

# Assessment Activity Report



## 16-17 SA - Student Publications (SLOs)

**Mission/Purpose Statement:** It is the mission of Student Publications to provide training and professional support for publication of The Shorthorn, the official UT Arlington student newspaper; and other publications. In doing so, as part of its mission, the department provides training for students planning careers in journalism and related fields.

**Student Competencies:** Critical thinking, planning, communication, journalism skills, teamwork

### Intended Outcome: 2nd semester reporters

Second-semester reporters will demonstrate the ability to report and write stories that meet second-semester competencies: mastery of beat reporting techniques on a major beat; production of a story portfolio that reflects enterprise; demonstration of effective judgment in story reporting and selection; development of narrative technique; and development of technique in document reporting.

**Action Steps:** • Before the beginning of the fall 2016 semester, review and if needed revise competencies requirements for Second-Semester Reporters in line with The Shorthorn's current publications strategy.

- Before the end of the second week of the semester, review the competencies with each reporter who meets the experience criteria outlined in the outcome to develop a plan for each reporter that includes time-specific benchmarks for portfolio and skills development.
- Provide at least three training opportunities throughout the semester with professional reporters on topics related to higher-level reporting skill with all areas of reporters (news, sports, features) throughout the semester.
- Provide ongoing coaching for reporters developing specific story assignments.
- At mid-semester, review work to that point with each reporter.
- Continue to provide tools — video cameras, audio equipment, pdf readers, scanners — to help reporters elevate their multimedia skills as outlined on the competencies grid.
- With assignments editors, develop story assignments for each edition of The Shorthorn that meet the higher-level reporter competencies.
- At the end of the fall semester, assess fall semester, adjust action plans if needed for the spring semester.

### Methodology and Criteria for Success

**Portfolio/E-Portfolio** - A portfolio review of stories produced during a two-week period in spring semester (exact dates TBD) by four advanced Shorthorn reporters will show that at least 75 percent of stories produced by advanced reporters meet the second-semester competency levels.

(N/A)

**Responsible Person(s):** Laurie Fox

**Mid-Cycle Update:** Objective not met in Fall 2016. Having a largely new student staff in the fall kept attention on our first-semester reporters' development, which impacted our success with this objective. We have revamped training and the beat and story assignment process to emphasize beat reporting and conduct more consistent reviews of student work during the semester to track progress on this outcome and correct issues as they arise.

### Results of Assessment

**Date:** 2016 - 2017

06/14/2017

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcome Fully Achieved

A review of four second-semester reporters' portfolios containing all work produced between April 3 and April 17, 2017, showed that the majority of stories they produced demonstrated second-semester competencies at a satisfactory or higher level.

Story portfolios for each reporter were assessed using a rubric outlining those competencies: mastery of beat reporting

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techniques on a major beat; production of a story portfolio that reflects enterprise; demonstration of effective judgment in story reporting and selection; development of narrative technique; and development of technique in document reporting. Each reporter scored good or excellent in mastery of the first three competencies; each showed the need for improvement in demonstrating technique in document reporting.

## *Proposed Improvements*

**Proposed Improvement:** Based on the results of this outcome, the department will develop training and resources on using documents as a daily reporting tool. The newsroom adviser will incorporate tips for doing so in her daily critique of student work. (06/14/2017)

## *Related Items*

Core Curriculum Objectives

**Core: Communication** - To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

**Core: Critical Thinking Skills** - To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

**Core: Empirical and Quantitative Skills** - To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

**Core: Personal Responsibility** - To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**Core: Social Responsibility** - To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities.

## **Intended Outcome: Advertising Learning Outcome**

The Shorthorn advertising sales team and advertising design team will demonstrate the ability to sell and produce advertising packages that include print, online and digital advertising for The Shorthorn.

**Action Steps:** • At the beginning of each semester, provide sales training on how to sell ad packages (print, online and digital) and that prepares ad sales representatives identify and understand products appropriate for each platform.

