

STANDARD 9

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES



The ultimate outcome: Students launch creative and meaningful careers

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ The school assesses undergraduate student learning through two direct measures (senior examination and aggregate internship evaluations) and three indirect measures (student surveys, student awards and alumni survey).
- ❖ Assessment has led to the addition of culminating courses in each major, a stronger emphasis on research, creation of a student agency, and enhanced career services.
- ❖ Significant student achievements nationally include a 2009 Pacemaker Award for the student newspaper, the 2011 collegiate Emmy for best student television newscast, and third in the nation for the school's Bateman public relations team in 2011.
- ❖ The M.A. program assesses student learning through three direct measures (e-portfolio evaluations, team project evaluations and an end-of-program exam) and two indirect measures (exit interviews and graduate employment).

1. *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.*

The Elon Eleven is the school's distinctive way of expressing ACEJMC's values and competencies. Each concept in the Elon Eleven has a specific learning outcome, and these learning outcomes are listed on the following pages. The Assessment Plan immediately follows, specifying how the unit uses direct and indirect measures to assess whether student learning is occurring as the faculty intends.

The undergraduate program has a long history of assessment, and, at ACEJMC's request six years ago, the school produced a booklet about its assessment approach. Today, on the undergraduate level, the school applies these five assessment measures:

- ❖ senior examination (direct measure)
- ❖ aggregate internship evaluations (direct measure)
- ❖ student surveys (indirect measure)
- ❖ student awards (indirect measure)
- ❖ alumni survey (indirect measure)

The graduate program is in its third year, and assessment results already are guiding program improvements. The school applies five graduate-level assessment measures:

- ❖ e-portfolio evaluations (direct measure)
- ❖ team project evaluations (direct measure)
- ❖ end-of-program examination (direct measure)
- ❖ exit interviews (indirect measure)
- ❖ graduate employment (indirect measure)

2. *Describe the involvement of members of journalism and mass communication professions in the assessment process.*

Professionals are heavily involved in the assessment process. On the undergraduate level, their internship evaluations are aggregately evaluated for program assessment. They also are primarily the judges of student awards, and alumni are professionals themselves when evaluating the quality of their Elon experience. On the graduate level, professionals provide the e-portfolio and team project evaluations and certainly make a judgment on program quality when choosing to hire iMedia graduates.

In addition, professionals on the national advisory board provide regular feedback.

Elon Eleven Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Truth, accuracy and fairness

Learning outcome: The student will be able to articulate the importance of truth, accuracy and fairness in the communications process; describe how access to information seeks to ensure these values; and demonstrate the ability to be fair and accurate in applying news values.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and ... evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness.”

Freedom of expression

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify the five freedoms in the First Amendment and state their importance in a democracy; distinguish between areas of expression that are and are not protected by the First Amendment; and apply legal principles to contemporary media issues.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press ... including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.”

Ethical ways of thinking

Learning outcome: The student will be able to describe the philosophical underpinnings of ethical decision-making; recognize the symbiosis between law and ethics; and apply ethical principles to contemporary issues in communications.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles.”

History and roles of media in society

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify significant milestones in the history of communications; describe important events and individuals in the history of media and communication in the United States; and analyze the role and impact of media on U.S. society.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.”

Diversity of audiences in a global age

Learning outcome: The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures in U.S. society and around the world; describe ways to identify and communicate with diverse audiences; and analyze the global consequences of the digital divide.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society ... and forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.”

Write clearly and accurately

Learning outcome: The student will be able to demonstrate proficiency in grammar, spelling and mechanics; organize content for effective storytelling; and write with accuracy, clarity and style for different audiences, different media and across multimedia platforms.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve ... [and with] clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.”

Use the tools of technology

Learning outcome: The student will be able to describe how technologies shape the way people perceive and interact with the world; master the tools and technologies appropriate for communications professions; and produce media content for print, audio, video, the web and mobile applications.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.”

Apply theories in presenting images and information

Learning outcome: The student will be able to identify leading communication theories and concepts; analyze aesthetic principles that guide the production of visual content; and demonstrate the ability to apply theories and aesthetic principles in the presentation of images and information.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.”

Engage in research and critical evaluation

Learning outcome: The student will be able to describe qualitative and quantitative research methods; evaluate information from primary and secondary sources; and write and present a scholarly paper using methods appropriate to the communications professions.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.”

Understand data and statistics

Learning outcome: The student will be able to perform basic numerical computations; interpret statistical data regarding public opinion polls, marketing research and audience analysis; and demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts in appropriate communications professions.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.”

Think creatively and analytically

Learning outcome: The student will be able to explain the creative elements of professional communications; analyze the changing economic models for media; and draw rational conclusions from evidence and critical analysis of social and communications phenomena.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “think critically, creatively and independently.”

An additional expectation exists for graduate programs:

Contribute to knowledge

Learning outcome: The student will be able to contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the ability to think strategically across media platforms; plan and create interactive media content; and manage information in a digital age.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to “contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.”

Student Learning Assessment Plan

School of Communications, Elon University

initial plan, August 2003; revised, August 2010

Assessment is the process of determining if students are learning what the faculty intend for them to learn. While grades represent assessment of students at an individual level, program assessment is the evaluation of student learning at a comprehensive level.

At its best, assessment has a transforming effect on education through the circular process of analyzing curriculum, instruction and student learning – and then using those findings to improve future student learning. This process requires gathering information from multiple sources to analyze what students know, understand, and can do as a result of their educational experiences.

