

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Division: Language Arts

Department or Program: Journalism and Mass Communications (JOUR)

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I. DESCRIPTION AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

Area(s) this program considerably addresses:

Basic Skills Transfer Career/Technical Other (describe): Through the publications of the Journalism Department, (1) a historical record of De Anza College from its beginnings to the present is produced and recorded, (2) students and others from the De Anza College community are given a public forum to practice their First Amendment rights, and (3) promotional/informational materials are provided for students, staff, and prospective students.

A. Brief Description and Mission of the Program

The Journalism Department is both a transfer and vocational education program that offers:

- Specialized journalism courses that transfer to CSUs
- A General Education media literacy course that transfers to UCs and CSUs
- An A.A. degree in Journalism, beginning with the 2008-09 academic year
- Student-produced publications/media (via print, online and broadcast)
- A newsroom/laboratory for practicums.

The department's mission is to:

- Help students cultivate and deepen their media literacy skills
- Help students develop critical thinking skills for clear, relevant journalistic communication
- Serve as an avenue for students to transfer to four-year college and university programs in communications, mass communications, journalism, advertising, public relations and broadcasting
- Equip students with the skills and experience needed to seek internships and begin careers in the mass media
- Teach and encourage students to practice their first amendment rights to inform, criticize and participate as citizens
- Produce publications to give a voice to the college community and record the college's history

B. Summary of Program's Strengths

The program helps students:

- Become informed, active citizens with enhanced media literacy skills, interpersonal skills and cross-cultural communication skills
- Prepare to transfer to universities or obtain a Journalism AA degree
- Obtain skills to qualify them for internships and entry-level mass media jobs

The program has:

- A state-of-the art newsroom/laboratory, with equipment and software available for print, online and video journalism, similar to what is found in the workplace at a community newspaper
- Award-winning student-produced publications, including a weekly printed newspaper, an online newspaper with video and multi-media components, and a yearly magazine
- A full-time faculty member (who serves as the department chair and adviser to the student online newspaper, print newspaper and magazine), four part-time faculty, and one half-time lab assistant. The department also has an advisory board of industry professionals who meets once a year
- Support from alumni, the statewide Journalism Association of Community Colleges, the local journalism industry, and college leadership
- Promotional materials including brochures and a Web site.

C. Summary of Program's Main Areas for Improvement

The Journalism program would be improved with:

- Increased staffing to keep the newsroom open as needed for students, and to properly support the business operations and technical functions of the program
- Increased interaction with De Anza programs that have related functions such as the Film/TV Department and the Technology Resources Group; relocation near the Technology Resources Group would increase student interest (leading to increased success) and save resources.

- Reclassification of the laboratory technician, who performs work above his job description in order to keep the department functioning
- Increased relationships with local media outlets for internships, grants and educational opportunities
- Increased outreach to targeted populations
- An increased budget, allowing faculty and students to attend conventions and workshops, and the purchase of additional equipment/software for student use
- Wireless Internet access in the newsroom/laboratory, allowing more students to participate in online activities simultaneously.
- A name change from “Journalism” to “Mass Communications” to more accurately reflect the emphasis of the program (more students are enrolled in the Mass Communications class than the Journalism classes combined), and to emphasize a focus on the future of convergence journalism.

D. Expected Outcomes for Students in the Program

Upon participating in what the Journalism Program has to offer, students will:

- Have a liberal arts foundation in mass media and journalistic practices, ethics and principles
- Be savvy users and consumers of media products
- Be qualified to transfer to a four-year university
- Be qualified for an internship or entry-level position at a media outlet or mass communications industry, including having a basic command of the technology and production skills necessary for a career in the media
- Show strengthened interpersonal skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and time management skills
- Demonstrate satisfactory skills in one or more aspects of media production, including writing, design, publication for print, visual, online, electronic and broadcast media.

II. RETENTION AND GROWTH

A. Response to Institutional Goal of Increased Access, Growth and Retention

To increase access, growth and retention, the program has increased the number of course offerings and participated in outreach activities sponsored by the Outreach and Vocational Education Departments.

Program enrollment has increased each year since it was reinstated in 1998. Over the last three years, enrollment increased from 552 students to 665 students. Retention, which was 80 percent in 05-06 increased to 86 percent in 07-08.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Journalism Program Enrollment	552	617	665
Journalism Program Retention	80%	79%	86%

B. Response to Institutional Goal for Targeted Populations

Over the last three years, program enrollment for targeted populations increased from 127 students to 146 students. Retention, which was 78 percent in 05-06 increased to 82 percent in 07-08.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Program Enrollment of targeted populations	127	121	146
Program Retention for targeted populations	78%	76%	82%

C. Basic Skills Needs of Students

None of the courses in the Journalism Department are considered “basic skills” courses. They are all college level transfer courses that require competence in basic skills. However, students who are lacking in some areas of basic skills can still take advantage of the program’s offerings. The newspaper staff class welcomes students who lack basic skills or who are ESL students, as the class has opportunities for students of different levels. Also, students at higher levels assist students at lower levels. Of course, students lacking in basic skills who enroll in college-level journalism courses are less likely to be successful than those who do not lack basic skills.

