academic year (CMJR 6).
- **#73. Broadcasting Program:** The Academic Plan called for the elimination of the Broadcasting Major because of its reliance on non-academic staff and inadequate equipment. The program was eliminated as specified. However, due to the strong student demand for Broadcasting coursework, this current plan proposes the implementation of a scaled-down Broadcasting Concentration. Unlike the previous Broadcasting Major, the new concentration would rely primarily on full-time faculty and existing adjuncts. Advances in technology would allow the course to be taught with less expensive equipment. The equipment for an audio track in Broadcasting is already in use—primarily with radio station WISR, CMJR’s innovative internet radio station. Equipment for a video track would be the same as that used in the Video Production partnership with Theatre & Dance.

The two items from the Academic Plan that indirectly relate to CMJR include:

- **#132. Natural Resources Journalism:** This Action Item in the Academic Plan mandated that faculty and students should become engaged in the work of the Institute for Environment and Natural Resources. In response, CMJR has offered coursework that explores the relationships between the media and ENR. Due to the critical nature of the media in disseminating ENR-related information, attempts to offer this coursework in the future will continue.
- **#4. Articulation:** CMJR has regularly been involved in articulation conferences with faculty from Communication and Journalism programs at Wyoming Community Colleges. Last year and this coming year, UW faculty took a lead role in helping to organize the conferences.

### **Curriculum**

The CMJR undergraduate curriculum is designed to serve 2 majors: Communication and Journalism. Both degrees can be completed in less than 128 hours—both require 120 for graduation.

Our Graduate curriculum offers a Masters in Communication with two emphases—human communication or journalism. Each requires 31 credits (27 hours of coursework plus 4 hours of thesis) and is typically completed within two years.

In the next five years, we plan to make minor revisions to our curriculum in two basic areas. The first is to refine our existing curriculum and course offerings as necessary to meet UW's needs. The second is to develop new concentrations that will allow our students to gain formal recognition in different areas of expertise. Planned refinements in our curriculum include:

- CMJR will provide most of the courses necessary for the new University Studies oral communication requirement. We must continually evaluate our course offerings to insure that they are sufficient for UW's needs.

- CMJR has played an integral role in providing W, C2, and C3 courses for the University Studies program. We plan to continue this role by qualifying courses in these areas for the new University Studies program.

- The concept behind the new "I" courses made them a natural fit with existing courses in CMJR, so we will offer a disproportionately large number of I courses.

- We have developed a new interdisciplinary agreement with African-American Studies in which we will provide one course a year for that program

- Joint efforts with AAST are only a part of our attempts to create a greater international focus in our curriculum. We also plan to requalify our Cross-Cultural Communication course as a Global Studies. We offered a special course in Summer 2003 with an international focus. And through a proposed sabbatical in which one of our faculty hopes to study abroad, we hope to make international journalism a regular part of our curriculum.

New concentrations that will be developed include:

- Video Production: an interdisciplinary effort between CMJR and Theatre & Dance (CMJR 6).

- Broadcasting.

- Interdisciplinary Writing: a joint effort between CMJR and English (CMJR 7).

### Assessment

CMJR has two different committees that oversee assessment. Our Student Interaction Committee has worked to develop assessment plans for our Communication and Journalism majors while our Graduate Committee has worked to develop a plan for our Graduate program. The Student Interaction Committee will serve as the assessing body for both Communication and Journalism, while the Graduate Committee will serve as the assessing body for the Masters program. The status of our assessment plans is as follows:

- Journalism. The assessment plan for Journalism is essentially complete. It will be posted on the web pending approval of faculty in the Fall of 2003. The Method of Assessment relies heavily on two sources—feedback from our external constituency, and a formal evaluation of the portfolios produced during internships (about 120 students per year enroll in internships).

