Part II, Standard 9. Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Please respond to each of the following instructions:

1. Provide a copy of the unit's written plan for assessment of student learning outcomes. This plan must include the dates of its adoption and of implementation of its components.

   See SMSC Assessment Policy & Plan, Appendix 9-1.

2. Provide the unit's definition of goals for learning that students must achieve. If this definition is incorporated into the plan for assessment, a page reference will suffice.

   See pages 3-5 of the SMSC Assessment Policy and Plan for the eight Learning Outcomes and how they are assessed – (Appendix 9-1)

3. Describe the collection and reporting of data from both direct and indirect assessment measures and how the unit used its analysis of the data to improve curriculum, instruction, etc. Provide copies of any end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available in a separate digital file.

   See Appendix 9-2 titled Assessment Reports – there are be six reports for each year, assessing each of our six degree options (Strategic Communication Bachelor of Arts, Strategic Communication Bachelor of Science, Multimedia Bachelor of Arts, Multimedia Bachelor of Science, Sports Media Bachelor of Arts and Sports Media Bachelor of Science).

SMSC uses direct and indirect assessment measures.

Direct Assessment:

1. Undergraduate Performance Portfolios

   To comply with the assessment requirements of Oklahoma State University and the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the School of Media & Strategic Communications requires all undergraduate majors to develop a digital portfolio in Electronic Communication, a required core-curriculum class, and maintain their digital portfolios until graduation.

   Portfolios are required to exhibit specific and appropriate assignments or projects from SMSC classes, internships or other work-related student opportunities or both. Senior portfolios are reviewed in the capstone course for each degree program. Thus, portfolio development is discussed throughout the curriculum.

   It is important to understand that the portfolios specified in the school’s assessment plan are not in any way intended to assess the accomplishments of any individual student. Instead, they are intended to accomplish a dual purpose: (1) To provide
evidence of satisfaction of program outcomes from a broad perspective; and (2) to provide a basis for broad feedback on the overall program and to indicate areas in which adjustments should be made.

Senior Digital Portfolio links are collected during each capstone course for each degree program, and links are forwarded to the SMSC associate director/assessment coordinator.

The associate director/assessment coordinator randomly selects five portfolio links from each program and sends the links to each program’s professional external reviewers. This is done annually. Portfolios are grouped together per degree program, which allows for comparison of learning outcomes across degrees.

External reviewers are SMSC alumni who have excelled in their fields and have worked in the profession for several years. Each reviewer completes an assessment via online survey for one of the three SMSC program’s student portfolios. Assessment results are forwarded to the SMSC Faculty Assessment Committee, and the committee, which is composed of program heads, studies the results and makes written recommendations for the faculty. Faculty Assessment Committee recommendations are emailed to faculty, recorded in the annual OSU Assessment Report and discussed at the first faculty meeting of each school year. Each program’s faculty meets to discuss how to implement the recommendations in the classroom.

Before 2014, 20-25% of SMSC’s portfolios were selected for assessment, depending on the number of portfolios in a graduating class. In 2016, SMSC began selecting fewer portfolios (10-15%) but made the review more comprehensive by including qualitative and quantitative questions. Portfolios are assessed through the use of a survey that quantifies the extent to which each of the eight Learning Outcomes was satisfied, using specific criteria for evaluation. Reviewers were provided with guidance on what to look for as well as how to assess the digital artifacts.

Feedback from this assessment process is used to create new courses that specifically address shortcomings in terms of learning outcomes, to provide assistance on creating appropriate portfolio artifacts, to improve classroom instruction and to improve the assessment process.

Direct Assessment:

2. Pre- & Post-Curriculum Exams

In 2017, SMSC added an assessment measure to help faculty members and the administration better understand core-curriculum comprehension. SMSC began requiring all students who were declared majors to take a pre-assessment curriculum exam when they take Media Style & Structure, an entry-level core-curriculum course. The pre-exam consists of 50 questions, 10 from each of the five core courses, Media Style & Structure; Media In A Diverse Society; Electronic Communication; Media Law; and Media Ethics. The pre-exam is administered online during class. Instructors who have multiple years of teaching one of
core courses selected the questions the program heads approved them.

SMSC requires all graduating seniors to complete a post-curriculum exam during their capstone course. The pre-exam and post-exam contain the same questions.

Pre- and post-exam results are reported to the Faculty Assessment Committee, which makes recommendations to all faculty via email and during a faculty meeting and are included in the OSU Assessment Report, which is sent to University Regents.