III. STUDENT EQUITY

A. Progress/Achievement Toward Decreasing Student Equity Gap

While the program made progress toward decreasing the student equity gap from 2005-06 to 2006-08, the gap increased in 2007-08. However, since the program is comparatively small, a handful of students can make major changes in the percentages, so the statistics may not be statistically significant.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Program Success Rates	74 %	78 %	77 %
Program Success Rates for targeted populations	72 %	75 %	68 %

B. Ways Program will continue working toward goals

The program is anxious to decrease the student equity gap and will work toward this by:

- Continuing to participate in De Anza's outreach programs
- Promoting student membership in minority organizations' and their journalism scholarships
- Increasing the use of teams and team-building exercises, which was made easier this year as the arm chairs in the journalism classroom were replaced with group tables (pods), facilitating community.
- Providing access to hardware and software in the journalism lab
- Promoting relevant De Anza College services such as the computer give-away program and emergency loan program
- Encouraging faculty to attend workshops to improve their teaching and communication skills
- Continuing to foster a friendly, welcoming environment in the department
- Looking for ways to decrease textbook costs, perhaps by joining the Bookstore's textbook rental program in fall, 2009.

C. Challenges that Exist in Reaching Goals

Challenges faced in reducing student equity gap include:

- **Lack of Support/Resources.** In the past, a counselor assigned to the Language Arts Division visited Journalism classes to explain to students the De Anza resources and programs that could help targeted groups of students. The Language Arts Division no longer has a counselor assigned to it, and thus there are no longer counselor visits to journalism classrooms. Targeted students who could be supported by De Anza's resources may not be aware of the resources or have the confidence to seek them out.
- **Textbook Costs.** The textbook for the course with the largest number of students, JOUR 2, costs \$80 - \$100, which can be a disincentive for targeted groups. Because the media is a rapidly changing field, using older textbooks or dated materials available under creative commons licenses is not a viable option. The department will continue looking into reducing textbook costs, and is considering joining the Bookstore's textbook rental program in fall, 2009.
- **Difficulty Identifying Numbers of Statistical Significance.** Because the Journalism program is small, it is difficult to identify trends and make assessments, with the target populations in the single and low double digits.
- **Lack of Basic Skills Focus.** The journalism program is not a basic skills program, but a transfer/vocational program that requires college-level reading and writing for success. However, as an open door institution, students who are not prepared for college level journalism classes are allowed to enroll in them. Understandably, success rates in these classes are expected to be lower for under-prepared students.

IV. BUDGET LIMITATIONS

A. Limitations Placed on Program due to limited funding

Although the journalism program does not have a "B" budget, the school newspaper, La Voz, has a small "B" budget, and the Publications Lab (comprised of TWRT, La Voz and Red Wheelbarrow) has a small "B" budget, both which sufficiently cover basic supplies sufficiently.

Funds from Measures C and E, Perkins Grant and lottery funds have allowed the program to modernize its facility and purchase updated equipment. Income from newspaper advertisements is used to pay for student attendance at journalism conferences and competitions, and to hire student workers to help with clerical and administrative duties.

The effects of limited funding are most obvious in the staffing shortage. The number of permanent staff today is the same as it was several years ago, even though the program has doubled and tripled in size. The one full-time faculty member not only teaches, but oversees the department and budget, updates the department Web page and brochures, runs a newspaper business, coordinates and supervises the physical lab, and advises student publications including a weekly newspaper, a Web site including multi-media and video programming and a yearly magazine. Often she spends up to 55 hours or more a week on campus, compared to 16-20 hours a week for the average full-time faculty member. In addition, the half-time lab technician is paid at one of the lowest levels for classified staff and

is working out of class to keep the lab operating, to oversee the use of complex print and multi-media technology and to assist/support students with production challenges.

Limitations due to a lack of funding are also seen in problems with the physical facility: the door used for the main entrance is not ADA compliant, there is no college-issued sign designating the Student Publications Lab room number, one of the windows is cracked, blinds are missing, the doors consistently don't latch properly, the podium in the classroom is broken, etc.

B. Consequences to students and college if program is eliminated or reduced

De Anza is the major source of journalism transfer students from the South Bay area to San Jose State and San Francisco State Universities. De Anza is the only community college in Santa Clara County that offers an AA degree in journalism. Of the seven community colleges within 20 miles of De Anza, only two others (West Valley and San Jose City) produce a student newspaper. Elimination of the De Anza journalism program would leave a large gap in community college journalism in the South Bay.

Although many unfamiliar with the field say that journalism is dying because large newspapers are failing -- this is a fallacy. Journalism is not dying – it is changing, rapidly. In fact, it is becoming more important today for students to be educated in journalistic techniques, as Web 2.0 allows and encourages everyone to become citizen journalists. The Journalism Program helps prepare students of all majors to think critically, communicate clearly and be active citizens.