A Distinctive Approach

The school endorses the professional values and competencies formulated by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

The Elon Eleven is the school's distinctive way of expressing the values and competencies to students. A specific learning outcome exists for each concept in the Elon Eleven.

The school's curriculum matrices identify which courses emphasize which of the values and competencies. The opening three core courses introduce every student to at least an *awareness* of all values and competencies. This exposure leads to an *understanding* of values and competencies as applied in each curriculum specialty, and then to their *application* in advanced core courses.

The school's Course Handbook lists the catalog description, course goal and primary course objectives to ensure that the values and competencies are uniformly stated in syllabi and provide consistency across multiple sections. Faculty can add additional objectives for their classes as they wish.

The Elon Eleven is displayed in every School of Communications classroom. The dean personally introduces the Elon Eleven to students in each section of the opening course, Communications in a Global Age, and explains how the curriculum and experiences are designed to work together to fulfill the school's mission.

Undergraduate Assessment Measures

The school applies two direct measures and three indirect measures to assess student learning at the undergraduate level. These measures are:

Senior Examination (direct measure)

The school wants students to master the key content of a communications program, from knowing the First Amendment to demonstrating how to interpret public opinion polling. The school will administer an examination to new students in the opening course and to seniors in the capstone course as a way of assessing student learning from the start of the program to the finish. The exam will seek to measure students' grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding of the discipline's values and competencies. Frequency: Every third year.

Aggregate Internship Evaluations (direct measure)

All students in the school complete at least one professional internship before graduation, and the Internships Office gathers feedback from each professional supervisor. The school will analyze the internship evaluations on an aggregate basis to determine the level of student preparedness and performance in professional work settings. The aggregate analysis can reveal strengths and weaknesses related to curriculum and instruction. Frequency: Annually.

Student Surveys (indirect measure)

Elon seniors evaluate the quality of their educational experience by participating each year in the National Survey of Student Engagement. The university provides comparative data for School of Communications student respondents. The school will compare and analyze Communications responses to the university and national averages to discover issues or reveal trends over time that need to be addressed to enhance student learning. Also, the university conducts its own student surveys, and the school will analyze those results. Frequency: Annually.

Student Awards (indirect measure)

Student successes can be an external indicator of the quality of the educational experience, whether originating in classes or through student media. The school will compile student successes, ranging from research presentations in the university's Student Undergraduate Research Forum to national competitions such as the Hearst Journalism Awards and Broadcast Education Association competitions. The compilation, comparison and analysis of student success over time can offer insight into the effectiveness of the instruction and experiences provided to students. Frequency: Annually.

Alumni Survey (indirect measure)

Alumni have the ability to assess their educational experiences with the benefit of perspective. The regular compilation, comparison and analysis of alumni responses can show patterns over time of alumni judgment about curriculum, instruction and student learning and of the short-term and long-term usefulness or relevance of what they learned. Frequency: Every third year.

Graduate Program Assessment Measures

ACEJMC requires graduate programs to show that students also are able to contribute to knowledge. The school's graduate-level learning outcome says students will contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the ability to think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.

The school applies three direct measures and two indirect measures to assess student learning in the M.A. in Interactive Media degree program. These measures are:

E-Portfolio Evaluations (direct measure)

Interactive media students prepare an online portfolio as part of the course of study. The school will send a sample of student portfolios to professionals in the interactive media field for an assessment of the quality and usability of the portfolio. The school will then analyze the evaluations in terms of strategic thinking, content creation and information management. Frequency: Every other year.

Team Project Evaluations (direct measure)

Students complete team projects in the Interactive Projects for the Public Good course in other countries during winter term. The school will send links for the projects to professionals in the interactive media field for an assessment of the quality and significance of the team projects for the public good. Frequency: Every other year.

End-of-Program Examination (direct measure)

Students need to grasp key concepts and skills in the interactive media program. The school will administer an examination to students poised to graduate one year and to the class of entering students who arrive for the following year, ensuring that no student contaminates results by taking the exam twice. The exam will seek to measure students' grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding of interactive media. Frequency: Every third year.

Exit Interviews (indirect measure)

Students who have gone through the intensive iMedia program in 10 months can provide perspectives on program strengths and areas to improve. The graduate program director will conduct individual exit interviews with the graduating class to learn their perceptions and gather ideas for improvements. Frequency: Annually.

Graduate Employment (indirect measure)

The purpose of the graduate program is to prepare students well for media positions or in positions that use interactive media skills. The school will collect employment data on its graduates through Career Services, knowing that the success of graduates in the marketplace is an indirect measure of program quality. Frequency: Annually.

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 and instruction, etc.

The school’s Assessment Plan applies two direct measures and three indirect measures in assessing student learning at the undergraduate level. (Graduate program assessment is addressed in #9 in the Graduate Program section.) Below is a summary of data and findings for each measure. The full reports from which these summaries are drawn are provided at the end of Standard 9.

SENIOR EXAMINATION (direct measure)

In an effort to assess the level of student learning in the program from start to finish, the school administers a 50-question examination to students in the initial course (Communications in a Global Age) and to seniors in the Great Ideas capstone course.

The 131 seniors who took the exam in May 2011 averaged 79.2 percent compared to an average of 43.7 percent by 123 students in the opening course who took the exam in February 2011 and an average of 45.8 percent by 251 students in the opening course who took the exam in September 2011. (The multiple-choice questions have five possible answers, so pure randomness should receive approximately 20 percent.)

