

Department of Journalism and Digital Communication Faculty Meeting  
May 1, 2020, 10 a.m.

Casey Frechette  
Casey Peterson  
Chris Campbell  
Edgardo Dangond  
Monica Ancu  
Bernardo Motta  
Mark Walters  
Elliott Wiser  
Deni Elliott  
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Janet Keeler  
Tony Silvia

CF: Good morning. We made it to the end of the semester!

CF: We are in good shape re: summer enrollment. Most classes are at or past capacity. We made a couple of hard decisions early on (canceling the mini-mester), but now we don't need to make any deletions from the summer schedule. We are seeing an uptick in Tampa enrollments, particularly in electives, in summer and fall. This is a point of concern among USFSP departments because there isn't a great mechanism to put our students at priority. More Tampa students have prioritized enrollment. In the short term, let's keep tabs on our individual classes and make accommodations as needed. In our case, making sure courses are available to majors is something our department can do easier than others.

CF: Fall enrollment in our classes is OK, but not as good as summer. There's a general callout for each of us to encourage students to look at their fall schedules and decide what they need to take. Earliest a decision would be made re: fall teaching would be early June. One of the likely factors in this decision will be the need for physical distancing throughout the fall, which throws scheduling into chaos. Unfortunately we don't have much firm information at this point. Textbook adoption is July 3, but I recommend we hang back a couple of weeks before making any efforts towards course redevelopment for online.

CF: The Provost's recent note made mention of compensating instructors who had to re-tool summer courses for online, but not many details on that at this point.

DE: I think students may be holding back because they're waiting to see how courses are going to be offered.

TS: I agree, the question about fall comes up in my class all the time. I saw a study the other day that 1/5 students who have been accepted to university in the fall are either not going or are waiting to see how courses will be delivered.

MA: Some universities (Alabama, Tennessee) have already announced they're going to open. No campus events, maybe classes every other week. I haven't heard anything but it might be the same for us.

MW: Seems premature to make that decision because we don't know how it's going to be.

CC: Yes, it's like the chicken and the egg. Many students want to come back. I see the fall as a sort of hybrid – some online and some face to face. A lot of students may decide not to come back at all.

JK: But teaching in two different ways is very difficult.

BM: One thing to consider is that for many students, their dorm is their home. The earlier they can know if the dorm will be open or not, the earlier they can begin to make financial decisions re: housing.

CC: In last Marketing and Communications meeting, they said they're planning to open the dorms in the fall. Which leads to a question of how they'll enforce social distancing in campus housing.

DE: I think asking faculty to teach a class simultaneously online and face to face is insane.

CP: I don't think UFF would allow that.

JK: Many students can't afford to take that "gap year."

BM: Also remember international students must have face-to-face classes.

BG: Many parents are also reluctant to pay for online courses.

JK: But if the entire state goes online in the fall, they won't have a choice.

JK: Everyone in MMC 2100 this semester has already registered for JOU 2100. A couple may be on the fence re: their major. We have 17/20 in there, so that's heartening.

TS: If you have to put JOU 2100 online, there's a precedent because Wayne Garcia has taught it online with 100 students.

JK: I also wonder what I will be able to ask them to do for classes – do they go out to cover things?

EW: How does graduate enrollment look? I only have one in JOU 6114.

CP: We should update the application deadline.

EW: The KTCOB is really pushing the online MBA. We should really promote the online portion of the graduate program.

CF: We can also highlight that it's been online since 2012 and is fully accredited.

BM: This all goes back to the lack of marketing the program. This is an opportunity to promote our accreditation.

MA: We getting a new website?

CF: It's coming. Getting a link to a test site next week. Later this month or next they'll launch, I think.

CC: In Marketing and Communications, they're talking about how we will be a subdomain.

MA: If we're going to promote ourselves as an online program, our website needs more multimedia.

CF: I also wonder about putting more of a spotlight on our DJD alumni and the cool things they're doing. Maybe there are some things we can organize content-wise that we can put on the "new" website.

EW: Could we have an email congratulating our seniors with information about our master's program?

CF: Good idea.

CC: Do we have access to edit our site?