- Communication. The Student Interaction Committee has worked on the plan for Communication and has completed the Program Goals and Objectives, while partially completing the Method. The program will be completed in 2003-04 so that assessment can begin in the Fall of 2004. It should have the plan completed by the start of fall semester in order to begin the formal assessment process. One goal is to tie the Method for Assessment of

Communication as closely as possible to that of Journalism, so to some degree, this will probably involve evaluation of internship portfolios.

- Graduate Program: The Graduate Committee has established Program Goals and Objectives, has partially completed the Method, and has yet to develop Outcomes. It should be completed with the assessment plan by Fall 2003. The Methods developed thus far target two groups of students—those who wish to pursue further graduate study and those who wish to pursue professional careers. For the first group, the Method will focus on the success of acceptance to Ph.D. programs and the success of paper acceptances at conventions. For the second group, feedback from external constituencies will probably play a large role.

### **Areas of Distinction**

The Area of Distinction in MFIII most germane to CMJR is **No. 5, Statewide Leadership in Cultural Endeavors, the Arts, and the Humanities**. This section states that UW must cultivate distinction in the visual and performing arts. It also states that UW must sustain an institution-wide commitment to writing, critical thinking, and oral communication across the disciplines. CMJR is the primary provider of oral communication instruction at UW. This Area of Distinction is most visible in a number of our department's endeavors:

- The Debate Team—While it has been UW's most successful intercollegiate competitor, winning three national champions in the past two years, its budget is roughly one-half that of the teams at comparable institutions. We need to increase this budget to a level more commensurate with those of its competitors. To some degree, this needs to be done through better development efforts, and the team's recent success can serve as a springboard for this effort. (CMJR 4) The goal is to increase the budget of the UW Debate Team to \$60,000 in the next five years—an amount comparable to other schools finishing in the top 50 nationally and to those schools most similar to UW in size, staffing, and schedule. (CMJR 3) Then, to recognize the support the Team has received, establish a Debate Hall of Fame to honor past UW debaters and supporters. (CMJR 5)

- Our Public Speaking courses (CMJR 2)—The importance of these courses to UW's curriculum increased dramatically in Fall of 2003 with the implementation of the O requirement in the new University Studies plan. CMJR already has a highly efficient system in place that utilizes graduate assistants in teaching these courses. As we add new sections in response to the new O requirement, we must continually monitor the course to ensure that it meets student demand and maintains the same high standard of excellence that has already been established. A newly developed Learning Community with English will utilize our public speaking courses to provide oral instruction as part of a joint oral/writing program. Since this is a new program, its success must be monitored to determine if any restructuring is necessary.

- The Oral Communication Lab (CMJR 1)—After its establishment following the original Academic Plan, the Oral Communication lab went through a very successful development stage. Now, as part of its continuing evolution, its mission needs to be reevaluated and any necessary adjustments made so that it can continue to serve UW's clear mandate for excellence in oral communication. The lab's original director had to retire unexpectedly, and as a first part of this effort, a new permanent director will have to be hired. As another part of this effort, a formal promotional plan needs to be implemented to make the UW community aware of the lab's services so that its use can be maximized.

**Area of Distinction No. 5** calls for a commitment to distinction in the visual and performing arts and in writing. Writing is a critical component of the CMJR curriculum, and the department is second only to English in providing writing instruction at UW. Visual Communication is also an important component of the curriculum. A number of department endeavors relate to these areas:

- We are the leading provider of photography courses at UW and offer coursework in both Graphics and Visual Communication theory. These courses along with our writing courses have traditionally played an important role in the W and C3 offerings in the University Studies program. We need to take the steps necessary to qualify these courses for the new University Studies program to ensure that they still play an important role in this program. At some point in the future, the existing “wet” darkroom that was built 15 years ago will need to be converted to a digital darkroom. While this may not occur in the next five years, we need to begin to prepare for this conversion at the time it becomes necessary.

- Video Production Concentration (CMJR 6)—This proposed concentration is a joint effort between CMJR and Theatre & Dance. A list of courses for the concentration has been developed. All but one are already part of the curriculum, and this one course needs to be developed in CMJR. Students are already involved in the internships that would be necessary for this concentration. To facilitate this plan, Theatre & Dance and CMJR in conjunction with the A&S Dean’s Office are investigating sources to provide the funds necessary to purchase the equipment required by this concentration. A concentration in Video Production should be submitted for formal approval during 2004-05.

