MEMO TO: Jerrold E. Hogle  
Vice Provost for Instruction  
FROM: Jacqueline E. Sharkey  
Journalism Department Head  
DATE: January 9, 2006  
RE: Journalism premajor proposal

This memorandum responds to your letter of December 13, 2005, which asks for additional detail regarding the Journalism Department’s premajor proposal. Your memorandum asks five questions, each of which is printed below, followed by the department’s response.

Question #1 – Is the primary set of reasons for your proposal (a) shortages of resources or (b) programmatic considerations about what students need academically to have a chance of success as a Journalism major? [Emphasis is in the original memorandum.]

Both factors are important, but the fundamental principle underlying the premajor proposal is that students who cannot fulfill these basic requirements cannot succeed as Journalism majors. We have found that the department’s current English requirement of an average of B or better in Freshman English is not sufficient; many students enter the Journalism curriculum without knowledge of grammar or basic writing skills that are necessary for success in a writing-intensive curriculum such as ours. The same is true of basic mathematical skills. Journalists must know how to read the studies, reports and statistics that are the foundation for a substantial percentage of the information that the news media present to the public. All the classes in the skills curriculum – and theory classes such as Ethics and the News Media – include lectures and assignments that call for students to understand and be able to perform significant numerical operations on data from these kinds of sources. Many Journalism majors cannot. After reviewing the grades Journalism majors earned in math classes last year, the department estimates that requiring a B or better in Math 105 would lead to a 10% reduction in the number of majors, but also would stimulate many others to undertake a badly-needed strengthening
of their mathematics proficiency. A fuller explanation of the premajor mathematics requirement is included in the response to Question 5, below.

Question 2 – Could you give us a better idea of the total size of your teaching personnel (speaking of resources)? It is clear that you have six full-time faculty [in Fall 2005], but what about adjuncts or part-time lecturers? Will the personnel situation next year (2006-07) be exactly the same as this year (2005-06), or will more or less faculty be available? We need a fuller picture of all your teaching personnel (though not by name) and how teaching loads are (or are soon to be) distributed among them. [Emphasis is in the original memorandum.]

The table below provides the data you requested regarding majors and full-time faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>No. of Majors</th>
<th>No. of Tenure-Track Faculty</th>
<th>No. of Clinical Faculty</th>
<th>Total Faculty</th>
<th>Ratio of Majors To Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>106:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>61:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2007</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>61:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The department counts double majors because they have to take exactly the same number of units, and therefore require exactly the same resources, as students majoring solely in Journalism.
b. Figures include the department head. They also include one adjunct instructor who will become a tenure-track assistant professor after defending his Ph.D. dissertation in Spring 2006.
c. This figure includes an associate professor of practice and two assistant professors of practice.
d. Figures from Spring 2006 forward include a half-time faculty member whose tenure home was Journalism; at her request, the department asked to have her line moved completely into the department as of Spring 2006. That request was granted in late fall.
e. A multi-year lecturer joined the faculty in Spring 2006.
f. Based on an extrapolation of enrollment since Fall 2000, disregarding any potential effects of the premajor. The department’s enrollment doubled between Fall 2000 and Fall 2005.

Teaching loads for tenure-track faculty usually are two courses per semester.\(^1\) Teaching loads for clinical faculty usually are three courses per semester, plus substantial instruction-related service.

The remaining classes are taught by adjunct faculty. Because the department currently is not offering a graduate curriculum, no classes are taught by graduate teaching assistants.

\(^1\) The teaching load for a new tenure-track faculty member is 1-2. They are given a one-course load during their first semester.
Nearly all classes taught by adjuncts are core classes required for graduation. In Fall 2005, adjuncts taught more than 70% of the department's total class sections. In Spring 2006, adjuncts will teach more than 60% of classes, and in Fall 2006, they will teach an estimated 30%, because of the increase in full-time faculty numbers.

