

NOC Mass Communications Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2015

Attendees to the Mass Communications Advisory Board Meeting were Scott Cloud, Newkirk Herald-Journal; Sean Anderson, Team Radio; Tom Muchmore, Ponca City News; Jeff Funk, Enid News and Eagle; Ricky Roggow, Chisholm Trail Radio; Dr. Cheryl Evans, Dr. Pam Stinson, Dr. Cathy Moore, Dean Percy, and Dr. Rae Ann Kruse.

Dr. Evans welcomed the committee members. Dr. Stinson followed with a brief history of the Mass Communications program, its growth in majors, and the highlights of the students' trip to Chesapeake Arena.

Dr. Cathy Moore started introductions.

Dean Percy, faculty member in Mass Communications, offered information about the program's broadcast radio and journalism offerings.

With the environment constantly in the news, we are encouraging our students to take Environmental Science for their biological science credit and Earth Science for their physical science credit. Do you agree with this line of thinking?

Responses included:

- Yes, it is a regular news topic
- Yes, because of water issues
- Yes because of earthquake, oil drilling activities, and reinjection

Our students currently take Ethics or Business Ethics. We are interested in creating a media ethics course and would like your input.

Responses included:

- You should create a media ethics course, especially with focus on social media.
- Media ethics would be far more important than the other two ethics classes that are offered.
- Recommendations to include short courses in ethics and legal as well as libel.

We are also proposing some one-hour courses in specific areas—investigative journalism, crime scene photography, and social media in journalism. What are your thoughts?

Responses included:

- Dr. Evans asked what our students do after graduation—go on to four-year college or go to work?
- Dean Percy answered that the placement rate was about half and half. Students who went on to college generally attended Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma University, University of Central Oklahoma, or Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

- Dr. Evans said it might be a good idea to consider our transfer schools and make sure we aren't duplicating 3,000 and 4,000 coursework.

We are working on a grant for 10-Mac computer lab for the Tonkawa and Enid campus' Journalism departments. What are you using in your businesses?

Responses included:

- Industry standard is Mac
- Don't try to use conversion software for PC's
- Macs are much more reliable
- Easy to spend a lot of money chasing technology
- Dr. Kruse asked what Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma University, University of Central Oklahoma, and Northwestern Oklahoma State University are using. Response was that OSU, OU, and University of Central Oklahoma are all using Macs. We need to verify what Northwestern Oklahoma State University is using.

Dr. Kruse asked the members to complete the participation survey in their packets to volunteer for internships, job shadowing, and mock job interview judge opportunities.

Dr. Stinson reviewed the Scholarships and Foundation handout from the packet.

The perfect employee has the following attributes:

- Well rounded—understand the landscape of the industry. Have a clear understanding of what students are getting into. An approach that would have worked 15 years ago won't work today.
- Diversify, diversify, diversify! Students that will be hired quickly will have skills in building websites; management and sales; competent software skills; versatile. Some students have unrealistic expectations to start career as a DJ or broadcaster, not work their way up. Students need to go in with eyes open.
- Students now are expected to do things that didn't exist when the committee members graduated.
- Know the difference between reporting and writing an opinion piece.
- Students need diversity because their first job will most likely be in a small area. Almost everyone will need to be able to do sports. Recommend course in Sports, Journalism, or Sports Writing.
- Students need diverse skills because no one works 52 weeks a year and students may have to fill in for other employees or different shifts.
- Diverse skills will allow students to go where the jobs are and be better prepared for their first job. Do whatever is necessary to refine their skills.
- Sean Anderson recommended identifying which students are four year and which ones are going into industry. Start putting together resume and packages.
- Tom Muchmore reminded the group that students need to be willing to make commercials before they will land an on-air personality position.
- Sales skills are critical.
- Build relationships with community members.
- Relate to people from all walks of life. Jack of all trades.
- Multitask and meet a deadline.

- Seek out information, assemble information, exercise judgment, and maintain confidentiality. Golden skill set for everyone.
- Empathy
- Willingness to travel, relocate.

Dr. Evans asked how many of the committee members have hired NOC graduates.

Responses included:

- Ponca City News
- Blackwell Journal-Tribune
- Enid News-Eagle

What software skills would you like to see from our students?

- Print—Creative Cloud (version varied)
- Print—Basic understanding of layout software. Know what a page should look like.
- Print—In Design or Quark
- Broadcast—NextGen, Adobe Audition 6 (critical)
- Copy writing skills

We have eliminated our darkroom and our photography instructor has retired. What recommendations would you have for our Photography Option?

Responses included:

- Students need a couple of photography classes
- Be gentle with Photoshop
- Introduce video, even if it is taken with the student's phone
- Video is a valuable tool, even in broadcast arenas
- Learn to use iMovie editing software

Dr. Evans commented that much of the discussion seemed to focus on Interpersonal Communication.

- Interpersonal Communication should be a required course.
- "There isn't any aspect of our business that doesn't require interpersonal interaction."
- Reflective listening
- Have to be able to bear up under scrutiny.
- Cultivate skills for professional communication.
- Accept feedback without escalating the situation.
- Don't be defensive.
- Hear a person out without interrupting.
- Learn to apologize even if you are right.
- World awareness.

General Discussion

- Students need to be able to sort out the difference between effective communication and other millions out there—Blogs, Tweets, Facebook, and Podcasts. Professionals versus others.

- English grammar and punctuation need to be the focus because high schools are sending students who can't put a sentence together.
- Program needs to focus on "community journalism" and explain to students why local newspapers and radio are important to the local communities.
- Mix entry-level skills course with a vision with "here's where I can apply that."
- Real-life experiences are important to portray. Students need to hear war stories from veterans in the industry.
- Students who might not be good reporters could still be great marketers for the Chamber of Commerce or write excellent employee newsletters for the local hospital.
- Good writing skills are critical for all employees—i.e., educators, lawyers, public relations.
- There aren't enough courses to teach a reporter everything he or she needs to know.
- Ricky Roggow said he chose NOC to get hands-on education and used his Bachelor of Science degree to round out his education. Mr. Roggow commented that what NOC offers is so much better than everyone else because of the early hands-on approach.
- Sean Anderson agreed that it is important for students who are really passionate to get early hands-on experience.
- Tom Muchmore said that speaking for Mass Communication at OSU, it is important to get students immediately started writing or broadcasting because the industry needs people right now.

Dr. Stinson thanked the committee members and the meeting concluded at 7:35 p.m.