

Department of Journalism and Digital Communication Faculty Meeting
Friday, September 17, 2021

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CF: Hello, everyone.

DE: If anyone knows of anyone interested, I'm looking for an executive assistant.

CF: Let's jump into item three. Edgardo, could you please say a few words about the DJD final project platform project?

ED: It's a platform that will allow everyone to create ARPs. The idea is to facilitate the project from beginning to end, from proposal to completion. There will be a timeline that lets the student know where they are in the process. In the end, we will have a repository so people can look at all of the projects, either public or private. People in the department can look at the projects, as well as potential students. At this point, we have gone through all the steps and are working on the data in the database and timeline of the development. We want a beta version for testing this spring.

EW: Will it be able to handle large video project?

ED: Yes, but the project at this point is about capturing each step of the process. We could store video, but that doesn't deal much with the step-by-step process.

JK: Great idea. Will they use this to file their proposal? Will they have access in the semester before they start?

ED: Yes, completely separate from Canvas.

CF: To underscore Edgardo's summary, the goal here is to highlight the great work our DJD students do for prospective students. Also valuable for current students coming up on their

projects. Equally important is the timetable aspect of the project. This is a natural evolution of how Edgardo has archived projects in the recent years.

CF: Joan is with us now. Any updates?

JE: We are getting a new advisor! This person will advise for 4 different majors, Digital Comm included. I'll be training them. Peterson will be on the search committee. We are in the period of late adds but I have not been working with any journalism students there. For the spring, many students prefer the online options.

CF: Mark, any updates on faculty searches?

MW: We began this process in the summer. We had a pending second hire we were waiting to come through. It came through, so we are doing a combined search for a science communicator and data visualization line. We will be searching from one pool. We have worked through the qualifications in the first ad and added qualifications in the data viz ad. Both positions will be posted now, until October 31. More than the officially posted ads, we will find more folks with individual contacts. We have many meetings scheduled, but the committee will meet on Jan. 17 to select finalists. We are on track and moving forward.

MA: The ads aren't published yet?

MW: I just sent them to Woroner on Friday, but they should be up by now or any minute.

MA: Timeline?

MW: They'll be advertised until Oct. 31, then we will have meetings to choose semifinalists and finalists. We will interview finalists on Jan. 10, and we will select finalists on Jan. 17. We will make recommendations on Jan. 19 to the chair.

DE: I think it's important we reach out to relevant organizations (Society for Environmental Journalism, etc.) because last time it was left to HR and we didn't get great candidates.

MW: Right. I'm going to reach out individually to people.'

CF: There's a lot of hiring around the college. One thing many people are thinking about is building on the diversity of the faculty at USF. The office of DIEO has funding to give to searches among diverse groups.

MW: This is critical in this search because the research will touch on underserved communities.

NY: I can post on science boards.

CF: One other note: The importance of informal outreach, talking to our professional networks about the availability of the positions.

CF: A note to reiterate: we still have our full time instructor hire in the hopper and we will relaunch that search in January.

CF: Had a conversation with the editor at the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. For years now, they have had grant funded reporting assignments (The Community Foundation of Sarasota County). The foundation puts together an emergency fund for folks experiencing financial hardships. The Herald Tribune funds yearlong positions to cover stories related to what's happening in the community about fundraising efforts. The rest of the year this is a general assignment reporter that might go a bit broader with a focus on government accountability. Going forward, they're interested in setting this up as a yearlong fellowship for our alumni. Ideal timetable: August/September start with students who have graduated in spring or summer. They're flexible with perhaps starting them in the summer. Competitive process – a single position. We'd be involved in the selection process. One thing that's important is that the person has some practical experience under their belt (CN, Weekly Challenger, etc.). Also important is that the person would be independent and a self starter. Person would be an independent contractor - \$55,000 per year, no benefits. The position is open right now, so if anyone has a sense of a recent grad, let me know.

CF: We need to formally approve meeting minutes from last time.

MA: Motion to approve.

DE: Second.

CF: Let's talk about assessment. Thanks for participating in our data collection for the past academic year. We submitted our report some weeks ago, and got feedback on it. A couple of things we need to take a closer look at to comply with One USF assessment. The good thing is this dovetails nicely with what we need to do for ACEJMC. The first thing is how we map competencies to our curriculum. We've done this for years, noting which class students can expect to encounter which competency. Moving forward, we need to note what level of interaction – introduced, reinforced, mastered and assessed. Because we have a clearly defined sequence – especially in the undergrad program – we can easily note which level of interaction each competency has.