Elon Eleven	Entering students Fall 2011 (251 students)	Seniors Spring 2011 (131 students)	Difference in student learning
1. Truth, accuracy and fairness	44.2%	89.2%	+ 45.0%
2. Freedom of expression	32.6%	73.2%	+ 40.6%
3. Ethical ways of thinking	47.0%	76.5%	+ 29.5%
4. History and roles of media in society	47.5%	81.8%	+ 34.3%
5. Diversity of audiences in a global age	48.5%	78.0%	+ 29.5%
6. Write clearly and accurately	47.0%	85.8%	+ 38.8%
7. Use the tools of technology	53.8%	84.4%	+ 30.6%
8. Apply theories presenting images/information	49.3%	75.0%	+ 25.7%
9. Engage in research and critical evaluation	42.6%	83.4%	+ 40.8%
10. Understand data and statistics	42.1%	69.8%	+ 27.7%
11. Think creatively and analytically	51.6%	68.3%	+ 16.7%
TOTAL	45.8%	79.2%	+ 33.4%

The exam is administered without students receiving a study guide in advance. It seeks to measure their grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding. Here are three examples from the exam, with comparative results from seniors in May and entering students in September:

Freedom of expression

- 92 percent of seniors identified the five freedoms in the First Amendment, compared to 53 percent of entering students.

Write clearly and accurately

- 85 percent of seniors comprehended the inverted pyramid style of writing, compared to 24 percent of entering students.

Understand data and statistics

- 83 percent of seniors identified a scale of 1 to 5 as a Likert scale, compared to 22 percent of entering students.

The school has been administering a senior assessment exam since 2004-05, but the exam has evolved in structure. The previous version was 100 questions, half focused on core courses and half on each major/sequence. In 2009-10, the school decided to modify the exam to concentrate on core content, and the exam went through a year of revising and retesting before it became the current exam given as a pre- and post-test. The full report on the 2010-11 exam cycle and previous iterations follows this section.

AGGREGATE INTERNSHIP EVALUATIONS (direct measure)

Students in the School of Communications are required to complete at least one professional internship before graduation. In 2010-11, 268 internships were completed for academic credit, with 84 percent of those occurring during summer.

The internship director gathers evaluations from workplace supervisors, reviews student portfolios and assigns grades, which represents individual student assessment. For programmatic assessment to occur, the school analyzes the aggregate evaluations submitted by these professional supervisors to identify strengths and weaknesses that student interns collectively bring to the workplace.

This analysis reveals a high satisfaction level with Elon Communications students. More than 90 percent of evaluations were ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ on a 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree, omitting not applicable). The highest aggregate scores for summer 2010 internships, at 95 percent, included “demonstrates good interpersonal communications skills” and “appropriate ethical behavior for a professional workplace.” In addition, 91 percent of the evaluations marked Elon interns in the top two categories for “clear, correct and appropriate writing skills.” One of the lower aggregate scores in summer was “ability to evaluate the work of self and others” (87 percent).

The school has been analyzing internship supervisor evaluations on an aggregate basis since 2003, when the school began requiring an internship as a graduation requirement. In fall 2010, the Internships Office revised the evaluation instrument to better reflect the Elon Eleven. Asked to evaluate student ability in the 11 areas, here are aggregate professional evaluations in the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ categories (omitting the ‘not applicable’ responses):

Apply truth, accuracy and fairness	95 percent
Describe principles of free speech and press	84 percent
Explain and apply ethical ways of thinking	90 percent
Describe the history and roles of media	89 percent
Communicate with diverse audiences	95 percent
Write clearly and accurately	92 percent
Use the tools of technology	100 percent
Apply theories in presenting images/information	97 percent
Engage in research and critical evaluation	93 percent
Understand data and statistics	93 percent
Think creatively and analytically	88 percent

The university’s Career Center solicits a post-internship evaluation from students. Almost nine of 10 Communications respondents said the internship made them better prepared to enter the job market, 86 percent said they were challenged to do their best work, 85 percent said they were given adequate supervision and feedback from the professional supervisor, 84 percent said the internship helped them see connections between classes and careers, 77 percent said Elon prepared them well for the internship, and 69 percent said the internship clarified their career goals.

STUDENT SURVEYS (indirect measure)

Elon participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the nation’s most comprehensive assessment of higher education practices. The 2010 survey polled 362,000 randomly selected freshmen and seniors at 562 U.S. colleges and universities. The survey included 572 Elon students, and 123 of those respondents were School of Communications seniors. The university’s Office of Institutional Research provided a data set to compare their responses to the Elon and national averages.

The NSSE results confirmed for faculty that the school is achieving many of its student learning objectives. Percentages reflect the top two answers in the scale:

Evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution (excellent, good, fair, poor):	
School of Communications	97%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	86%

Evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution (excellent, good, fair, poor):

School of Communications	89%
Elon University average	83%
NSSE national average	72%

Spent significant amounts of time studying and on academic work (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	83%
Elon University average	84%
NSSE national average	81%

Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	96%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	61%

Included diverse perspectives (by race, religion, gender, political) in class discussions or assignments (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	64%
Elon University average	63%
NSSE national average	63%

Talked about career plans with a faculty member or adviser (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	50%
Elon University average	61%
NSSE national average	43%

Writing clearly and effectively (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	89%
Elon University average	85%
NSSE national average	78%

Speaking clearly and effectively (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	86%
Elon University average	83%
NSSE national average	73%

Analyzing quantitative problems (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	64%
Elon University average	70%
NSSE national average	76%

Developing a personal code of values and ethics (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	78%
Elon University average	69%
NSSE national average	61%

Thinking critically and analytically (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	92%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	88%

Elon conducts its own annual survey of graduating seniors. In the latest survey, breakout data for Communications students was above the university average for participation in internships, leadership and undergraduate research; contribution to academic ability, computer skills, creativity, verbal and written communication; effective speaking skills, information literacy skills and applying ethical decision-making skills; and satisfaction with programs and services including classrooms, library services, academic advising and career services.

