

Summary
Comprehensive Program Review
BFA in Mass Media
Valdosta State University

Comprehensive Program Review in the University System of Georgia requires that programs be evaluated under the following three categories: (1) Viability; (2) Productivity, and (3) Quality.

VIABILITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—the use of such considerations as available resources, student interest, career opportunities, and contributions to the goals and mission of the institution, University System, and state to determine whether a program should be continued as is or modified (expanded, curtailed, or eliminated). Viability considerations are independent of quality measurements; i.e. high quality program could lack viability, or a program in need of considerable improvement could have a high viability.

According to its program review, Mass Media is a viable program, judging by student interest, career opportunities, and contributions to the goals and mission of the institution. With a three-year average of 31 degrees conferred per year and 253 full-time majors, student interest appears high. Data provided indicates that demand for graduates in this field should continue to grow and the program fits with the mission and goals of VSU. The only factor compromising viability may be the lack of adequate resources – faculty, space, and budget.

PRODUCTIVITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—the number and contributions of graduates of an academic program and/or the number of students served through service courses in the context of the resources committed to its operation. (Additional measures of productivity might include counts of students who meet their educational goals through the program’s offerings, including minors, certificates, or job enhancement, if such goals are part of the program’s mission.)

According to its program review, Mass Media is a productive program, judging from the number of majors and minors served. It is also attempting to be increasingly productive with the introduction of a new track in international documentary production and cooperation in other interdisciplinary efforts such as the Cross-Training certificate with print journalism. Students have opportunities for internships as well as practical experience.

QUALITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—measure of excellence. Quality indicators may include, but are not limited to, attainment of student outcomes, a comparison of program elements relative to internal and external benchmarks, resources, certification results, placement in graduate schools, job placement, and awards and honors received by the program), and other standards.

According to its program review, Mass Media has mainly anecdotal evidence about quality since this type of program does not have any external accrediting agency. The program, though, and its faculty have won various awards and fellowships. To help assess its quality more formally, the program plans to launch a comprehensive study of its graduates beginning in Fall 2005; it also plans to create an Alumni Board of twenty graduates to offer feedback to the program.

AREAS of CONCERN

The Mass Media program should be both enhanced and expanded. With few exceptions, the program earns strong or exemplary evaluations in all indicators. Significant strategic opportunities for program expansion exist via the development of a graduate degree, the expansion of community outreach via Channel 11 and University radio station WVVS, and further development of faculty and student work.

Areas of Concern

(1) Its small faculty struggles to meet the needs of a large number of majors/minors. Currently, the program has eight full-time faculty members for over 250 majors. As a result, students often struggle to graduate in a timely manner, and faculty members are overloaded, both in their classes and in their advising. In order to help slow the growth of the program, it has already raised the GPA for admission.

(2) The program worries about its ability to attract further faculty members, particularly minority faculty members, because of what it perceives as a low salary scale.

(3) The program also feels that its lack of appropriate space and equipment, particularly studio and lab space, may adversely affect the program. While the department recently gained new space in the recently renovated Nevins Hall, it is not sufficient to meet program needs. It has also received a second studio space (Studio A), but the space does not have the equipment necessary to use as a studio.

(4) The program consistently provides nationally recognized programming on its educational access channel, yet the channel does not receive a funding line from the University. Sustaining such award-winning programming without a dedicated budget line is problematic.

(5) Students in the Audio emphasis are hampered in their on-air radio training at WVVS-FM, the student-run on campus radio station.

Action Steps

- (1) The new studio space, Studio A, should be equipped to be used as a studio for video productions, thereby allowing classes to be scheduled in a manner favorable for students, faculty, and productions done cooperatively with the city of Valdosta.
- (2) A dedicated budget line for Channel 11, a vital community outreach function of the Area, should be established. The institution should also negotiate with the cable carrier for expanding Channel 11 into more local households.
- (3) Pursuant to recommendations in the forthcoming Delaware Salary and Equity result, faculty in the area should receive equity adjustments to bring their salaries in-line with other faculty on campus.
- (4) WVVS-FM, the student radio station on campus, should be merged into the program to better train students.
- (5) An advisory alumni board should be established.
- (6) The effects of the higher minimum GPA requirement should be evaluated in the 2006-07 academic term.
- (7) Seek possible accreditation through the National Communication Association.