

Name Change Proposal

From: Department of Journalism

To: Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Name Change Justification

A. Mission of the academic unit: How does the proposed name more clearly fit the mission of the academic unit? Does the change reflect a change in the unit's mission?

Answer: This is the Mission of the Journalism department, as stated in our Constitution:

“The mission of the Department of Journalism is to train students for careers in journalism inclusive of public relations and mass media communication. To achieve our mission, the Department is committed to producing working journalists, public relations practitioners and other communicators with a broad background in the liberal arts and sciences. Reporting, writing and editing skills are emphasized in all phases of the degree program. By producing students who are prepared to compete on the national level for top-flight employment opportunities, we also best serve the communities of Southern California. The program has developed a core of skills and related theory that are focused into one major concentration with several specializations that allow student to develop to their full potential.”

The new name is more inclusive and better reflects our stated Mission. Since Journalism is not the only discipline taught and covered by the department, the proposed new name will do a much better job of conveying the diversity of classes, tracks, sequences and career options we offer to our students.

B. Curricular implications: Does the new name reflect past changes in curriculum? Does it reflect plans for future curriculum changes? Do any planned changes impinge on other academic units? If so, what are the plans for avoiding unnecessary duplication?

Answer: Historically, our department has offered all classes in Public Relations and other Mass Communication disciplines on campus. We have recently (spring 2009) approved a new sequence of classes in Public Relations, which is now being offered as an option to our majors. We are also anticipating the creation of a new Master's degree in Mass Communication. The new department name reflects these changes and more clearly indicates the breadth of the options we offer.

We have checked with the chairs of Communication Studies (Sharon Downey) and Film & Electronic Arts (Craig Smith in May 2009), and neither of them opposes our name change. Those colleagues don't see any significant overlap between what our respective departments offer to students.

C. Effect on the University: How will the new name assist students in finding the program they need? How does the new name make clear the differences between the academic unit and others in the University?

Answer: Our new name is more inclusive, and it will help us to market our major, classes, sequences and options to the students. The new name will also allow us to publicize and promote our mass communication courses in a way that is clearer and more effective. All of our electronic and printed materials will immediately reflect those changes, and will become much more effective recruiting and promotion tools.

D. Comparisons: What names are used for comparable academic units in other Universities in the CSU System and nationwide?

Answer: We are an institutional member of both the Association of Schools in Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC) and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). Our external accrediting body is the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). Our new name (journalism and mass communication) is much more in line with the scope and breadth of these three important organizations (note that all three of them have journalism and mass communication in their names).

Nationally, a very significant plurality of accredited schools uses the names "journalism and mass communication" or "journalism and mass communications". This is a very well known name in the discipline, and many schools have chosen it because it reflects the versatility and scope of the media industry.

Only four schools in the CSU system have accredited journalism programs. Out of those, two are departments of journalism (Chico and Northridge), one is a department of communications (Fullerton), and one is a school of journalism and mass communications (San José). The other two accredited programs in the state are a graduate school of journalism (Berkeley) and the Annenberg School for Communication (USC).

We have applied for external accreditation with ACEJMC, and will be reviewed in Fall 2011. Besides putting us more in line with national trends, our new name will also help us to convey better what we do and who we are.