Direct Assessment

3. Graduating Seniors Survey:
SMSC conducted 15 senior exit interviews each spring (five students from each of the three programs) from 2010-18. Students volunteered to be interviewed. Students were asked to rate their comprehension of the eight SMSC Learning Outcomes in a paper survey and asked whether they had anything else they would like to discuss.

In 2019, graduating senior assessment was expanded to include all graduating seniors instead of 15 volunteer seniors. Seniors received three emails in April asking them to complete a senior survey. (Appendix 9-3)

Indirect Assessment

4. Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)
Our primary use of the Student Survey of Instruction centers on the response of students to the statement “I learned a lot in this course,” which is taken as a partial indication of learning. This is especially helpful in courses in which content is almost completely devoted to particular learning outcomes, such as Media Law and Media Ethics.

Indirect Assessment

5. Internship Supervisor Evaluations:
Internship supervisors access interns on their performance of the eight Learning Outcomes. Faculty internship supervisors use the same assessment form in each of the three programs. (See internship supervisor evaluations in Appendix 9-4.)

Summary of Assessment Reports 2015-19:

2015 - Analysis and Use of the Results
Upon completion of the yearly Assessment Report, the departmental Curriculum Committee will investigate trends in the assessment. Thus, specific areas of weakness can be identified. Based on these trends, the Committee will make proposals for adjustments in the curriculum. The Committee will present the results and proposed curriculum adjustments during each year’s first semester’s faculty meeting for discussion, leading to votes on specific plans for adjustments to the curriculum when needed.
As a result of assessment efforts, we have recently changed the way we offer some of courses to put more focus and faculty attention to training our students to be better writers. Specifically, MC 2003 Mass Media Style & Structure was changed to be taught as a lecture/lab combination with faculty teaching 20 students per section rather than a large lecture course with separate lab sections teaching assistants taught.

This new plan is an update of past successful assessment methods as well as an addition of new methods. We plan to make more curricular adjustments based on feedback from professionals analyzing portfolios and internships.

2016 – Analysis and Use of the Results

The portfolio process in the school is slowly being improved upon each year. The school has a more systematic and thorough plan to assess student learning. The senior capstone/portfolio assessment was streamlined this year using an electronic survey, making the process much easier for the professionals to complete. This year, senior exit interviews were added, which improved the assessment process and allowed for better evaluation of the remaining five learning outcomes that were not assessed in the past two assessment cycles. The assessment plan calls for two additional methods, which are being developed and administered for the 2016-17 academic year.

The assessment results indicate that the students’ work is improving; each of the three outcomes assessed last year and this year improved from the previous year. However, the results indicate there is room for improvement. The five learning outcomes that were newly assessed this year with the exit interviews cannot be compared to previous data, but the evaluation indicates the program is meeting most of the learning outcomes with room for improvement.

The following steps were recommended last year, and there is a clear plan to implement these steps in this coming assessment round:

1. Administer the pretest/post-test in MC 2003 (pretest) and the end of the capstone course (post-test) to assess learning outcomes that are not easily demonstrated in the portfolios. The pretest will be administered the first day of class in MC 2003. The post-test will be administered during the last two weeks of classes in the capstone course. The pretest/post-test will be used to measure learning from the core curricula, which students in all six of the degree programs in SMSC are required to take.

2. All portfolios need to be reviewed at different levels and in different classes. Where possible, each course should produce a portfolio artifact that can add to
our students’ knowledge and understanding of the three learning outcomes assessed using the portfolio. This recommendation will be discussed in the October 2016 faculty meeting.

3. An assessment plan needs to be developed for using the assessment data to adjust the curriculum to better serve the students. The assessment plan/report will be brought to the curriculum committee to review and discuss possible curriculum changes.

In addition to the steps mentioned above, an Alumni Survey should be developed and used as a method to assess the program and the preparedness for the media industry among SMSC graduates.

2017 – Analysis and Use of the Results

Student Learning Outcome No. 1: Students will demonstrate an appreciation of the constitutional freedoms, legal issues and ethical principles involved in mass communication.

Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 1: 4.4 out of 5 points - Goal achieved.

The score indicates students were highly satisfied with their knowledge of constitutional freedoms, legal issues and ethical principles in mass communication. Three students “strongly agreed” they had a good understanding of the First Amendment, one student “agreed” she was more comfortable discussing constitutional freedoms and legal issues that are media related, and one student was “neutral” regarding her understanding of this Learning Outcome.