- Provide training for student ad design staff on design and computer software appropriate to online and digital advertising.

Add staff positions, where needed, specifically focused on sale of ads for Shorthorn digital products. The students in these positions will collaborate with other members of the ad sales team to identify opportunities and develop proposals for digital advertising for Shorthorn clients to ensure informed and efficient customer service.

- Implement all-ad team meetings that include salespeople and designers.
- Reconstruct workspace and workflow to allow for additional collaboration and discussion of work on assignments.
- Collaborate with members of the Student Publications digital development team and ad design team to develop design and technical aspects of products.
- Informally review progress at the end of the fall 2016 semester, adjust action steps if needed to achieve outcome by the end of the spring 2017 semester.

## *Methodology and Criteria for Success*

For sales: 75 percent of Shorthorn advertising accounts show a mix of advertising products.

For design: A portfolio review of non-print advertising during a two-week period (TBD) during the spring 2017 semester will show that 75 percent of non-print advertising reflects design best practices and utilization of technology appropriate to the platform.

(N/A)

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**Portfolio/E-Portfolio - Ads:** An accounts review conducted by the advertising assistant director at the end of each fall and spring semester will show that of all advertising accounts with The Shorthorn, 75 percent reflect a mix of advertising products (print, online, social media, etc.) being offered that semester.

**Design:** A portfolio review, conducted by the production manager each spring semester, will show that at least 75 percent of online advertising contained in the portfolio reflects design best practices and utilization of technology appropriate to the platform. Portfolio work will be assessed using a rubric. (N/A)

**Responsible Person(s):** Ads: Tammy Skrehart, assistant director

Design: Adam Drew, production manager

**Timeline for Implementation:** At the beginning of each semester, provide sales training on how to sell ad packages (print, online and digital) and that prepares ad sales representatives identify and understand products appropriate for each platform.

Start of fall and spring semesters: Provide training for student ad design staff on design and computer software appropriate to online and digital advertising.

Fall 2016: Implement all-ad team meetings that include salespeople and designers.

Fall 2016: Reconstruct workspace and workflow to allow for additional collaboration and discussion of work on assignments.

Ongoing, beginning Fall 2016: Collaborate with members of the Student Publications digital development team and ad design team to develop design and technical aspects of products.

Informally review progress at the end of the fall 2016 semester, adjust action steps if needed to achieve outcome by the end of the spring 2017 semester.

**Mid-Cycle Update:** At the end of the fall semester, 73% of our advertising customers bought a mix of products. The design portfolio review was conducted and showed an emphasis on print advertising; future assessment will include multiple platforms. We've reassessed our advertising packaging to add attractive options for customers. We've extended the portfolio review for ad design to include multiple platforms.

## *Results of Assessment*

**Date:** 2016 - 2017

06/12/2017

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcome Partially Achieved

Because this outcome involves two distinct student groups, results are reported and discussed separately:

Sales reports produced at the end of the fall and spring semesters show that The Shorthorn advertising sales team did not meet the criteria for success listed in this outcome, falling short by two percentage points. Seventy-three percent of advertising customers each semester connected on the sale of advertising packages that include print, online and digital advertising for The Shorthorn. Several factors contributed to this, including:

- Accounts in Dining Guide and MHG were counted as print only since they paid for print but the online component was free. We did not account for this in our outcome reporting, although both are Shorthorn products.
- In December and January, the department shifted its sales strategy based on real-time data and feedback from advertising customers that our print-focused ad sales packages were growing less appealing. Given the information, we shifted our ad packages to a heavy focus on digital products with a print add-on option. Doing so increased interest in packages, and the sales students had little time to prepare for the switch with their customers.
- Fewer customers are interested in ad campaigns and packages, with more of an interest in single-sale purchases. This created a challenge for students who are attempting to sell long-term packages.

An assessment of student design work conducted during two weeks of the spring semester shows that 85 percent (11 of 13) advertisements published across platforms reflects design best practices and utilization of technology appropriate to the platform. Work from three students was assessed.