In fact, Communications seniors were below the university average in only four of the 23 categories, and only slightly so: ability to apply quantitative reasoning skills; ability to communicate effectively with people from other nations and cultures; participation in study abroad; and participation in volunteer/service activities.

STUDENT AWARDS (indirect measure)

Elon students and student groups have experienced significant national achievements in recent years. The school does not claim these awards; they belong to the students. But the national recognition is an external indicator of the caliber of work by students in the school. Here are seven examples spanning the breadth of the school's interests:

- ✓ Student television newscast Phoenix14News won the nation's collegiate Emmy from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 2011 for best newscast.
- ✓ *The Pendulum* student newspaper won its first national Pacemaker Award in 2009, and The Pendulum Online is a 2011 Pacemaker finalist for the second straight year.
- ✓ Elon's public relations team finished third in the nation in the 2011 Bateman case study competition in New York City.
- ✓ Cinema student Philip Kimbrough directed the winning work in the 2011 Sprite Refreshing Films competition, which was shown at the Los Angeles Film Festival.
- ✓ Morgan Little won national first place for Online Opinion and Commentary in the 2010 Mark of Excellence Awards by the Society of Professional Journalists.
- ✓ Randy Gyllenhaal was named the top student television journalist in the nation in the 2009 Hearst Journalism Awards competition in San Francisco.
- ✓ The "One on One Sports" talk show produced by Elon Student Television won third place nationally in 2009 from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Later in this standard, #5 provides a comprehensive listing of student awards and achievements at the national, regional and state levels.

ALUMNI SURVEY (indirect measure)

The School of Communications conducts an alumni survey every three years, asking graduates about the quality of their educational experiences at Elon and what they now are doing. A total of 228 alumni responded in the 2010-11 survey.

Almost 97 percent of respondents indicated they are currently employed or in graduate school. Two-thirds of those employed reported they are working in communications, whereas a third of graduates reported that their work is outside their discipline.

The survey was structured around the learning outcomes based on the Elon Eleven. More than two-thirds of alumni said the unit contributed “very much” – the highest available category – to their development in “writing clearly and accurately” and “using the tools of technology.” Here are combined results of the top two categories on a 4-point scale (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

Valuing truth, accuracy and fairness	86 percent
Appreciating free speech and press	88 percent
Applying ethical ways of thinking	88 percent
Knowing the history and roles of media	89 percent
Communicating to diverse audiences	79 percent
Writing clearly and accurately	94 percent
Using the tools of technology	92 percent
Applying concepts when presenting information	72 percent
Conducting research and evaluating information	82 percent
Interpreting data and statistics	47 percent
Being creative	86 percent
Thinking analytically	84 percent
Speaking clearly and confidently	92 percent

Communications skills that graduates considered the most important in the workplace included writing and publishing (29 percent ranked it as the most important), speaking and presenting (24 percent), production and software skills (16 percent), research skills (14 percent) and management skills (12 percent).

About a quarter of Communications alumni have attended graduate school, and 87 percent of them indicated that Elon prepared them well for graduate school.

Graduates said the greatest strengths of the program were the faculty, technology, facilities, courses, fellow students, campus media and the internship program. Open-ended comments focused on the need for practical experience while in school, greater assistance with internships, working with campus media, connecting students with industry professionals, and requiring a digital portfolio.

COMPLETING THE LOOP

Programmatic change flows from many fountains – new initiatives at a university, the evolving interests of faculty and the arrival of new faculty, and a response to recognized shortcomings discovered through formal assessment of student learning.

Rather than revisit the school’s strengths discovered through assessment, this section focuses on how assessment has played a role in programmatic change in the six years since the previous ACEJMC review.

Here are five specific areas of programmatic improvement on the undergraduate level:

- ◆ As the school matured in its first decade, assessment conversations among faculty, students, alumni and the professional advisory board led to a decision to deepen the academic experience. The school adopted a new curriculum, effective fall 2008. The four majors each have a culminating course that brings together the concepts, writing and production skills needed in that discipline. For example, Journalism students in both the print/online news sequence and the broadcast news sequence take Multimedia Journalism together to better prepare them for converging roles (although it has proven to be a challenging course to teach). The school also began requiring a public speaking course to improve the articulation of information and ideas. Effective fall 2011, the school added a requirement that all students complete a minor, double major or semester abroad as a way of promoting academic depth.
- ◆ The school revised the Great Ideas capstone course and began the *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* to strengthen the emphasis on theory, research and numerical competency. These improvements were partly driven by a NSSE survey question about the ability to apply theories to practical problems and new situations. In the 2004 survey reported in the prior self-study, Communications students ranked below both the national and Elon averages on this item. In the 2010 NSSE data, 84 percent of Communications students – above the national average and just 1 percent behind the Elon average – report that their courses emphasize applying theories and concepts to practical problems and new situations.
- ◆ The school has significantly strengthened its internship program. This comparison of data from the 2004-05 survey of Communications students reported in the prior self-study and the 2010-11 survey reveals a higher student satisfaction rate (agree and strongly agree responses on a 5-point scale):

	2004-05	2010-11
Elon prepared me for my internship	60%	77%
Received adequate training by employer	75%	85%
Received good feedback from supervisor	74%	85%

The school has implemented T.G.I.F. sessions (Three Great Internship Fridays) for all first-time interns to better prepare them for a professional internship, and the school closely monitors internship sites to ensure a quality experience. While the school may cringe that some students still report not feeling prepared, the data show considerable improvement. Six years ago, 12 percent of students marked the bottom two categories (disagree and strongly disagree) compared to 5 percent in the latest survey.