During the interview, all students agreed they have gained knowledge during their coursework regarding constitutional freedoms and ethical principles. All students recalled hearing about law and ethics in multiple classes. Two said they struggled to understand ethical principles taught in SMSC, but they had learned about same ethical principles in Philosophy and Religion, which made them more comfortable using the theories. Another student said she felt the ethical principles were repeated in Introduction to Strategic Communications, Religion and Ethics; she said she was thankful to hear the principles repeated across classes and departments.

The School should continue to discuss constitutional freedoms and ethical considerations across its curriculum, and more classes should include ethical principles if possible.

Student Learning Outcome No. 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relevance of human diversity in mass communications.
Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 2: 4.8 out of 5 points. Goal achieved.

Students’ survey scores were 4.8/5, which indicates students strongly agreed and were satisfied in their learning and understanding of diversity issues in mass communications. Four students “strongly agreed” and one student “agreed” they had a good understanding of diversity issues.

During the interview, all students agreed they felt confident in their understanding of diversity issues and all agreed they had discussed diversity in several SC classes, mainly regarding audiences.

The School should continue to discuss diversity across its curriculum.

Student Learning Outcome No. 3: Students will demonstrate respect for the history and social role of mass communications.

Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 3: 4.4 out of 5 points. Goal achieved.

Students’ survey scores were 4.4/5, which indicates students strongly agreed and were satisfied in their learning and understanding of the history and societal role of mass communications. Four students “strongly agreed” and one student “disagreed” they had a good understanding of the history and societal role of mass communications.

During the interview, four of the five students agreed they felt confident in their understanding of mass communication’s history and role in society. One disagreed.

The School is doing a good job of presenting and incorporating the history and societal role of mass communications in its curricula.

Student Learning Outcome No. 4: Students will demonstrate critical, creative and independent thinking as they relate to individual disciplines in mass communication.

Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 4.

External Reviewers - Portfolios - the mean score was a 3.66/5, which is lower than the 4/5 ranking in 2016. The goal was not met.

Internship Assessment - the mean score was 6.7/7, which is a significant improvement from last years’ score of 4.6. The score indicates students’ ability to think critically, creatively and independently. The goal was met.

Student Learning Outcome No. 5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relevant theories and concepts of mass communication.
Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 4: 4.4 out of 5 points. Goal achieved.

Four students agreed they learned basic mass media theoretical concepts in their classes, but they were less confident in this learning outcome compared with other learning outcomes regarding their knowledge or application or both of theoretical concepts. One student was neutral. However, when asked specifically about theories and concepts used in strategic communications, three students were able to name and explain a few theories.

The School should continue incorporating theoretical concepts of mass communications in its curricula. Each program’s faculty should meet once per semester to discuss curriculum in each class and what theories are taught in class.

**Student Learning Outcome No. 6:** *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the methods and techniques of research and information gathering.*

Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 6.
Internship Assessment Score: The mean score was 6/7, which is a significant improvement over 2016. Goal achieved. Portfolio Assessment Score: The mean score was 3.73, which is slightly higher than the 2016 score of 3.67. Goal achieved

The score suggests students are slightly improving on their information gathering skills in internships and in class work, but there is room for improvement. The faculty should find ways to incorporate more information gathering into class assignments, which will produce more writing samples. More writing samples give reviewers a better understanding of the students’ information gathering skills. Faculty should work with outside professionals to make sure best industry practices are learned in college courses.

**Student Learning Outcome No. 7:** *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the writing, editing and production techniques of mass communication specialties.*

Internship Assessment Score: The overall mean score was 6.70, which is significantly higher than the 2016 score of 4.5. Goal achieved.

Portfolio Assessment Score: The mean score was 3.65, which is a decline from 2016’s score of 4.08. Goal not achieved. More writing samples are key to displaying students’ writing skills.

Students must add more writing samples to their portfolios, and the writing samples should demonstrate an understanding of how to write effectively across multiple platforms. Faculty need to do more portfolio reviews and must meet with industry leaders to understand best industry practices and what skills industry professionals expect when students graduate.
**Student Learning Outcome No. 8:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of relevant planning and management methods in mass communication.

Summary of the results from the assessment of Learning Outcome 4 - 4.4 out of 5 points. Goal achieved.

The majority of the students discussed the importance of learning about planning and media management. Four students indicated they developed a strong understanding of media planning and management through the Management and Strategies course, the Media Markets course, and the Capstone course, Campaigns; two mentioned the Advanced PR Writing course. The School is doing a good job of presenting and incorporating planning and management concepts and relevant assignments in its curricula.