The exact number of adjuncts employed, and the number of course sections they teach, depends on the amount of temporary hiring funds the department receives. Each fiscal year, and more recently each semester, Journalism has had to prepare and submit a large request for temporary hiring funds. The request is based on a detailed calculation of the number of students who will need each class, and from this the numbers of class sections the department must offer. Many classes teach essential professional skills and are taught in dedicated computer laboratories. These must be limited to 20 students per class section, for two reasons: (1) Accreditation rules state that 20 is the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in each section (the preferred limit is 15 students). (2) The computer laboratories have a maximum of 20 computer stations each.

That twenty is the upper limit allowed by the accreditation rules the department is subject to (fourteen is the preferred limit); and second, that the computer laboratories have no more than twenty stations each, and some have fewer.

In recent years Journalism’s temporary hiring requests have not always been fully funded, with the result that some students have been unable to get needed class seats. Although we give registration priority to graduating seniors, some seniors have not taken advantage of the registration periods reserved for them, and then, when they tried to register later, have found themselves unable to enroll. This situation, which has been caused ultimately by the extreme budgetary restrictions the department has been required to operate under, has led to complaints about which you have considerable knowledge.

There are other important considerations regarding adjunct instructors. Most adjuncts are working journalists professionals, and as such bring important real-world experience into the classroom. However, the size of the available pool, the degree of classroom experience, and the instructional quality all vary considerably from semester to semester. Therefore adjuncts can augment, but cannot replace, full-time career faculty. In the past, some students have gone through their entire undergraduate careers at UA without being able to take a class from a full-time faculty member. Such situations inevitably cause deterioration of program quality and provide another reason why enrollment must be constrained to be commensurate with the number of full-time faculty in the department.

Question #3 – What size major – and what size minor (when you reopen it) – are you aiming for, in terms of total numbers of undergraduates and within what time frame? In this connection, can you give us an estimate of what your proposed pre-major requirements are likely to do to some sophomores? How many of them (what percentage of the pre-majors) do you anticipate being unable to move to full major status if your proposal is approved?
The size of the major will depend on the size of the faculty. The department hopes to achieve a ratio between majors and full-time faculty that is similar to the ratios maintained by its aspirational peers, which averages about 23:1.2 (Some other professionally-oriented departments at UA have similar ratios.) As Table 1 demonstrates, we are far above this ratio at present. How quickly it can be achieved will depend upon how effective the premajor is in reducing the number of students, and the rate at which the full-time faculty size increases.

The Journalism minor should be re-instituted only after the department reaches an appropriate ratio between majors and faculty. Its size will depend on how many minors the department can accommodate without getting into a situation in which the number of minors is compromising the quality of education that Journalism is able to provide for its majors. This was the problem that led us to request the suspension of minor enrollment that has been in effect since Fall 2003.

The premajor will have no effect on current sophomores. If it takes effect in Fall 2006, as proposed, it will apply only to students who enter the University after August 2006. As stated in response to Question #1, the department estimates that the premajor initially will reduce enrollment by 10%.

**Question #4 – What is the relationship between your proposal here and the expectations of your department’s accrediting agency?**

The Journalism Department faces a grave risk of losing its accreditation if this premajor proposal is not approved.

In October 2005, the department had its first Academic Program Review. The external review committee was led by Thomas Kunkel, Vice-Chair of the Accrediting Committee of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, and Dean of the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism. The committee’s final report, which is attached to the end of this document, states that the student-faculty ratio “is dire enough that it may well jeopardize the department’s full accreditation,” adding that the reviewers “cannot recall such a faculty-student imbalance at any other Research 1 university.”[3] [Emphasis is the review committee’s.]

---

2 The department’s aspirational peers, as identified in the Journalism Department’s Academic Program Review self-study, are the University of Missouri, the University of Maryland, the University of Texas, Northwestern University and the University of Southern California. Three of the five are state land-grant universities. Student faculty ratios range from 13:1 at Missouri to 26:1 at the University of Maryland.

3 Because Dean Kunkel was the head of the Journalism APR committee, he will recuse himself from the deliberations in Spring 2006 about whether the department should be re-accredited.