- Broadcasting Concentration—Student demand for courses in broadcasting is high, so this concentration will allow us to offer a formal program. Using much of the same equipment as that in the Video Production Concentration along with existing equipment, two tracks in a Broadcasting Concentration will be developed—one in radio production and one in television production. All courses necessary to teach the concentration are already part of the curriculum. Two full-time faculty in CMJR along with part-time adjuncts will teach the broadcast courses. The concentration should be submitted for approval during 2004-05.

- CMJR offers a unique instructional tool in the student radio station WISR. Its instructional uses need to be further developed and incorporated into our proposed Broadcasting Concentration.

- Interdisciplinary Writing Concentration (CMJR 7)—This proposed concentration is a joint endeavor with the English Department. While it links directly to Area of Distinction No. 5’s call for distinction in writing, it also links to virtually every Area of Distinction in MFIII. This is interdisciplinary not in the sense that it is a joint effort between the two departments, but because it involves a third area of the student’s choosing, and this choice can include any other department at UW. Potentially this concentration can serve to improve writing skills in any discipline, which links it to every Area of Distinction in MFIII. The courses required by this concentration are already part of the curriculum, so pending approval by both departments, the concentration should be formally proposed during 2003-04.

Additional Areas of Distinction in MFIII link to CMJR. One is **No. 1, Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)**. CMJR has offered and will continue to offer courses that examine the role between the media and ENR.

**Area of Distinction No. 6** directs departments to develop courses and scholarship related to the diverse populations of this region. The following CMJR endeavors relate to this area:

- Hispanic Radio Station La Montanesa—CMJR played a role in helping to develop this new station in Laramie. We now need to create new bonds that allow us to utilize this important facility into our curriculum through possible internships and as part of our proposed Broadcasting Concentration.

- CMJR has just hired two new faculty members who bring diversity to the department. This provided the opportunity for an interdisciplinary agreement with African-American Studies in which we will jointly offer courses in the future. These new faculty will help us to attract a more diverse student population and provide new course offerings whose content will add to a more diverse perspective.

Three areas in CMJR link to **Area of Distinction No. 4, Professions and Issues Critical to the Region**. This area calls for departments to provide leadership development. The following endeavors relate to this leadership role:

- External Constituencies (CMJR 8)—In most Wyoming communities, the media play a critical leadership role. CMJR has worked closely with media outlets for whom we instruct and provide a significant number of Wyoming’s media professionals. Journalism teachers represented by the Wyoming High School Press Association also play an important role in preparing media professionals. We now need to forge new bonds with our media constituencies so that they can play a greater support and instructional role in the department. To date, most of our development efforts have involved our media constituency. Recently, we have discovered opportunities to create stronger ties with constituencies in Advertising and Public Relations, and we need to develop relationships with these groups. Both media professionals and high school teachers have inquired about coursework that would allow them to pursue advanced degrees or certification without having to leave their jobs for significant amounts of time. To create stronger bonds with both groups and to increase our graduate enrollments, we need to explore the possibility of reformatting courses in our existing graduate program to accommodate the needs of constituencies who are unable to pursue coursework in Laramie on a full-time basis.

- CMJR is a leading provider of Leadership Building courses for the state. Courses such as Persuasion, Public Speaking, Argumentation, Business & Professional Communication, and Communication & Conflict have helped to train potential leaders in Wyoming communities for years. As part of our curricular review process, we must ensure that our coursework continues to serve an important leadership building role in Wyoming.

- Marketing Minor—This new program, which is an interdisciplinary effort between CMJR, Art, and the Business College, was formally approved in 2002-03 and offers the potential to provide a major boost to Wyoming’s economic development efforts. We now must begin the process to promote the program and recruit students into it.

