

**ACTION PLAN (STAGE 1)  
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW  
C & J DEPARTMENT**

**October 30, 2012**

***Introduction***

This discussion of how the C & J Department can move forward in useful and innovative ways has its origins in the C & J Academic Program Review. The project began in early spring of 2011, when a subset of faculty and staff met to discuss the tasks and timelines associated with the C & J Academic Program Review. Work began in earnest at the April 2011 faculty meeting when the Chair submitted a potential list of topics to be researched and reported, and faculty self-selected the issues they would investigate. Writing teams developed to address larger issues, and by August 2011, almost all independent documents had been submitted.

We called upon the assistance of the C & J Advisory Board in a special meeting on September 7, 2011, to elicit members' ideas and suggestions for effective self-review of the Department. Working with the Board, the faculty not only solidified issues and concerns to be addressed in the self-study, but also produced the central questions that would guide the organization of this document. Key questions we identified included Departmental identity and history; service to students; faculty expertise and needs; Departmental mission, vision, and strategies for a successful future; and where we stand in relation to peers in the discipline.

This self-study was subsequently read and reviewed by a number of faculty and administrators at UNM in winter 2011 and early spring of 2012. The process culminated in an on-site review by a three-person team, which included Dr. Bob Avery (University of Utah), Dr. Karen Tracy (University of Colorado), and Dr. Sherman Wilcox (University of New Mexico). After a multi-day site visit in April 2012, this team produced a document acknowledging department strengths and recommending a range of innovations and revisions designed to improve C & J. The "Action Plan" presented here has been created in response to that review, and while it is clearly just the first stage in meeting the issues reviewers addressed, it identifies how the Department intends to move forward in designing and implementing an action plan.

We are a Department that values the self-study process. Our experience with APR in 2001 and our review by ACEJMC (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication) in 2007 taught us much about ourselves and shed light on how we could enhance our service to our students, the University, the discipline, and our myriad communities. We grew and improved as a result of these assessments. Importantly, these reviews also contributed to new and important Departmental projects, including the doctoral program in intercultural communication in 2001 and a renovation of the C & J Building in 2008. We are hopeful the Department will see similar gains in service and overall program as a result of the 2011-2012 Academic Program Review. This

discussion of an action plan, as presented in this document and a planning spreadsheet, is the first step in that direction.

It should be noted that this APR self-study, moving into an action plan, overlaps with a second self-study, the ACEJMC Accreditation Review. While these two evaluations serve different audiences and specific purposes, they both advance the goals, objectives, reputation, and service of the Department.

### ***The Undergraduate Program***

The APR Review Team targeted four topics in the undergraduate section: experiences for the strongest students, close monitoring of the online program, a student-led PR campaign for the Department, and expanded student media programs for the UNM campus. These topics are discussed below.

At our retreat we discussed ways to advance educational experiences for strong students and named several that we plan to pursue in the coming months. They include the following:

- 1) Promotion and further development of our C & J honors program. Too few of our faculty and students know about this long-standing program in the Department. It offers an excellent opportunity for strong students to pursue a scholarly topic of their choosing in a format that mirrors the M.A. experience (choosing and researching a topic, writing and defending a prospectus, working with a thesis committee, and writing and defending a final thesis project). This two-semester project allows talented students to leave the C & J program with a tangible project that not only enhances their research and writing ability, but also prepares them for graduate work.
- 2) Developing honors versions of C & J classes. This would allow us to work within the confines of our curriculum to develop more rigorous versions of regular coursework, satisfying both the need for students to take certain classes in the program and also creating a more demanding experience for them in these courses.

The online program is clearly important to the C & J Department. This revenue stream funds all student and faculty travel, most of the operating budget, and salaries for post-doctoral scholars and visiting lecturers, among a range of other activities. It has also been useful to us in growing our full-time faculty. We recognized early on the importance of close monitoring and assessment and are working closely with the College to support such activity. Additionally, two members of the C & J faculty are actively involved in training, assessment, and course design for the Department's online teaching initiative. The Chair is currently developing an analysis of online activity in the department over the last three years, charting student credit hours, revenues earned, and ratio of online courses to face-to-face classes. These data will allow for planning and clarity of purpose with the online program. We are also currently developing online health communication courses that will lead to an online undergraduate certificate program in this area. It

should be noted that not only has C & J been a pioneer in online teaching in the College, it was also one of the first to explore systematic assessment of courses and student learning. We believe the Department will continue to be well-served by such innovation in the future.

Our Strategic Communication capstone course (“Campaigns”) has worked with clients in the community for years, producing viable, creative programs that has built image, presence, and customer base for these course partners. The course instructors are responsible for selection of these clients; the Department is working with strategic communication faculty to gain inclusion into this program as a client in the capstone course or with LoboEdge, the Department’s student-lead strategic communication agency.