The department also sought the advice of Douglas Anderson, the Chair of the Accrediting Committee of the Accrediting Council, and the Dean of the College of Communications at Pennsylvania State University. A memorandum concerning his telephonic consult with the department also is attached to the end of this document. Dean Anderson made two points regarding the faculty-student ratio:

- The Accrediting Council has been warning the University that the Journalism Department had too few faculty since 1994, and will want to see action, not simply more promises. [In 1994, the department had 9 full-time faculty and fewer than 300 majors. At the time of the February 2006 site visit, the department will have fewer faculty and more than 600 majors. The accrediting team will want not only strategic hiring plans for the future, but evidence that the University is addressing the problem now.]

- New plans for controlling enrollment need to be in process or implemented before the site-visit team arrives. (The visit is February 12-15, 2006.)

Given these warnings by the two top officials on the Accrediting Committee of the Accrediting Council, the department regards approval of the pre-major proposal as crucial to the department’s re-accreditation.

It should be noted that four of the five aspirational peers listed in the department’s APR self-study — all of which are accredited — have strong pre-majors, or special entrance exams for prospective majors, or both.

Question #6. May the on the Committee wonder why your pre-major requirements include “Math 105 or higher-level mathematics course.” Math 105 is actually below the level that we request for students seeking admission (4 years of high-school math). Why doesn’t Journalism want (say) “Statistics” (Math 160) for its students? Could you help us understand your proposed math requirement a bit more?

Perhaps it would be helpful to summarize the University’s published academic policy regarding undergraduate mathematics proficiency. It begins “MATH 105 (Math) in Modern Society) or PHIL 105 (Logic and Critical Thinking) or any three unit

5 Dean Anderson, who formerly was director of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, was willing to provide an accreditation consultation because he is prohibited by Accrediting Council rules from ever participating in deliberations about any Arizona school. The rules state that anyone who previously has been the head of a journalism unit may not participate in deliberations about the status of any other unit under the same Board of Regents.


7 Ibid., p. 2.

mathematics course numbered above MATH 165 is required of all students...." After discussing the Mathematics Readiness Test, the policy continues as follows:

Math Strands: Entry-level mathematics students should choose one of three strands according to their interests, preparation, and intended major. *All strands presume that students will have completed the high school math required for entrance to the University.* [Emphasis added.]

G-Strand (General Knowledge) – This strand involves a general understanding and appreciation of how mathematics is used to solve problems in everyday life; for example, the mathematics of voting and elections.... The options for this strand are MATH 105 ... and PHIL 110..., ...

M-Strand (Moderate Knowledge) – The M-strand is for students who require mathematical facility at the level of at least MATH 110 (College Algebra). ... Students who choose the M-strand are prepared for further mathematical work....

S-Strand (Substantial Knowledge) – This strand involves skill and facility with calculus....

in short, according to published University academic policies, Math 105 is above, not below, the University’s high-school mathematics entrance requirements.

To shed further light on the Committee’s question, we have reviewed the current (2005-06) APRRs (Academic Program Requirements Reports) for a large number of departments offering undergraduate degrees. The results are as follows:

- Every bachelor’s degree offered in the College of Fine Arts, and every bachelor’s degree offered in the College of Humanities, requires only G-strand mathematics. All of these degrees’ APRRs state specifically that one 3-unit Math 165 course will satisfy its Foundation Mathematics requirement. They also allow students to substitute Phil 110 or Ling 178 (The Mathematics of Language and Linguistics) for Math 105. None of the APRRs states any additional degree requirement regarding mathematics.

- The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers 15 Bachelor of Arts degrees and two Bachelor of Science degrees. Of these:

  - Twelve B.A. degrees (Anthropology, Geography, History, Journalism, Judaic Studies, Latin American Studies, Linguistics, Mexican American Studies, Near Eastern Studies, Philosophy, Political Science and Women’s Studies) require only G-strand mathematics, and state specifically that one semester of Math 165 (or Phil 110 or Ling 178) will satisfy their...
Foundation Mathematics requirements, and require no additional mathematics.\(^7\)

- Three B.A. degrees (Communication, Psychology and Sociology) require M-strand mathematics. Psychology requires Math 110 or Ling 178. Sociology requires Math 110. Communication requires Math 110 with a grade of C or better. None requires any additional mathematics.

