Note: This document contains notes from a faculty conversation around the strengths and weaknesses articulated in our self study.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The self study process provided ample opportunity for reflection on the strengths and potential areas of growth for our unit. Key takeaways include the following:

Areas of Weakness and Potential Growth

1. **Formal Assessment of Advising.** At present, aside from informal feedback, our measure of the effectiveness of our advising is our retention and six-year graduation rates. We need to develop direct measurements to better understand how well our advising efforts serve our students.

   Monica will follow up with Joan to see what procedures they have in place at the college level.

   CP: I feel like the most direct way to measure this would be time to graduation.

   MW: A direct measure might be the comprehensiveness of our tracking of the students. They have records of who spoke with them before, etc.

   DE: We have physical files, but perhaps this is something to go online with.

   DS: Maybe we need to digitize this and have a place for notes available to the advisor. When it's saved, an email can go out to student with a survey, asking for their input.

   CF: We can make this accessible to Joan.

   TS: This also builds in some accountability for students.

   MA: What we can do before we get something from the university is to follow up on advising to create a survey through Google Docs and, after the advising session, we can send that link out.

   BM: I can look into this further.

   MA: I'll help.

   KJ: Talking to Joan may be beneficial, perhaps to connect to DegreeWorks, etc.

2. **Individual Advisement.** Previously, all undergraduates were required to receive permits from the department before registering for journalism and media studies classes. The permit system required every student to have individual counseling. Absent that, the department is still searching for the most effective way to improve individualized advising.

MA: I do advising for a lot of students. When they come to me, I get their physical file. There are forms, advising forms, etc. by the entrance.

I make marks on the forms, and we talk through their options. I make a copy for them, and I keep a copy in our files. These are also available online.

I did a big advising session at the beginning of the semester. I had about 15 students show up.

KJ: DegreeWorks is a great tool available to students.

MA: Students to login to their accounts so we can review the information together.

DS: On the folders that Casey P sets up, I make notes on the folder, with dates, etc., in addition to filling out the form and making sure it's complete.

MW: It's challenging because we often don't have all the information we need, and the stakes are high.

BM: We can check and see if there are existing programs to see what software may exist to pull this off.

3. **Alumni Feedback.** We have expanded efforts to seek input from alumni, but we need to take further steps to incorporate alumni feedback into our assessment process. One important development in this area will be the inclusion of alumni survey results in our end-of-semester faculty meetings focused on assessment.

    KJ: We have a local alumni coordinate for USFSP housed here now. Heidi, I believe, is her name. She's come here from Tampa and she's in Williams house.

    DE: Okay, so she's part of development and someone we can talk with.

    MW: How complete is our alumni records?

    CP: There's a gap at the undergraduate level for me in terms of determining when and if people graduate. I know if students enroll in Senior Seminar, but that's not equivalent to graduation.

    DE: It seems we should be notified, or given a roster, when students graduate.

    MW: THere's a concerted institutional effort to build up alumni outreach, and that's something we will tap into, but it's a necessary foundation.

    KJ: Going back to development and advancement, they're speaking to Lauren to work on ways to see retention rates.

DE: I'll follow up.

4. **Unit Name and Identity.** We see efforts to improve recruitment and retention tied to our ability to rename the department or its programs to emphasize the digital nature of our work.

   DE: First, I want to make sure everyone knows a goal is to tie into STEM. Digital/Multimedia is one of the state programs that fits into that classification. It's also very important that we don't lose our core designation of "journalism" in the attempt to update our name.

   MW: This is essential for our department, especially considering the Tampa department is also seeking this designation.

5. **Support for Digital Efforts.** We need to bolster staffing support for our efforts in the realms of multimedia and digital journalism. To that end, we have applied for a permanent position for the VideoWorks technical director. In addition, we are hopeful to hire for a promised clinical instructor position in Spring, 2016. Additionally, we hope to receive a promised clinical instructor position in Spring 2016.

   The technical director position has been made permanent (though this has not been finalized). We are also advocating a permanent position for the Multimedia Specialist.

   We have been approved for tenure track hire to begin fall 2016. Additionally, we hope to receive a promised clinical instructor position in fall 2016.

Areas of Strength and Continued Investment

1. **Entrepreneurial Efforts.** We have excelled at finding innovative revenue streams, including the Auxiliary Education Business Activity we have formed for our VideoWorks production studio. Beyond serving our faculty and students, VideoWorks generates income by taking on projects for other campus units. We are also exploring revenue possibilities via different department-sponsored on-campus events.

   MW: VideoWorks generates income by on campus and off campus contracts.

2. **Niche Offerings, Especially in Food Writing.** We have developed an innovative graduate certificate in food writing –- at the time of development, one of only two in the country offered by a journalism department -- and have successfully recruited new students into this program, which has also become a conduit for our other graduate programs. In addition, general interest in food writing has prompted the addition of an undergraduate minor in food writing (in process) and a variety of community programs and events.

   DE: Let's make sure we focus on photography here as well.

3. **Digital Focus.** We have reacted with great agility to a changing media landscape. For example, visual communications component came a few years after the launch of the M.A. program in 1991. While schools around the country were struggling to reconfigure themselves to react to both community news and media convergence, JMS had already incorporated both into its basic philosophy and daily practices. In 2012, the department launched its one-of-a-kind, fully online, master's program in Digital Journalism and Design. That program curriculum includes cutting-edge media technology, multimedia journalism, information design and social media, advancing graduate students' digital skills to meet evolving expectations of communication professionals.

4. **Partnerships.** We have formed working relationships across campus and within the Tampa Bay community that provide wide-ranging academic and professional opportunities to our students.

   DE: We have two community advisory communities -- (food writing and photography) culinary communication and community journalism.

5. **Collegiality and Community.** We have a longstanding culture of openness and communication. We value the kind of robust debate and respectful dialogue that encourage personal and professional growth.

GOALS AND PLANS

Our department's strategic plan outlines five strategies. Two or more goals have been defined to support each strategy. Goals we have already achieved appear in bold below. Remaining goals have a one to five-year timeline.

1. Strategy 1: Develop vision and realign programs for future of profession.
   a. Goal 1: Change Departmental or Program names
   b. Goal 2: Combine M.A. Programs
2. Strategy 2: Create Culinary Journalism programs
   a. **Create Food Writing & Photo Grad Cert.**
   b. **Offer Sizzling Images short course**
   c. **Begin summer abroad program**
   d. Create Undergrad Minor
   e. Begin raising funds for endowed chair in communication and culture
3. Strategy 3: Build Community Journalism programs into secure, revenue-producing endeavor
   a. **Hire tenure-track CJ Prof.**
   b. Create Robert Dardenne Awards Endowment in Community Journalism
   c. Find better space for NNB
   d. Develop community partnership to create long-term NNB impact
   e. Begin raising funds for endowed chair in community journalism
4. Develop Data Journalism Program
   a. Work with KTCOB, develop grad and undergrad certificate programs
5. Enhance Program Sustainability
   a. Market programs
   b. Recruit regional minority students
   c. Expand VideoWorks' capacity and revenue
   d. Increase enrollment:
      i. Undergrad by 5 percent
      ii. Grad by 5 percent
      iii. Both by 10 percent