- ◆ The formation of Live Oak Communications as a student agency in 2007 was in response to this statement in the assessment section of Elon’s previous self-study: “Professionals in corporate communications expressed concern about the lack of extracurricular experiences on campus for corporate students and the inability of some of them to connect knowledge and skills gained in the classroom with areas of potential employment.” Today, Live Oak provides Strategic Communications students in particular with an agency experience, with more than 40 staff members assisting clients with website design, video production, media relations, social media, advertising, cause-related and viral marketing, brand positioning, and event management. In 2010, Live Oak received two Spinks awards – Best Website and Best Event – from the Triad PRSA chapter for client work.
- ◆ Career services for Communications students have been greatly enhanced. The school’s previous self-study noted, “A purpose of assessment is to determine where the school needs to improve. One area appears to be career advising.” In 2008, the university added a staff position – assistant director of career services for the School of Communications. In the university’s Cap & Gown Survey in May 2011, 98 percent of Communications seniors reported they had utilized Career Services – the highest response of any school. The school also emphasizes the value of career advising by faculty members. In the 2004 NSSE survey data, only 38 percent of Communications students reported that they often or very often talked about career plans with a faculty member. In the 2010 NSSE results, that number is 50 percent. Combined, these outcomes indicate considerable improvement in career services.

4. *If campus media operations are under unit control, discuss awards they have won in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years.*

Campus media are not under unit control. However, the school has a close relationship with student media and provides many of the faculty advisers. Student media awards do reflect on the quality of the School of Communications, and major recognitions are cited in the student awards section of the preceding item.

5. *Discuss awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years. If campus media operations are not under unit control, please list only awards won by the unit's majors.*

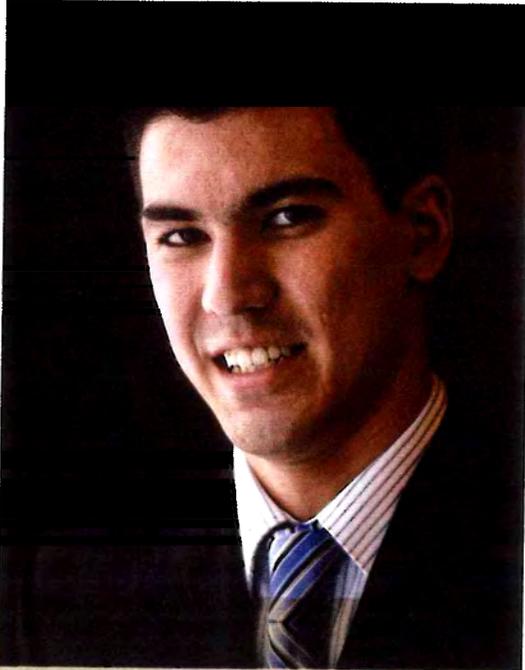
School of Communications students have been successful in competitive settings nationally, regionally and statewide. The highest individual award in the school's history is the Hearst Journalism Awards national championship in television news, awarded to Randy Gyllenhaal in 2009.

The list of student awards for the past six years begins on the following pages. The Student Awards assessment report at the end of this standard provides a comprehensive listing of student achievement on campus as well, including student award recipients in the school and noting the large number of accomplished students inducted in Lambda Pi Eta communications honor society.

Communications students are recognized at the university level, including membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi and Omicron Delta Kappa. Students have the opportunity to make research presentations at a university-sponsored event and publish their research in a peer-reviewed undergraduate research journal.

Students also have received numerous recognitions at the highest levels in academic and professional organizations such as Scripps Howard Foundation competitions and the Public Relations Society of America, as noted in the assessment report at the end.

2009 National Broadcast News Championship—Television



RANDY GYLLENHAAL

Elon University

First Place, National Television Broadcast News Championship

At the Awards Ceremony on Saturday night—after hours of planning, shooting, writing and editing—all I could think about was how amazing the food looked. Problem was... the enormous butterflies in my stomach were preventing me from eating it. As the awards were being announced, "nervous" was an understatement. The Hearst Championship is the Pulitzer Prize of college journalism. Getting to San Francisco has been a goal of mine since freshman year of college. Actually winning the thing was something I only dreamed of.

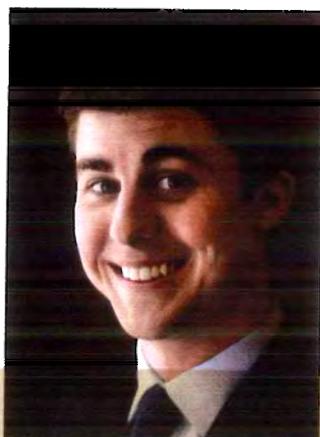
A few days earlier when we got our assignment, I tried my best to hit the ground running in a city I knew nothing about. My photographer and I blindly went to Fisherman's Wharf and just did some on-the-ground journalism—chatting with fishermen, getting some information and figuring out how the economy was hitting this part of San Francisco. We went on a fishing boat, visited a fish distributor and talked with a restaurant owner—trying to understand the entire seafood chain in San Francisco. It was only later that night, as I looked back at the video and sound we shot, that I realized we had an extremely compelling, character driven story.

