

# ACEJMC ASCENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE ACCREDITING COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Vol. 8, No. 3 • NOVEMBER 2001

## Council revises Standard 3: Curriculum

The Council at its September meeting adopted a revised version of Standard 3: Curriculum. The text of the standard was rewritten, although much of its meaning was unchanged. The new version incorporates references to the knowledge, values and competencies defined in the Principles of Accreditation adopted in September 2000.

Otherwise, although the language is new, the standard retains its other emphases: teaching students to work in a diverse, democratic society, and maintaining balance between skills and theoretical courses and between courses in journalism and mass communications and courses in other disciplines, primarily liberal arts and sciences.



Steve Geimann, Lana Rakow, Ham Smith and Trevor Brown take advantage of a break in the September meeting to discuss the logistics of the next phase in standards review.

The new Standard 3 will take effect in September 2002 and will apply to accreditation reviews in the 2003 – 2004 academic year and thereafter.

The “Explanation” section of the standard was changed in just two ways. Another reference to the Principles was added, as was a suggestion that numeracy should be stressed throughout the cur-

riculum along with language use and visual literacy. The “Evidence” items for the standard were left untouched.

The standard already had been rewritten slightly for the current (2001 – 2002) edition of *Journalism and Mass Communications Accreditation* to change the 90/65 provision to a requirement for 80 semester hours outside the unit, with 65 semester hours

in liberal arts and sciences. These changes also eliminated references to curricular exemptions, which have been abandoned, and deleted an evidence item related to the exemptions.

The committee that developed and proposed the revised standard consisted of Trevor Brown (chair), dean, School of Journalism, University of Indiana; Beth Barnes, assistant dean for professional graduate studies, School of Public Communication, Syracuse University; Steve Geimann, deputy team leader, telecom/media, Bloomberg News; Sandra Keyes, editor, *The Honolulu Advertiser*; Lana Rakow, professor, School of Communication, University of North Dakota; and Hampden Smith, head, Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, Washington and Lee University.

### Principles prompt fresh look at all standards

The new Principles of Accreditation, adopted a year ago, are gradually finding direct expression in ACEJMC’s standards for accreditation. In addition to adopting a revised Standard 3, the Council at its September meeting discussed several approaches to revising the rest of the standards.

It has been clear since the Principles were adopted that, coupled with an increased emphasis on outcomes

assessment, they implied changes in the standards. The most immediate need was in Standard 3, but several other standards — perhaps all — require some attention. The committee that revised Standard 3 presented to the Council three basic possible approaches to standards revision, ranging from a conservative approach to a radical restructuring involving combining and re-ordering standards.

Committee chair Trevor Brown said that, whatever approach the committee took, schools and other interested parties would be involved in the process.

The Council took no action beyond conveying its sense of how to proceed. Members encouraged the committee to be ambitious and to at least consider extensive restructuring; to recognize the importance of student achievement but

→ See “Fresh look,” page 2

#### Inside

CHEA review of Council proceeds	2
Interim reports eliminated	2
Assessment schedule, guidebook	3
The book on diversity practices	3
Broadcasters, advertisers needed for site team training	3
Deadline past for dues	4
SPJ honors Steve Geimann	4
Appeals Board 2002 – 2003	4
Calendar	4
Member, program updates	4

*Fresh look, continued from p. 1*

keep in mind other missions of education, including scholarship and public service; and to inject outcomes assessment only into standards where appropriate.

#### Revisions redux

The most recent full review of the ACEJMC standards was completed in 1996, and the resulting standards took effect in Septem-

ber 1997. That review process lasted more than two years and included surveys, public meetings and forums, and several discussion sessions at Council meetings.

## CHEA's review of ACEJMC practices proceeds

The Accrediting Council will undergo a review for recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in March 2002. In January 2001, the CHEA board of directors determined that ACEJMC was eligible to undertake this review.

ACEJMC will submit to CHEA a self-study providing evidence that it meets CHEA's recognition standards. The Council's most recent similar

review was in 1996, when the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation continued its recognition of ACEJMC for five years.

CHEA invites comment from third parties. All third parties who intend to comment at ACEJMC's recognition review must submit in writing to CHEA a description of the organization(s) they represent and an outline of the proposed comments. All

comments must address ACEJMC's efforts to meet the CHEA recognition standards. Third-party comment must be received no later than Feb. 1, 2002.

Third-party comment should be sent to:

Judith Watkins  
Vice President for Accreditation  
Services  
Council for Higher Education  
Accreditation  
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 510  
Washington D.C. 20036-1136

## Council cancels interim and focused progress reports

Fourteen schools distinguished themselves from all others this year: They were required by ACEJMC to complete interim reports.