CP: Yes, but any changes we make at this point won't be ported over to the new site Tampa is setting up.

CF: For fall, we will be in a better position if we codify what it would take to convert your face-to-face classes to an online class. That way we can show the college the degree of work it would take. And we can show which courses should really, really be taught face to face.

JK: For MMC 2100, that's the first face to face class they will take. I've found that's the class where they bond with each other and with the program. If that goes online, we need to figure out a way to get them together.

CC: Janet brought up a good point earlier. For photojournalism, I have to change the curriculum. If there are no events, what do they take photos of?

BM: I was just organizing my summer classes. I counted the number of hours invested in creating the class. Took me 225 hours to transform NNB to an online course. That's a cost the university should take seriously. It's a class that needs contact and outside activity. We need to

consider liability. If a student gets sick because they were sent out to do work for class, they can sue the university. Consider the ethics of what you're going to do.

MW: The university is probably thinking the same thing re: liability.

TS: People can sign waivers, but that is only a limitation of liability. It's not absolute. I was thinking of advanced reporting. Maybe in all of the courses we need to have a component on reporting remotely – that's the reality; that's their future.

BM: That's what I did with my class and how I am prepping NNB. If they can't go anywhere, they can still call people, find information, use the internet.

MW: I think it would help to look at the advantages of remote reporting rather than the negative aspects. We started DJD for just this reason.

CF: I also wonder if this opens opportunities for us in terms of remote connections with newsrooms that may not be in our geographic area to inform how we address this new way of teaching.

CC: There are so many technologies out there that allow this virtual connection, but eventually people are going to start wanting to be in physical space with human connection.

MA: It's hard to adjust. My guess is we will have some sort of campus activity in the fall unless the situation gets very bad in the summer. If they're willing to reopen the beaches and some of the outdoors, they may slowly open everything else.

EW: I just gave an interview to Poynter about the future of journalism. If I'm running newsroom I'm seeing how much I'm saving by having people stay at home. Remote reporting would be a good idea for a course.

TS: That's how I'm going to run advanced reporting in the fall. Historically, this department has been at the fore of teaching multimedia. We were teaching that stuff 10 years ahead of everyone else. We have a legacy of proaction, not reaction.

JK: We also have to be aware of peoples' equipment. Many operations are expecting their employees to provide their own equipment.

MW: Re: human connection. One of the things we initially thought about in DJD was to have an intensive summer institute as a way to bring people together. I'm also convinced that if you can have surgery remotely, visit a therapist remotely, you can report a story remotely.

CC: The equipment we have to loan out to students is beyond obsolete. The equipment used in professional studios is different from equipment used in remote reporting. Course development will be a rush the longer the university delays a decision about how classes will be reporting.

CF: USF received about \$30 million from the CARES Act. Half has to go to students, but the other half is discretionary money for the university. I think we could create a list of equipment students would need to successfully do remote reporting.

CC: You can buy equipment at every budget level.

JK: They need good phones. Good phones can do almost everything. But many students have bad phones.

MW: Do we have a list of what you need to be a backpack journalist? That's something we need to include in all of our online courses.

TS: It really goes back to what you're teaching to: the end product, or the process? If the former, you need higher-end equipment, but the latter can be taught with a phone.

CC: I believe there's a balance between storytelling and technical skills.

JK: Right now, we can accept lower production values. Just look at the news today.

MW: It also opens the conversation of packaging vs. content. Today, as people report from their living rooms, content has become king over presentation.

BM: Many newer publications are looking for reporting. The delivery is a consequence of the content. You can do most reporting and packaging with a phone, small tripod, microphone and lens. I would recommend we keep most classes focused on processed, and have one class targeted at high end production.

CF: One thing I'd like to see us be able to do is to document on our website a sense of how students will be getting up to date training if they take fall classes. If everyone could come up with a blurb for their class to describe how the curriculum is relevant and contemporary, that'd be great.

CF: The idea of a dedicated remote reporting class in the fall is also intriguing.

TS: When I was in radio news, at least half of what we did was produced without ever leaving the building due to distance and time. Thinking about "remote reporting," what's old is what's new again.