### **Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department**

Many areas of CMJR link to the Institutional Issues in MFIII. At least three relate to the **Learning Environment**’s call for “personalized education:”

- In 2002-03, a new Learning Community was created with English that will allow a student to pursue speaking and writing skills at the same time. Since this new endeavor is in the rudimentary stage, we need to monitor its success to ensure that it serves its intended purpose.

- The Oral Communication Lab (CMJR 1) contributes to students’ academic success by providing one-on-one tutorials in public speaking. As noted under Areas of Distinction, an ongoing evaluation of its mission will be undertaken.

•The Institutional Issues note the importance of the new University Studies I courses, and as noted under Curricular Issues, CMJR is one of the largest providers of I course instruction in the A&S College. Since I courses are new in 2003-04, we need to evaluate their success to determine if they serve their intended purpose.

Under **Scholarship Issues**, two items link to the issue of **Bolstering Graduate Education**:

•Our plan to begin exploring distance education for potential graduate students (CMJR 9) would provide the opportunity for new students to enter our graduate program who are currently limited by distance and scheduling from pursuing coursework.

•Due to the demands placed on our public speaking courses by the new University Studies O requirement, CMJR was allocated four new graduate assistantships. Just as we must ensure that the new GAs maintain our record of excellence in teaching these courses (CMJR 2), we also have the responsibility to ensure that our graduate curriculum is able to provide for the needs of this expanded base of graduate students. This requires maintenance of a faculty sufficient to teach and direct the research of the students in this expanded program.

The issue of greater **Interdisciplinarity** links to a large number of areas in CMJR, which are discussed under Areas of Distinction. These include:

- The proposed Video Production Concentration with Theatre (CMJR 6).
- The proposed Interdisciplinary Writing Program with English (CMJR 7).
- The newly developed Learning Community with English.
- The newly developed Marketing Minor with Business and Art.
- Our interdisciplinary agreement with African-American studies.

This agreement with AAST obviously links to the issue of **Diversity and Internationalization** as do two other issues in CMJR:

•Along with the new faculty member who will work jointly with the African-American Studies program, a second new faculty hire should help increase our international presence. Combined these two new faculty should pay immediate dividends in that our ability to both recruit and retain minority and international students should increase, as should our ability to offer new courses that are relevant to them and that will broaden the perspective of all students. We need to adjust our curriculum as necessary to insure that we take advantage of the opportunity these two new faculty offer.

•CMJR's involvement in the new Hispanic Radio Station, La Montanesa will ultimately demonstrate the power that the media have in building stronger connections in the region. We need to incorporate this new facility into relevant coursework as described under Areas of Distinction.

Two CMJR Action Items relate to the **Structure of the Curriculum** Issue that calls for the curriculum to help create the technical and scientific literacy needed in modern society. As noted under Areas of Distinction, both will aid students in understanding how to communicate the complexities of scientific and technical data.

- The Interdisciplinary Writing Program with English (CMJR 8).
- The Oral Communication Lab (CMJR 1).

Two CMJR Action Items link to the Issue of **Enrollment Management** by presenting opportunities for increased enrollment unique to CMJR. These two concentrations are closely linked in that they would allow the University to offer formal programs that would attract students who might otherwise enroll at other institutions. Impact on existing curriculum would

be minimal since CMJR currently offers courses in these areas—courses that have proven popular despite the existence of formal programs.

- The Broadcasting Concentration
- The Video Production Concentration with Theatre (CMJR 6).

The growth in our number of majors, the impact of the University Studies O requirement, the resulting increase in our graduate student numbers, and proposed new concentrations require a continuing evaluation of our curriculum to ensure it meets enrollment demands. Our curriculum committee has performed this evaluation in the past and will continue in this role.

The Institutional Issue of **Outreach** links to one CMJR Action Item:

- Our desire to serve the region’s media professionals and high school teachers by creating more distance-based courses in our Graduate Program (CMJR 9).