CF: The second thing we will need to further refine is the idea of criteria of success in each competency. We need to set a quantitative cutoff, say 75% or 80%. But we also need to indicate what portion of a class should reach the threshold, say 90% of the class that reaches the threshold. We need to discuss whether we need to do this course-by-course or program wide. We also need to consider a minimum cutoff. Also note that if the threshold isn't met isn't the worst – so long as we identify how we will adjust things going forward.

CF: Finally, there's the issue of how we do our scoring. We don't have a lot of purely objective assessments. We have a lot of subjective assessments – grading a paper, evaluating a multimedia project, etc. In a nutshell, the issue is that for subjective competencies, we need to include at least one additional faculty member who is scoring all of the student work or a sample of student work. The proviso is that if we can mediate the subjectivity in the assessments, the assessment

folks would be amenable to that. But because we have so many subjective assessments, this could be way too much work for us. One idea to make it manageable is to use a 5% sample. But given our small classes, a sample would be negligible. Thoughts?

MW: When you talk about the sample approach, 5% of the students' work would go to a second scorer?

CF: Yes.

MA: On every course?

CF: On many courses. It'd be on every assessment that couldn't be automatically scored.

MA: This is coming from USF, not ACEJMC?

CF: Yes.

MA: Why?

CP: SACS.

CF: We are getting this from the Office of Decision Support. The rationale is that if you only have the instructor grading, there can be a rose colored glasses effect.

MW: What happens if I grade a paper and give it a B and the professor gave it an A?

CF: Good question. I would like to bring it to ODS. Is the student's grade averaged?

MW: Is there functionality for this in Canvas?

CF: I'd like to know.

DE: One thing people are doing in departments is deciding on what counts as "success." If you decide that 80% should score C+ or above, the difference of scores is not a big deal.

MA: Can we approach it differently in some of our assignments in skills courses? Can we set the assignments in such a way that are objective in terms of application of a skill?

CF: Formulating a detailed rubric with criterion that are quantitatively measured?

MA: Yes.

CF: The second scorer would come in and work with the rubric? Or is this in lieu of a second scorer? My understanding is we'd need a second scorer if the grade couldn't be given automatically. I do think having a rubric would make the process easier, though.

CC: I grade them on things that are objective, things you can find in the metadata. For me, how do you grade art? Literally, all of my assignments rely on observable things.

CP: Has anyone seen the moderated grading option on Canvas?

MW: Even on the quantitative stuff, so much comes down to human judgement. What about curved grades?

MA: Are there any guidelines from the university we can see? When do we start this? This semester? That would change how we teach now.

CF: This is a long term shift in how we approach things. It doesn't make sense to shift how we approach assignments mid semester. I'll see if I can get specific examples of how other units have approached this. My sense is they will have some flexibility on how we approach this with as little disruption as possible. Also, we can be fairly selective about when we do this – specific assignments that lend themselves to multi-grading approach. Things like portfolios in senior seminar that we can assign multiple competencies to.

CC: The time commitment is going to be notable for faculty.

CF: Our assessments will break down if we can't keep up with the numerical approach, yes.

EW: This applies to grad and undergrad?

CF: Yes.

EW: Is every university doing SACS accreditation doing this? Or is this a USF thing?

CF: We are going to do what we can to meet reporting requirements, but we are also going to do what we need to do for our professional accreditation obligations. We will have to be creative to serve both parties. This conversation has introduced some questions that I'll take back to ODS. Let me get more clarifications and I'll loop back soon.

MA: Maybe we should set up some meetings to look at competencies and courses. We have more than just a writing sequence.

CF: Let's have sequence-specific meetings to map them.

CF: Let's talk about accreditation. There are updates from the past few months. Later this month, we will get a memo requesting a letter of invitation from USF, which will kick off the self study. August/September 2022 – Self study due. January/February 2023 – Site team visit. We will ask for the later date given our hiring situation.

CF: The self study is a systematic examination by the unit of its environment, focusing on mission, range of activities, accomplishments and plans for the future. A review of our

assessment and ways to enhance the program. Measure of strengths and weaknesses. Important to not gloss over areas we can improve.