JK: Yes, but how do we report on people who don't have phones or webcams? We need to give voice to the voiceless – homeless people, differently abled, etc.

TS: True, but there are some stories that can be done remotely, some perhaps even better reported remotely.

CC: What is the Tampa Bay Times doing?

JK: Phone interviews. Photogs are masking up and going out, shooting from afar. One already got COVID. It's up to them to supply their own PPE.

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CF: Vote for exploring faculty admin role for NNB was unanimous. Next week I'd like to get a draft of the position description. We need to come up with a list of duties and qualifications. Sharing a Google Doc with you all that includes the proposal for the position we wrote in March. Let's use that as a starting point to come up with a one pager. Feel free to add items and comment as you see fit.

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CF: All departments are being asked to produce or revise governance documents ahead of documentation. Sharing that Google Doc with you now. What we have on the website are our bylaws, diversity statement, assessment statement and a few other things we have produced for accreditation over the years. Also providing links to other departments' governance documents. Keep a lookout for this share next week.

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CF: Also wanted to provide an update on the digital yearbook project. A lot of interest from people in what we're doing. We're making a digital yearbook/scrapbook for graduating students. It's become a custom social network. Family/friends/classmates can give them well wishes on their page.

DE: Have you considered marketing this to other schools?

CF: Yes.

BM: You should also let the Chronicle of Higher Education know. High schools, too.

CF: We are also developing a streaming platform. Probably won't be ready for graduation but might be of interest to other schools or conferences. It's essentially a virtual meeting room. We have great capability and flexibility with what the output is.

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MW: The question came up re: allowing a GRE score to replace the 3.0 requirement.

CP: The university requirement is 3.0 with a 10% exception. A 2.8 is different than a 1.5, for example.

MW: Yes, there has to be a floor.

DE: Are we under new college restrictions in terms of admission given consolidation?

CF: I'm not aware of any but it's a good question.

MA: Given that they need a 3.0 GPA while in grad school, if their GPA goes below 3.0 they'll be put on probation. Grad studies accepts students on probation for only 2 semesters. We can still admit people below 3.0 and make it conditional.

MW: I think we need to take it on a case by case basis.

CP: Agree.

MW: The idea is to find something that predicts success in the program. The challenge is that we'd take a risk of having someone in the program who won't make it.

DE: It used to be that we get a 10% exception for admits. I'm reluctant to make a decision before we know what the standard is going forward.

JK: And students can't take the course now anyway.

CF: We will get clarity, but overall I'm hearing that we should follow the practices we have been, at least in the short term.

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CF: Reports!

BM: NNB. Today, Nicole will present her website on Methodist Town. Now it's just more prep for summer and online transition. Contacting folks letting them know Nicole will be in charge for now.

TS: Internships have come to a close. 9/10 got their number of hours. One student won't finish but she hasn't dropped. Submitting self evaluations and supervisor evaluations now. I will need direction on what we tell students going forward in the fall. My answers are indefinite. I need to know how to tell students internships are impacted.

MA: Most of our classes are full in summer and fall, especially electives. If you get students asking permission to add the class, ask them where they are in their studies. If they're graduating this year and are our majors seeking to take a non-skills class, give them permission.

MA: We had a discussion about moving courses online. In the future it's worth having one section of MMC 2100 online. Every semester we have 2-3 students who need it but can't get in. We may be able to fill a section if it's online.

MW: Are we worried about the online section cannibalizing the face to face section?

MA: Yes. But it's worth a try. I also think we should consider offering an online section in the summers. It's so common a course that we can market it to other universities.

JK: MMC 2100 has to be developed as its own course, though. Can't just take the face to face class and throw it online. In the fall, we only have 9 students enrolling in MMC 2100 – 8 in the day, 1 at night. Keeping an eye on that.

MW: No updates on grad program.

EW: Media Management offered online in the fall. If anyone is advising grad students, please push it. I sent along some bullet points.

JK: We taught Sizzling Images in springs, but in spring 2021 I'd like to put it on hiatus. That class is heavily dependent on putting students out into the community. Also, expanding the Topics in Food Communication in the spring to food blogging and social media – digital communication with food.

BM: This is my last faculty meeting. ☹