### **Other Issues Germane to the Department**

The O requirement in the new University Studies plan presents a huge challenge to CMJR, since we are the primary source of public speaking instruction at UW, but it is a challenge we readily accept. We have been allocated four new GA positions to help meet the demand for our Public Speaking courses. With this growth in the number of graduate students, CMJR must be able to meet the greater demand for graduate-level coursework that will inevitably result.

To better serve UW, CMJR has also proposed a number of new concentrations and interdisciplinary efforts. While these new programs should have only minimal impact on our existing curriculum, they do reveal a vulnerability that already exists. For many of our programs, we have only minimal faculty qualified to teach coursework in those areas. For example, we have only limited faculty qualified in such areas as Web creation, natural resources journalism, advanced writing, video production, and advertising and P.R. While CMJR is certainly capable of offering proposed new programs in graduate outreach, and interdisciplinary writing, our abilities in these areas could become strained by any faculty transitions.

In addition, CMJR is a department that must serve many diverse interests. Our department must be capable of providing instruction in a vast range of subjects ranging from human communication and public speaking to photography, from journalistic writing to broadcasting. While there is some similarity in the theoretical background of these subjects, the practical skills that must be mastered differ greatly. This requires a faculty with a wide range of specific interests.

Due to our growth, the wide spectrum in faculty expertise required, and our vulnerability in certain specialty areas, CMJR will pursue the following personnel strategies in the next five years:

- Maintenance of existing faculty lines. In recent semesters, our upper-level courses have filled prematurely, and the high demand for many of our other courses regularly results in waiting lists. Replacement of any faculty losses will be critical to maintain our curriculum.
- As one possible immediate transition, CMJR currently has a faculty member on leave of absence to the Business College with the strong prospect that his position there will become permanent. Should this occur, a replacement faculty would be sought to help serve in those areas of high demand or where our faculty is stretched thin. These areas could include Writing, Web Design and Instruction, Natural Resources Journalism, and Advertising and PR.
- Director of the Oral Communication Lab. The very talented director of our Oral Communication Lab who served in this position since its founding had to retire unexpectedly in

2003. Currently the lab is under the direction of a temporary APL. Due to the importance of this facility created by the mandate placed on oral communication in MF III, the hiring of a new director is a priority to ensure that the lab can realize its maximum potential.

### **Action Items for 2004-2009**

**CMJR 1:** Develop a plan that will allow us to continually evaluate the function of the Oral Communication Lab to determine whether it is meeting UW's needs. (See Progress on 1999 Academic Plan Items, #117, Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department, and Areas of Distinction.)

**CMJR 2:** If necessary, implement additional sections of Public Speaking in the coming year to meet this demand. (See Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department and Areas of Distinction.)

**CMJR 3:** Determine and maintain a budget for the UW Debate Team so that it remains nationally competitive. (See Areas of Distinction.)

**CMJR 4:** Further the development efforts that will allow us to build on the Debate Team's current successes through solicitations of friends and alumni. These efforts need to be developed, and additional funding sources need to be identified.

**CMJR 5:** Establish a Debate Hall of Fame to honor past UW debaters and supporters. (See Areas of Distinction.)

**CMJR 6:** Establish a concentration in *Video Production*: A joint effort between Communication & Journalism and Theatre & Dance, all the required courses but one are already part of the curriculum. (See Progress on 1999 Academic Plan Items, #73; Curriculum; Areas of Distinction; and Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department.)

**CMJR 7:** Establish a *Interdisciplinary Writing Concentration*: This is a joint program to be administered by CMJR and English, and it would include any other department at UW of the student's choosing. (See Curriculum, Areas of Distinction, and Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department.)

**CMJR 8.** Continue efforts development efforts with the Journalism community and seek out ways to expand these efforts to those who graduated in Communication. (See Areas of Distinction and Issues in MFIII Germane to the Department.)

**CMJR 9:** Explore the means to provide better outreach opportunities that will allow teachers and professionals to complete their Masters or certification through a restructuring of the format of existing courses. (See Areas of Distinction.)