In addition, a large number of students in De Anza's journalism program are not journalism majors, but majors from all disciplines (or undeclared), who enroll in the basic mass communications/media literacy class. It is easily argued that media literacy is as important in the 21st century as math or geography literacy, for example.

With elimination or reduction of this program, more dire than the consequences to journalism students and others who are expanding their media literacy skills, would be the consequence to De Anza College as a whole. The journalism department is home to the student First Amendment newspaper, La Voz Weekly. Rarely do student newspapers survive without a journalism program, as seen by the numerous times that Foothill College's newspaper, the Sentinel, has unsuccessfully tried to restart publication since the demise of its journalism program. Three essential roles that La Voz Weekly serves are:

- The "voice" of De Anza students, giving students (not just journalism students) an audience and outlet for their First Amendment right to freedom of the press to inform, communicate and criticize.
- A historical record of De Anza College is preserved for future generations. Both the De Anza library and the Student Publications Lab have bound copies of La Voz back to 1968. These collections are the most complete collection of De Anza's student history available. Without a journalism program, there would be no student newspaper, and with no student newspaper, there would be a minimal historical record of De Anza's place in the world.
- A regular and thorough communication tool for the De Anza community about events and activities on campus.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A. Community Collaborations

The Journalism Department works with local newspapers, such as the Mountain View Voice and Metro, and TV stations to provide students for internships

B. Relationships with Other Programs

The journalism program works with several other programs on campus:

- **Cross-cultural Partners Program:** journalism students participate in CCP, providing native speakers to team up with non-native speakers
- **Honors Program:** Several journalism classes offer Honors Cohorts.
- **Language Arts Computer Lab:** The journalism classes use the Language Arts Computer Lab in the ATC for training on using library database search tools.
- **Library:** Journalism courses require students to perform research using resources available at the library, including scholarly databases that are unavailable to the general public on the Internet.
- **Technology Resource Group:** Journalism classes use the Broadcast Media Center's television facilities each quarter to learn media production techniques and to produce "Video Voz," the broadcast version of the student newspaper.
- **Student Publications Lab/TWRT/EWRT:** The Journalism program shares office and laboratory space, classified staff, and "B" funding with the TWRT program and Red Wheelbarrow (the literary magazine published out of the EWRT department) under the heading "Student Publications Lab."

- **Film/TV Department:** Faculty from both departments communicate and cooperate on projects such as recruitment, publicity and curriculum development.
- **English Department:** Starting next year, the literary magazine class, EWRT 65, will be cross-listed with Journalism. In addition, Ken Weisner from EWRT and the journalism program are creating a pair of LINC classes to be offered in 2010.
- **Distance Learning:** The journalism department offers JOUR 2 as a distance learning class every quarter, and is in the process of converting three more of its classes to distance learning format.
- **Speech Communication Department:** The core journalism department class, JOUR 2 (Mass Communication) is required for the Speech Communication Department's AA degree.
- **Outreach Program:** The Journalism Department has participated in the Outreach programs parent/student days during the past two years.
- **Vocational Education:** The Journalism Department is part of the college's VocEd Program, which helps forge college-high school partnerships.

C. State and Federal Mandates

The Education Code requires that students at all community colleges be provided an opportunity to express free speech. While there are numerous ways that De Anza can provide this to students, La Voz is an important tool to meet this requirement.

The Journalism Department receives federal funds via the Voc Ed. Program's Perkins Grant. The government places restrictions on how the funding may be used.

D. Trends

A recent report in the San Jose Mercury News listed Journalism/Mass Communications as the 10th most popular major in the country. Personnel from both De Anza's and Foothill's International Students' Program say that Journalism and Mass Communications are a popular major with international students.

Enrollment has increased dramatically since the Journalism program was reintroduced at De Anza ten years ago. Enrollment during the 1998-99 was 179 students; enrollment during 2007-08 was 665 students.

As journalism is changing, the De Anza journalism program is also changing. Students are involved not only in print journalism, but in the various aspects of convergence journalism, by working on multi-media projects, blogs, podcasts and online videocasts.

While the employment situation is tenuous at the moment, the California Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information (LMI) projections for 2004-14 predicted 2,390 job openings per year in California in journalism and related fields.

E. Comparable Programs

De Anza is the only community college in Santa Clara County, and the only one seven community colleges (including Foothill, West Valley, San Jose City, Mission, Canada, Evergreen Valley) within a 20-mile radio that offers an AA degree in journalism. Of these seven colleges, only two others (West Valley and San Jose City) produce a student newspaper. It is the closest community college with a degree in journalism to San Jose State University. De Anza's student newspaper, magazine and online news site have been consistently recognized for "General Excellence" by the Journalism Association of Community Colleges. General Excellence awards re given to college media that meet a broad range of benchmarks of excellence. For the six-year period form 2001 to 2007, De Anza was awarded 17 General Excellence awards. The closest number for other community colleges in the South Bay were six awards to Ohlone and two to the College of San Mateo.