CF: We will produce both print and digital versions. ACEJMC is much happier to see website versions, rather than a PDF. We can do this. Two parts: Part 1 – General Information; Part 2 – Supplementary information and evidence of our compliance with eight accrediting standards. (Eight this time instead of nine last time.)

CF: A unit doesn't have to meet all eight standards to be accredited, but the body hasn't ever set a clear line of how many you need. Unofficially, if we don't hit any of the first four competencies, it will be difficult to reach reaccreditation.

CF: Strategic plans will be given greater scrutiny by site teams. The 72 credits outside the major requirement has been eliminated, introducing a little more flexibility for our students going forward. Professional values and competencies are reduced from 12 to 10.

CP: What about our two additional competencies?

CF: The business/entrepreneurship competency is good so we can continue with it. The data visualization competency was taken on by ACEJMC. So we are at 11 competencies now. But is there something we are teaching that isn't included in this list? If so, we can have conversation to include an additional. One additional competency specific to grad programs would be related to research skills.

CF: On diversity and inclusiveness. Standard has been revised to make more important. Stay tuned for further guidance on next steps.

Regular Updates>>>>

MW: Faculty Senate update. Only one special meeting was called but I wasn't there. I want to put the objective grading issue on the agenda moving forward.

MW: Seven internships over summer. Five this semester. Question about types of internships. What is acceptable as an internship? For example, this fall we have someone at WMNF and WUSF, but we have people with non-news outlets. Should we be more specific? Second, how do we keep track of these? Difficult to go back to see what our students have done. How might we formalize the process?

MW: Grad program has been struggling to get reports. We used to get reports from Mike Slattery, but he doesn't seem to deal with that anymore.

CP: Reid Lesperance is dealing with applications now, she should be able to help.

JK: We need to have internships that aren't one-offs. How can we sustain internships from semester to semester? Having something structured would help. Also, we have a student who finished the certificate this semester who has had photos printed in the Detroit Free Press!

CZ: I wanted to reach out because I spoke with the Herald Tribune and they will have internships aside from the fellowship. We are getting into internship application season. Creative Loafing is open for them now. Also, Tampa Bay Times just opened up applications for summer 2022 internships.

CF: We don't have an internship requirement in our program, so we should impress upon our students how valuable internships are. Mark, are you asking whether we should loosen or tighten our internship requirements based on the fact that many students don't go into journalism? Perhaps we should define internships by the skillsets students get rather than the industry?

MW: Yes, especially given the transition to a stem program, consolidated.

CF: There's important mapping to do on this, and investing in recurring posts is valuable.

CF: NNB update. One key thing Natacha is undertaking is a strategic plan for NNB, setting goals for the project, budgeting, etc. with the aim of having a finished plan in December. In terms of space, we now have PRW 110 as a full time home for NNB. This isn't instead of Enoch Davis, but in addition to.

CC: With the budget Natacha is working on, should I change the types of equipment I'm thinking of?

CF: Some months ago, we were kicking around the idea of a digital media hub. So, as you look at the floor plan you can think about what the space could do.

CC: What about Michael Francis' office?

CF: I don't know.

CP: Keep your eye out for furniture.

MW: Why was this given to NNB? Is there flexibility as to what we use that space for?

CF: This was given by CAS to specifically support NNB. This is combined with a startup fund of \$50,000 to hopefully make it self sustaining in the coming years. We still have access to Enoch Davis as an as-needed basis.

CC: PRW 110 is more of a workshop space, not a classroom. If Francis' room is something we could get, it'd be great.

CF: If we have a specific need we could cite for that space, it would help.

CF: This also ties in to bringing the NNB project closer to what we're doing at the departmental level, allowing us to set up more connectivity across the board: live streaming, multimedia projects, and the like. Making NNB more of a multimedia newsroom is important.

MW: What is the status of tracking alumni in light of consolidation? Central database in Tampa?

CF: As far as I know, no centralized system.

CP: Me either.

CF: I'll ask around. Then let's come up with a gameplan at the departmental level to fill in any holes.

JK: Is it possible for a grad assistant to help on that? Or too administrative?

CP: I can pull information individually, but there has to be an entity that can pull batch reports.

CP: Be sure to let Assess Covid know if you have face to face sick/positive/isolating folks.

CF: Bye, all.