The Council decided in September to drop the requirement. The Council also eliminated focused progress reports by schools that had been on provisional accreditation (three such schools filed progress reports this year).

The decision was based on the judgment of the executive director and staff that the value of the reports was not sufficient to justify the effort and time that they required of schools.

The interim report policy was adopted in 1997 and first applied to schools accredited in 1999, which delivered their reports in mid-2001.



Collector's items: No additional interim reports will join this year's set of 14. The Council dropped its requirement for the reports in September.

## Teams to apply more rigor in grad reviews

A recent letter from the ACEJMC executive offices to site visit team members asked them to ensure that their reports on master's programs go beyond mere description.

Council members in September expressed continuing concern that team reports often describe a program but include little or no discussion of the program's quality. Council President Jerry Ceppos last year appointed a committee to find ways to make graduate program review more rigorous, but changes will take time. Meanwhile, teams can provide critical evaluations within the limits set by current policies.

## ACEJMC ASCENT

Newsletter of the Accrediting Council  
on Education in Journalism  
and Mass Communications

Vol. 8, No. 3  
November 2001

President, Accrediting Council  
Jerry Ceppos  
Vice President for News  
Knight Ridder  
50 W. San Fernando St., Ste. 1500  
San Jose, CA 95113  
(408) 938-7830

Vice President, Accrediting Council  
Will Norton  
Dean, College of Journalism and  
Mass Communications  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0443  
(402) 472-3041

Chair, Accrediting Committee  
Trevor Brown  
Dean, School of Journalism  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
(812) 855-9249

Vice Chair, Accrediting Committee  
Beth Barnes  
Assistant Dean, Professional Graduate  
Studies, S.I. Newhouse School of  
Public Communication  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, NY 13244  
(315) 443-4045

Executive Director  
Susanne Shaw  
School of Journalism and  
Mass Communications  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
(785) 864-3986  
email: sshaw@ukans.edu

Publications Editor  
Charles Higgins  
School of Journalism and  
Mass Communications  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
(785) 864-7640  
e-mail: crah@ukans.edu

Council Website:  
<http://www.ukans.edu/~acejmc>

# Assessment: a guidebook and a schedule

The Council at its meeting Sept. 21 moved two steps closer to incorporation of outcomes assessment in accreditation reviews.

## A road map

The Council approved publication of a draft guide to assessment methods already in use by ACEJMC-accredited schools. Trevor Brown, chair of the committee that prepared the document, said it was intended not to set requirements but to collect and disseminate suggestions and proven practices so that schools would not have to invent their plans from scratch.

The guide was sent in late September to administrators of all accredited schools, in addition to all members of the Council and Committee.

The guide was based on a survey of accredited schools that asked them to list assessment methods they were already using. Some schools, driven by their universities or their institutional accrediting agencies, already have adopted well developed assessment plans. The guide is divided into sections describing different kinds of measures.

"No single assessment method is sufficient," Brown said. "The effort requires multiple measures, some direct, some indirect."

He said the committee would continue to gather material to add to the guide. The Council decided to publish it in its current form because it would help schools.

Lana Rakow, a member of the committee, said the Teaching Standards Committee of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication was making a similar attempt to gather good assessment practices. The Council made a commitment to continue working on assessment issues with representatives of that organization and of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication.

## Put assessment on your calendar

The Council adopted a schedule for the development and implementation of assessment plans.

Schools seeking accreditation or re-accreditation will be required to have plans for the assessment of educational outcomes by the beginning of the 2003 – 2004 academic year; to collect information for assessing student learning during that year; and to begin applying findings from the assessments to improve curricula, instruction and learning in 2004 – 2005.

## Call for advertising, broadcast professionals for team training

The Council seeks suggestions for participants in its fourth site-team training session, March 2 – 3, 2002, in Portland, Ore. This session will be primarily for those in the western half of the country.

The training is intended to concentrate on professional practitioners, especially those working in broadcasting and advertising. Academics, and practitioners in other fields, may attend, but one primary purpose of the training program is to increase the pool of practitioners in these fields who participate in ACEJMC's accreditation process.

Please contact potential participants before nominating them to ensure their interest and availability on that weekend. The Council arranges and pays for travel and lodging for participants in these sessions.

Please send nominations to Susanne Shaw by Nov. 19. For more information, contact her or Charles Higginson (addresses on p. 2).

## Third time around

The Council will conduct the third in the series of training sessions Nov. 10 – 11 in Arlington, Va.

About 35 participants have signed on for the session, which will raise the total who have completed the training to more than 100. The training program is supported by a three-year grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

## The book on diversity

Plans remain on track to publish a book of good practices schools have used to increase and incorporate diversity in their faculties, student bodies and curricula.