**Portfolio score:** The mean score for this learning outcome of demonstrating critical, creative and individual thinking was 3.66, which is lower than the previous year (4). The score indicates portfolios provided average representation of this learning outcome with room for improvement. Many of the professionals said there was not enough writing samples. Developing more writing assignments across curricula (that meet industry standards and best industry practices) and requiring more writing assignments be placed in the capstone portfolio is imperative. Furthermore, there needs to be more focus on helping students with portfolios in all upper-level classes. Faculty need to review student portfolios in each class to help students produce a professional portfolio. Capstone professors should review portfolios at the beginning and mid-semester to help students produce more professional work.

SMSC changed the way it recruits external reviewers, which may be the cause for lower portfolio scores. In 2017, the Assessment Coordinator asked SMSC alumni who had at least three to five years’ experience working the communications field to review portfolios. In the past, SMSC used members of its Advisory Board to do the external portfolio reviews.

However, many of the board members were no longer practicing professionals in the communications industry, which was cause for concern when they reviewed student work. Industry practices and technology change often and review of student work should reflect best industry practices.

**2018 – Summary of Assessment Results**

Overall, all SMSC programs achieved positive results in the 2017-18 assessment. Data collected from students, faculty, alumni and external reviewers proves SMSC is successfully educating students and achieving positive results in the assessment of its eight Learning Outcomes.

A faculty assessment committee reviewed the results. The committee agrees the pre- post-test
should be altered to include questions that better assess all learning outcomes. No questions focused on diversity or mass communication’s social role. New questions should focus on mass communication theory, history, diversity and its social role in a democratic society. Questions that are perceived as trivia should be eliminated.

The committee agrees faculty should create a plan to improve portfolio external review scores across all programs.

The committee recommends reviewing each assessment method and restructuring the senior exit survey before the next assessment cycle.

The committee recommends better assessment methods for Learning Outcomes No. 2 and No. 8. The Senior Exit interview measures each. The Faculty Assessment Committee questioned the validity of the method. The survey used must be changed to reflect all Learning Outcomes, and the survey should be offered digitally to all seniors. No changes recommended for internship assessment.

The Faculty Assessment Committee (area heads from SC, MMJ and SPM) reviewed three of the four assessment methods and will make suggestions/changes to the next round of assessment after meeting with entire faculty.

All faculty members will receive a copy before the September faculty meeting. Each program will meet to review and make recommendations.

No recommended changes to program. However, faculty members should review curriculum to ensure mass communication theory, mass communication’s social role, mass communication history and mass communication diversity are covered across classes and questions on the exam match what is being taught across multiple sections. The committee will send a written report to the assessment coordinator.

The pre- and post-test will be changed to include questions focusing on mass communication theory, history, diversity and its social role in a democratic society. Questions perceived as trivia will be eliminated.

The pre- and post-test should measure students’ scores across programs. The program cannot assess the test data. Changes will be made to the testing process. Portfolio improvement will be discussed in faculty and program meetings. Each program will create a plan to improve portfolio content.

Changes the Faculty Assessment Committee recommended will be made to Senior Exit survey.

Internal reviewers will meet with program faculty to report portfolio assessment findings and discuss methods to improve portfolio content.

The Faculty Assessment Committee will review and make recommended changes (if needed) for each assessment method.
Internship data should be collected digitally. Changes will be made to internship supervisor evaluation reporting methods.

All faculty should include Learning Outcomes that apply to their course in their syllabi.

The associate director will work with the director and Faculty Assessment Committee to review or implement changes or both in assessment methods. Changes will be discussed during faculty and program meetings.

Internship Evaluation score: The mean score of 6.7 indicates students are working and thinking more independently than in past years. Several classes in SMSC’s curricula focus on critical thinking and creativity, and the evaluation results indicate the same. Students are prepared to think and to think critically and creatively about audiences’ and clients’ needs.

4. **Describe the involvement of journalism and mass communication professionals, including alumni, in the assessment process.**

External Assessment Reviewers are SMSC alumni who are working in the field and have excelled. Reviewers have worked in the profession for several years. Each reviewer completes an assessment via an online survey for one of the three SMSC program’s student portfolios. The survey includes room for reviewer comments.

5. **In a digital file, list the major awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years. Limit to five a year.**

   *See Appendix 9-5 titled Student Awards.*

6. **In a digital file, list by specialty each member of the graduating class of 2015 and those graduates’ CU1Tent jobs. If practical, give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list. Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the profession and to improve curriculum and instruction.**

   *See Appendix 9-6 titled SMSC Alumni Information 2015-2018.*