The Hearst Foundation has been so helpful in helping me craft my career. Obviously, the financial support is great for a college student with loans. But they've also helped me figure out what journalism means to me... and given me a new appreciation for the industry and the people in it. San Francisco—with the food and fancy hotels—was just an added little bonus.

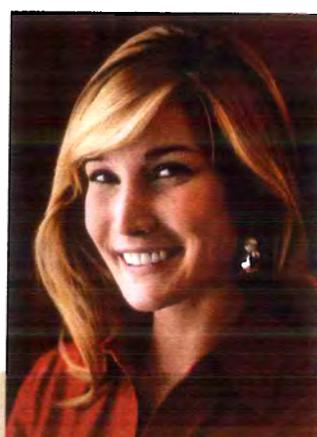
FIRST PLACE
Randy Gyllenhaal
Elon University
\$5,000 Scholarship and Hearst Medallion



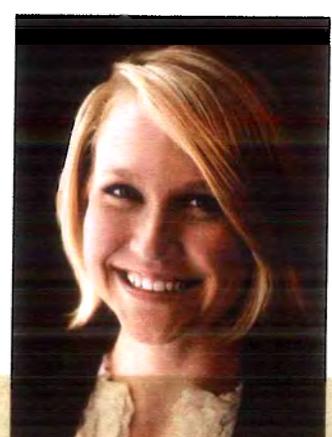
SECOND PLACE
Mathew Mendez
University of Southern California
\$4,000 Scholarship and Hearst Medallion
\$1,000 Award for Best use of Television for News Coverage



THIRD PLACE
Miles Doran
University of Florida
\$3,000 Scholarship and Hearst Medallion



FINALIST
Amber Dixon
Arizona State University
\$1,500 Scholarship and Hearst Medallion



FINALIST
Elizabeth McKernan
Arizona State University
\$1,500 Scholarship and Hearst Medallion

Finalists are listed in alphabetical order. Visit www.hearstawards.org to view the winning stories.

6. Give the total number of graduates from the unit since the institution first offered a professional program. List by specialty each member of the graduating class of three years ago and those graduates' current jobs. If practical, please give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list.

Elon has graduated 3,612 students who majored in the School of Communications, its predecessor Department of Journalism and Communications, or earlier journalism and communications majors when the program was in the English department.

Here is a list of the 2008 graduating class by curriculum name at the time of graduation and their current employment. The school was able to locate information on 90 percent of the class (185 of 206):

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Allison Brincefield, account executive, California Accessories, Washington, D.C.
Jennifer Connolly, graduate program, University of Southern California
Laurie Craft, assistant, Strook & Strook & Lavan LLP, New York
Mary Cunningham, assistant director, Landon School, Washington, D.C.
Madelaine de la Ossa, assistant account executive, Daniel J. Edelman Co., New York
Lauren Doxsey, human resources, Boston Properties, Boston
Laura Eastes, reporter, *The Georgetown News-Graphic*, Lexington, Ky.
Elizabeth Elmore, foreign expert, EF English First Teachers, Shanghai, China
Erika Hasenfus, assistant to the president, Luxe Interiors Design Magazine, New York
Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown, Army public affairs specialist, U.S. Department of Defense
Justin Hite, sports reporter, *Rocky Mount Telegram*, Rocky Mount, N.C.
Tayler Kent, Ph.D. student, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Richard Kraft, associate editor, news feed for *The Sporting News*, Charlotte
Meredith Long, project design manager, University Directories, Raleigh
Sarah McGlinchey, medical education coordinator, Neuronetics Inc., Philadelphia
Kristopher Moody, news editor, *Clay County News*, Sutton, Neb.
Colleen O'Brien, strategic communications analyst, International RAM Associates, Washington, D.C.
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David Prince, HIV/AIDS outreach worker, Peace Corps, Mangata, South Africa
Jeffrey Rickel, copywriter/client services, Dimension X Advertising and Marketing, Jeannette, Pa.
Danica Sands, professional yacht stewardess, Princess Sarah Yacht, Bahamas
Megan Seldon, picture editor, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.
Brittany Smith, freelance copywriter and content coordinator, Meredith Communications, Raleigh
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Brian Tkaczyk, assistant editor, Pace Communications, Greensboro
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Lindsey Wernecke, director of administration relations, Triumph Communications, Columbus, Ohio
Jeremy White, native English conversational teacher, AEON Corporation of Japan
Colby (Pierce) Wortham, director of development, Chesapeake Bay Academy, Virginia Beach, Va.

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Alexander Bond, commercial account executive, Brown & Brown Insurance, Tampa, Fla.

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 Nancy Whitman, account executive, O'Keffe and Co., Alexandria, Va.
 Lynice Williams, event planner, DMVntage, Washington, D.C.