Caesar Andrews, chair of the Diversity Committee, told the Council in September that the most effective tool for gathering best practices so far had been a survey of accredited schools. Doug Anderson, a member of the committee, conducted the survey.

Andrews said about 40 schools had responded and the committee would contact others to prompt their response. The committee

also plans to look at self-studies and team reports to get more detail.

Analysis of the information will be time-consuming, Andrews said, because it is primarily narrative and the project has a large scope. The committee has talked with some free-lance writers and editors.

Andrews said the book would be distributed to all accredited schools, probably to non-accredited schools, and perhaps to interested professional groups. The committee hopes to have a draft ready for presentation at the May 2002 meeting and to publish the final version in fall of that year.

## Calendar

### Accrediting Committee

March 23, 2002  
Michigan Avenue Westin Hotel  
Chicago

### Accrediting Council

May 3 - 4, 2002  
Courtyard Marriott - Embassy Row  
Washington, D.C.  
National Association of  
Broadcasters, hosts

### Accrediting Council

Sept. 27 - 28, 2002  
Michigan Avenue Westin Hotel  
Chicago

### Accrediting Committee

March 15 - 16, 2003  
Michigan Avenue Westin Hotel  
Chicago

### Accrediting Council

May 2 - 3, 2003  
San Jose, California

## Deadline past for dues

Schools' annual dues of \$650 were due Oct. 1. As of Oct. 24, several schools had not yet paid.

Checks should be made payable to ACEJMC and sent to Susanne Shaw, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045.

## Member and program updates

**Correction:** The previous issue of *ACEJMC Ascent* erroneously stated that the **Public Relations Society of America** had amended its bylaws to stipulate that one of its two representatives to the Council would be an educator, the other a professional. The Society's Board of Directors discussed this policy but did not amend the bylaws. The editor apologizes for this error.

### Bowling Green State University

**Jim Foust** has been named acting chair of the Department of Journalism. **Nancy Brendlinger** is taking a one-year leave of absence.

### Brigham Young University

**Michael Perkins** has become chair of the Department of Communications; **Ed Adams** is associate chair. Previous chair **Laurie Wilson** has returned to the faculty.

### University of Nevada – Reno

The School of Journalism has a new area code: 775. Telephone and fax numbers are otherwise unchanged.

Council member **Caesar Andrews** has become a member of the Recognition Committee of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. CHEA is a group of accreditors and college and university officers that oversees accreditation in the United States. CHEA is currently reviewing ACEJMC's operations for renewed recognition. In October, **Andrews** became president of the **Associated Press Managing Editors**.

**Andrews** also has a new address and telephone number:

Caesar Andrews, Editor  
Gannett News Service  
7950 Jones Branch Drive  
McLean, Va 22107-0320  
(703) 854-5898

**Alison Alexander** has replaced **Ellen Wartella** on the Council as a representative of the Association for Communication Administration. To reach her:

Alison Alexander  
Head, Department of  
Telecommunications  
College of Journalism and Mass  
Communication  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30602  
tel.: (706) 542-3785  
fax: (706) 542-2183  
e-mail: alison@arches.uga.edu

Council member **Doug Boyd** has a new telephone area code: 859.

Council member **Steve Geimann** will move to the address listed in the ACEJMC directory in December 2001. Until then, his previous address should be used:

Steve Geimann  
Deputy Team Leader  
Bloomberg News  
228 National Press Building  
Washington, D.C. 20045

Council member **Carolina Gonzalez** has a new position and address:

Carolina Gonzalez  
Editorial Board,  
*New York Daily News*  
450 W. 33rd St.  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 210-2205

### ACEJMC Executive Director

**Susanne Shaw** received the Presidential Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The award was for her work since the early 1980s to get diverse groups of media and educational organizations together to set standards that accurately assess the quality of journalism and mass communications programs.

## SPJ honors Steve Geimann

The Society of Professional Journalists bestowed its highest honor on Steve Geimann during its annual convention in early October. The Wells Memorial Key recognizes meritorious service to the Society and the journalism profession.

Geimann represents the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation on the Accrediting Council. He is a member of the SDX Foundation Board, a past SPJ national president and past chairman of the national SPJ Ethics Committee. He has been a reporter, editor, manager and news executive for more than 25 years.

## Appeals Board set for 2002 – 2003

Each October, the ACEJMC president appoints a three-person Appeals Board composed of two educators and one professional practitioner.

This board meets only if a school chooses to appeal a decision of the Council. In such cases, the board considers arguments and submits a recommendation to the Council, which renders the final decision.

Members of the Appeals Board for 2002 – 2003 are: Richard Cole (chair), Dean, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of North Carolina; Maria Russell, Chair, Public Relations Department, Syracuse University; and Nora Lopez, Assistant City Editor, *San Antonio Express-News*.