- The B.S. in Regional Development requires the same Foundation Mathematics as do the twelve SBS B.A. degrees, plus one semester of calculus, taken from MATH 113 through MATH 125. This could be interpreted as either an M-strand or an S-strand proficiency.

- The B.S. in Psychology has a Foundation Mathematics requirement of one semester of calculus, taken from MATH 117 through MATH 129, plus, apparently, a second semester of calculus as a major requirement. This again could be interpreted as M-strand or S-strand proficiency.

- The College of Science offers mainly Bachelor of Science undergraduate degrees. Most of these require S-strand mathematics, involving several semesters of calculus, as well as other areas of advanced mathematics. The few B.A. degrees in science require M-strand or S-strand mathematics.

- The College of Engineering offers mainly Bachelor of Science undergraduate degrees requiring S-strand mathematics, and involving two or more semesters of calculus.

With the above information as background, I will now address the second part of your question.

It should be apparent that the mathematics requirement for the Bachelor of Arts in Journalism is well within both SBS College norms for Bachelor of Arts degrees, and university norms for Bachelor of Arts degrees in disciplines other than the physical sciences and engineering.

Moreover, Math 105 is particularly appropriate for Journalism majors because it involves everyday mathematical problems of the types that journalists must deal with for many news reports, including those based on quantitative studies and analyses. Math 105 requires students to be proficient in basic numerical procedures such as performing, base/rate/percent calculations, reading stock tables, and interpreting election results. These are the types of mathematical issues that journalists encounter on a daily basis. It is for this reason that we have included a specific Math 105 requirement in the premajor,

\(^7\) The Philosophy B.A. APRR lists Math 403 (Foundations of Mathematics) as one of 14 alternatives to satisfy its Logic and Language upper-division major requirement; all the others are Philosophy courses. Math 403 is cross-listed as Phil 403.
instead of the G-strand Foundation Mathematics requirement which in other departments might be satisfied by Philosophy 110 or Linguistics 178.

Professional journalism, furthermore, places a high premium on accurate reporting. Because accurate reporting requires a high level of English literacy, with good grammatical skills, we have for many years required a B or better in Freshman English, a requirement we are now proposing to strengthen still further. For the same reason, we need to be able to require that journalism majors not only pass Math 185, but master it, at the B level at least.

Math 160 has Math 110 (4 units), Math 112 (College Algebra Accelerated, 3 units), or an exceptional Math Readiness score as prerequisites. Thus requiring Math 160 for the Journalism Bachelor of Arts degree would be inappropriate for several reasons. First, it would mean switching Journalism from G-strand mathematics to the M strand, currently followed by only three SBS B.A. programs, all of whose disciplines are intrinsically more quantitative in nature than is journalism. Second, this requirement would raise the major's total number of mathematics units from 3 to 6 or, more likely, 7. No other SBS B.A. degree requires more than 3 units of math. Third, because the Journalism B.A. curriculum is already full, adding three to four more units of mathematics would require either jettisoning an important existing subject, or gaining permission to expand the program to more than 120 units. Fourth, many of the topics taught in Math 160, such as the design of experiments and Student's T test, although interesting to specialists, are not needed by the vast majority of working journalists.

The Journalism Department strongly supports maintaining rigorous educational standards at the University of Arizona, as befits its status as a leading Research i university. We would support, for example, an across-the-board increase in undergraduate mathematics requirements. Should the University decide to take such a step. However, given the requirements as they stand now, it seems clear to us that what the Committee has in mind is a mathematics level that might be appropriate for a Bachelor of Science degree in some SBS units, but is not appropriate for a B.A. in Journalism, under either existing University academic policies or SBS College norms.