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 Annie Binning, delivery management associate, Organic, Charlotte
 Elon Bliden, district manager, Kobrand Corp., Baltimore
 Lisa Bodenhorst, owner, Ivey Run Design, Charlotte
 Erin Burgin, administrator, Rothschild Inc., Washington, D.C.
 Jamie Christie, associate account manager, AOL, Homepages at America Online, New York
 Jennifer Copeland, director, volunteer and affinity programs, Alumni Association, Duke University
 Kimberly Cote, account executive, Pace Communications, Greensboro
 Rachel Cruise, account executive, Edelman Public Relations, Chicago
 Lynn Cupero, account executive, Mullen Advertising and PR, Boston
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 Laila Hannallah, marketing and communications, Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C.
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 Michael Hughes, assistant director of development, St. Frances Center, Denver
 Jaclyn Hummel, media planner, Carat media agency/communications, New York
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 Kaitlin Lannon, executive assistant, Millennium Radio Group, Asbury Park, N.J.
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 Caitlin Magidson, student for MA, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
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 Leah Matthews, owner, Leah Rhianne Photography, Baltimore
 Kimberly Marker, administrative assistant, Alliance for Sustainable Colorado, Denver
 Kaitlyn McCrystal, publicity assistant, Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, New York
 Meredith McCue, marketing coordinator, Vogue magazine, New York
 Anna McGhee, administrative assistant and development intern, Manifold Motion, Seattle
 Maggie McHarris, recruiter and administrative analyst, The Rehancement Group, Reston, Va.
 Kilpatrick McNeely, procurement/purchasing manager, Liquidity Services Inc., Washington, D.C.
 Katherine Meiners, marketing specialist/account manager, Well Trak LLC, Kansas City, Mo.
 Tesla Mellage, communications coordinator for Honduras, Cargill Foods, Cologne, Germany
 Christopher Miller, marketing and communications manager, U.S. Tennis Association, Reston, Va.
 Joseph Mills, photographer/HD cinematographer/designer, Still55, Tampa, Fla.
 Laurie Montanus, associate editor, Independent Electrical Contractors, Washington, D.C.
 Natalie Moore, sales and recruiting associate, The BECO Group, Chicago
 Lindsay Morgan, e-marketing coordinator, Atlanta Spirit LLC, Atlanta
 Matthew Morrisette, marketing manager, Sealy Brands, Greensboro
 Kendra Nickel, law student, University of Pennsylvania
 Monica Nolden, senior associate, Smith Bucklin management, Washington, D.C.
 Catherine O'Pray, editor and producer, CBS, New York
 Christine Pahl, marketing associate, Compliance Implementation Services, Morrisville, N.C.
 Sandra Parks, coordinator, Under Armour, Baltimore
 Margaret Paulin, assistant manager, Coach retail company, Boston
 Hilaire Pickett, director of communication, Design Lines Ltd., Raleigh
 Amy Pierce, showroom sales associate, Lee Anderson Couture, New York
 Sara Pollock, associate community manager, Communispace Corporation, Boston
 Jordon Preston, national broadcast buyer, Universal McCann, New York
 Katelyn Radford, graduate student, Clemson University
 Alexander Retsch-Bogart, data analysis assistant, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Washington, D.C.
 Jacquelin Reynolds-Drumm, agent/assistant, International Creative Management, New York
 Elizabeth Richey, teacher, The Growing Years Learning Center, Greensboro

Jonathan Ridzon, account coordinator, Taylor Public Relations, Charlotte
Emily Romans, junior associate, APCO Worldwide, Washington, D.C.
Lauren Rosati, director of community relations, YWCA of Richmond
Samantha Schroeder, director of business development, The Goldstein Group, New York
Brittanie Schroyer, multimedia technology graduate student, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh
Leo Schwach, assistant media planner, Neo@oglivy, New York
Jennifer Seeley, public relations coordinator, Geico, Washington, D.C.
Meredith Severs, owner, Sweetgrass Event and Design, Charleston, S.C.
Victoria Smith, marketing and communications coordinator, University of Pennsylvania
Thomas Snow, administrator, Campus Outreach D.C., Washington, D.C.
Kelly Soth, account manager, TESSCO Technologies wireless communications, Baltimore
Lara-Anne Stokes, creative assistant, McCarthy Mambro & Bertinom, Boston
Rachel Stroud, marketing manager, Avid Xchange Inc., Charlotte
Jessica Tingle, administrative assistant, National Association of Social Workers, Washington, D.C.
Shawn Tobin, implementation specialist, Au Bon Pain, Boston
Sheida Vaez-Zadeh, communications and outreach coordinator, Samaritan Inns, Washington, D.C.
Lauren Walker, account executive, O'Keeffe & Co., Washington, D.C.
Grant Walsh, sales associate, EmSense Corp. neuroscience metrics, San Francisco
Melissa Walsh, marketing products coordinator, Booksurge (division of Amazon), Florence, S.C.
Katie Wareheim, admissions coordinator, Calvert School, Baltimore
Lauren Wattie, assistant account executive, Vault Communications, Philadelphia
Madeline Wear, marketing coordinator, Charlotte Radiology, Charlotte
Melissa West, sales executive, Escada, U.S. Subco LLC, New York
Allison White, digital planner, PAVE Creative Group, Greensboro
Katherine Whitmore, business development research associate, Micro Men Communications, Cary, N.C.
Andrew Wilen, marketing manager, Target Point, Charlotte
Robert Wilson, customer engineer, EMC Corporation, Charlotte
Jenny (Turner) Wood, research associate, Turner Research Network, Atlanta
Virginia Zint, sales coordinator, Solid State Logic, New York
Kathryn Zujkowski, business intelligence specialist, ListenLogic, Philadelphia

Cinema

Ryan Boyd, production assistant, GMMB broadcast production, Los Angeles
Lily Cameron, video production, Cantaloupe TV, Indianapolis
William Campbell, studio manager, Burning Oak Studios, Raleigh
Benjamin DeLoose, assistant, USA Networks, Los Angeles
Dustin Diamond, film/television production assistant, head of AV, Bridgeman/Packer Dance, New York
Lydia Graeff, tour actor/director, Missoula Children's Theatre, Missoula, Mont.
Michael Malagon, independent film professional, Boston
Michael McCormick, delivery solutions, United Parcel Service, New York
Katherine O'Neill, encode technician, Starz Entertainment, Denver
Lauren Princi, media scheduler, Discovery Communications, Washington, D.C.
Howard Rosell, freelance film crew, Los Angeles
Carissa Trifone, digital vault operator, 20th Century Fox, Los Angeles
Brandy Troxler, administrative assistant, Barbary Post post-production, San Francisco
Laura (Hendricks) Watkins, assistant, Consolidated Planning Inc., Charlotte

7. *List graduates who have established distinguished careers in journalism and mass communications.*

Elon graduates are distinguishing themselves. They have received Pulitzers, Oscars and Emmys.