## *Proposed Improvements*

**Proposed Improvement:** While we did not meet the criteria for success as outlined in the sales piece of this learning outcome,

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the results were quite close. We are researching the following proposed improvements based on the overall results of this outcome:

- Continue developing and adjusting sales packages that distribute advertising across multiple - but not all - platforms.
- We did not make the physical adjustment to space, as anticipated, in 2016. We will do so this summer, putting ad designers and sales people in the same workspace.
- Provide a more consistent, required training schedule for ad designers that includes the sales strategy and a foundation for the importance of their work.
- Ensure all processes encourage open communication and feedback on student work. (06/12/2017)

## Related Items

Core Curriculum Objectives

**Core: Communication** - To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

**Core: Teamwork** - To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

## Intended Outcome: 1st semester marketing students

First-semester marketing students will demonstrate the ability to plan and execute a promotional campaign.

**Action Steps:** - Update training materials to include a clear, step-by-step guide to planning and executing typical Shorthorn campaigns.

- Provide multiple training opportunities for student staff that tie campaigns to departmental objectives.
- Establish campaign assignments early in semester to allow appropriate time for research and development of campaign.
- Establish benchmarks for success appropriate to each campaign.
- During marketing meetings, provide feedback and other discussion on completed and anticipated campaigns.
- Reward good work using "Shorthorn bucks."

## Methodology and Criteria for Success

**Other** - Marketing assistants are trained and expected to use a checklist of procedures and action steps for marketing campaigns that they develop and implement during their employment with Student Publications. In addition, the marketing coordinator establishes specific goals for each campaign (i.e., 200 new social media followers). For this outcome, the marketing coordinator will review all campaign checklists for the semester. To successfully meet this outcome, the review must show that all campaigns followed each step listed on the checklist, which is filled out by the student assistant in charge of that particular campaign. In addition, the review will show that at least 75 percent of the time, the specific goals set for campaigns were met. (N/A)

**Responsible Person(s):** Marketing coordinator Brian Schopf

**Timeline for Implementation:** Prep work (training, updates to checklists, etc.): by Fall 2016

Collection of data: Ongoing, as checklists will be kept in a file by the marketing coordinator, through fall and spring semesters

Data analysis: December and May of each academic year

**Mid-Cycle Update:** This outcome was met halfway. A review of checklists showed that students successfully followed all steps in campaign planning and execution for each campaign (100%). However, the review also showed that specific goals were not set for campaigns, a critical aspect of this outcome. The director and marketing coordinator, with the student marketing manager, will establish goals for each campaign weekly during 1:1 meetings.

## Results of Assessment

**Date:** 2016 - 2017

06/14/2017

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcome Partially Achieved

Of the four spring campaigns with set goals during the spring semester, marketing assistants achieved the goal for three, or 75

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percent. Thus, the goal was achieved. A review of the checklists showed that students successfully followed the required steps in campaign planning and execution.

This outcome provided insight into the external challenges that affect the ability to reach set goals. That is, anything from lack of interest in a product to the weather can impact whether an outreach goal is achieved. However, the act of simply setting a goal for each marketing interaction seemed to engage students in achieving despite such odds.

The outcome also demonstrated the need to provide goal-setting training for students earlier in their employment, to fully engage them in consistent discussions on how to shift gears when goals are not met as well as assist in the development of critical-thinking, on-the-spot decision-making. We will incorporate that into next year's planning.

## *Proposed Improvements*

**Proposed Improvement:** The outcome demonstrated the need to provide goal-setting training for students earlier in their employment, to fully engage them in consistent discussions on how to shift gears when goals are not met as well as assist in the development of critical-thinking, on-the-spot decision-making. We will incorporate that into next year's orientation and training sessions.

(06/14/2017)

## *Related Items*

Core Curriculum Objectives

**Core: Communication** - To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

**Core: Teamwork** - To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

**Core: Personal Responsibility** - To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.