The Review Team urged the Department to help ASUNM and other student groups expand the offerings of student media at UNM, including a Spanish-language newspaper/magazine and a student radio station. Following information provided by Ernest Sanchez, communication attorney and member of the C & J Advisory Board, we explored the purchase of six licenses currently for sale by New Mexico Highlands University. We have also discussed the possibility of applying for a low-power radio license. Both of these options seem prohibitively expensive at this time, although each could provide valuable training for our students and service to the community. As an alternative, the faculty has determined that an online radio station, featuring radio content produced by interested faculty and students and in C & J classes, could aid not only in training students but also in creating a larger news presence by the Department. Following strong suggestions by multimedia faculty and several members of the C & J Advisory Board, the Department is piloting a production course in radio during spring 2103. We are also exploring how a large room on first floor could be converted into a radio production facility for online broadcasting and experiential training for multimedia journalism students. We believe this new course in radio, as well as a community station, will be beneficial to students and help them develop skills needed to pursue a career in radio and audio production. It is our intent to include Spanish-language content on this station, addressing in part the suggestion by the APR Review team that we develop media to meet the needs of Latino/a populations at UNM and in the larger Albuquerque community.

### ***The M.A. Program***

C & J worked with the College last year in a matching funds program that produced full funding for two MA students—one funded by C & J, the other by the College. The C & J master’s program is regarded as one of the best in the country; as the Review Team’s report clearly and correctly notes, adequate funding for all incoming students would protect and enhance the program. Recent discussions with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have revealed that funding through the College is not available for a larger matching program for MA funding. In light of this, we are working with members of our board to explore how private sector funding can be developed for this important master’s student support.

### ***The Ph.D. Program***

C & J is dedicated to bringing new faculty voices into the discussion of curriculum change and development. Overall graduate curriculum was a topic of discussion at the C & J Retreat in August 2012, and the Graduate Committee expressed concerns about graduate course content and sequencing in a special curriculum meeting in October 2012. The Department will schedule a special retreat in spring 2013 to explore needs of graduate students, redundancy in curriculum, teaching expertise of faculty, trends in the discipline, and overall departmental vision for the doctoral program.

We have also discussed the topic of fourth-year funding for all doctoral students, voting at the August 2012 Retreat to develop such a program should funding permit. Subsequent analysis has shown that C & J can effectively support fourth-year funding within current funding levels; and we have moved forward to develop promotional materials announcing this shift in doctoral funding in the Department. These materials will be distributed at the National Communication Association Graduate Fair in mid-November 2012. This change in policy has also been published in our graduate handbook, on our website, and in other materials distributed to new and potential students.

Some faculty members have expressed interest in the Department sponsoring another summer doctoral honors conference. This topic will be discussed at the spring retreat.

### ***Faculty Hiring***

The Department put forward a hiring plan for 2012-13 that featured five new hires. Our first choice (Assistant Professor in Strategic Communication) has been approved, and we are in the initial stages of that search. Given that we were able to hire nine new faculty members last year, we do not anticipate more than one new line this year. Should opportunity present itself, the Department will explore additional hires.

### ***Faculty Mentoring***

The Department has moved forward to develop a full faculty mentoring plan this year, focusing not only on new assistant professor hires, but also lecturers and associate and full professors. This plan was completed by October 15, 2012, and has been included in the department's policies manual. We have also named faculty members for each of the nine new faculty joining us this year.

### ***Faculty Governance***

Following the recommendations of the APR Review Team, the Department has elected a four-person Executive Committee, which includes representatives from each rank in the Department. This committee was put in place at the October 2012 faculty meeting; members will meet with the Chair in November and December,

2012, and in February, March, and April of 2013. This body will have a range of responsibilities, including acting as the Merit Committee.

***Administrative Staff—Advisor***

The APR Review Team suggested that additional staffing be put in place to assist the Department's academic advisor. The College has agreed to provide such support by providing a part-time advisor to aid in one-on-one advising, student program review, and other activities currently assumed by the C & J Academic Advisor.

***Physical Plant and Facilities***

The team rightly reported that C & J is indeed fortunate to have a state-of-the-art building and adequate technology and equipment for the teaching of our classes. Given that UNM no longer has a rotation for either painting the building or replacing equipment, C & J has accepted this responsibility. We use our own funds to paint and repair a portion of the building each summer; and we use course fees to replace and upgrade teaching technology on a regular basis (for example, computers in the Mac lab are replaced every four years). Further, in an effort to alleviate heavy demand for the Mac lab by multimedia and strategic communication classes, we have invested in a new 17-seat Mac lab for the Department. This lab, which opened this semester, will serve writing, editing, production, and strategic communication classes, as well as graduate methods courses. It should be noted that the review team was in error when it reported that C & J does not have a regular amortization schedule in place for existing equipment.

***Fundraising***

The Review Team posed a compelling—and very challenging— notion that C & J should seek to secure a \$10 million gift to be used as an endowment for programmatic projects for students and faculty. The team also suggested that C & J seek to grow to become a School of Communication and Journalism. After faculty discussion and deliberation of these ideas, the Department will invite Dr. Bob Avery (who serves as development officer for his own department) to return to our campus and discuss and advise C & J on these topics. This is a large and exciting possibility, and it must involve broad faculty involvement. We will seek to accomplish first stages of discussion this year, working with our advisory board to develop a plan.

Glenda Balas  
October 30, 2012