One was on *The New York Times* team that won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and, before that, directed the computer-assisted reporting project at the *Washington Post* that won a Pulitzer for public service. Another Elon graduate was senior producer of *The Silence of the Lambs*, which won the 1991 Oscar for Best Film. A 2000 graduate has five Emmys as a writer for “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.”

In addition, a 2005 graduate won the World Cinema Audience Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, a 2009 graduate won first place in the nation in the Hearst Journalism Awards competition in television news, and a 2010 graduate was part of the CNN reporting team that won a Peabody Award for its coverage of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

The vast majority of the unit’s graduates are still in their 20s and 30s, so the school defines *distinguished careers* differently than a unit with an established alumni base.

Below is a list of 20 alumni from the School of Communications and its predecessor department whose career trajectories are distinguished at this stage of professional life. A few are now in their 40s, while some on the list graduated only six years ago and are better described as in the process of *building* distinguished careers.

Laith al-Majali (2005)

Film producer and editor, Amman, Jordan (recipient of World Cinema Audience Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival)

Cindy Beidel Aitken (2002)

Communications manager, *National Geographic Society*, Washington, D.C.

Matt Belanger (2005)

Investigative reporter and anchor, WGAL-TV, Harrisburg, Pa.

Rich Blomquist (2000)

Writer and four-time Emmy winner, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, New York

Ryan Buckley (2003)

Writer and producer, CNN, New York

Loren Burlando (1993)

Associate producer, NBC Dateline International, New York

Allison Deibolt (2002)

Senior manager, ad sales marketing and research, Walt Disney International, London

- Wes Durham (1988)
Play-by-play radio announcer, Atlanta Falcons and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets
- Steve Earley (2004)
Social media community coordinator, *Baltimore Sun*
- Doug Finberg (1994)
Executive vice president of marketing, Marvel Studios, Los Angeles
- Scott Gustafson (2000)
Producer, ESPN (recipient of an Emmy for ESPN's production of Winter X Games)
- Dan Haessler (1999)
Media services manager, NFL Films, Philadelphia
- Scott McCrary (2000)
Producer, CBS Newspath, Washington, D.C.
- Jo Craven McGinty (1985)
Reporter and two-time Pulitzer Prize team member, *The New York Times*
- Tom Mullen (2000)
Director of interactive marketing, EMI Music, New York
- Doug Norwood (1984)
Chief of the Style Section copy desk, *The Washington Post*
- Johanna Rautasalo (1998)
Marketing manager, Nokia Mobile Software, Helsinki, Finland
- Kristen Rossi (1996)
Field director, *Entertainment Tonight*, Hollywood
- Troy Senkiewicz (1998)
Owner and producer, Digimax Consulting, Los Angeles
- Scott Warner (1997)
President, Warner Strategies crisis management consultants, Washington, D.C.

Three historically prominent individuals connected to Elon also merit attention, although they attended Elon long before there was a journalism or communications major. One is Marjorie Hunter (Elon, 1942), who spent 25 years as a *New York Times* reporter and became the first woman ever to cover the White House for *The Times*. The other two are prominent filmmakers. Kenneth Utt (Elon, 1942) produced Academy Award-winning films such as *Philadelphia* and *The Silence of the Lambs*. Martin Ritt (attended Elon in the 1930s, awarded an honorary doctorate in 1968) directed *Norma Rae* (Oscar for Best Actress to Sally Field), *Hud* and *Sounder*. All three are deceased.

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 Katherine Meiners, marketing specialist/account manager, Well Trak LLC, Kansas City, Mo.
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 Laurie Montanus, associate editor, Independent Electrical Contractors, Washington, D.C.
 Natalie Moore, sales and recruiting associate, The BECO Group, Chicago
 Lindsay Morgan, e-marketing coordinator, Atlanta Spirit LLC, Atlanta
 Matthew Morrisette, marketing manager, Sealy Brands, Greensboro
 Kendra Nickel, law student, University of Pennsylvania
 Monica Nolden, senior associate, Smith Bucklin management, Washington, D.C.
 Catherine O'Pray, editor and producer, CBS, New York
 Christine Pahl, marketing associate, Compliance Implementation Services, Morrisville, N.C.
 Sandra Parks, coordinator, Under Armour, Baltimore
 Margaret Paulin, assistant manager, Coach retail company, Boston
 Hilaire Pickett, director of communication, Design Lines Ltd., Raleigh
 Amy Pierce, showroom sales associate, Lee Anderson Couture, New York
 Sara Pollock, associate community manager, Communispace Corporation, Boston
 Jordon Preston, national broadcast buyer, Universal McCann, New York
 Katelyn Radford, graduate student, Clemson University
 Alexander Retsch-Bogart, data analysis assistant, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Washington, D.C.
 Jacquelin Reynolds-Drumm, agent/assistant, International Creative Management, New York
 Elizabeth Richey, teacher, The Growing Years Learning Center, Greensboro

Jonathan Ridzon, account coordinator, Taylor Public Relations, Charlotte
Emily Romans, junior associate, APCO Worldwide, Washington, D.C.
Lauren Rosati, director of community relations, YWCA of Richmond
Samantha Schroeder, director of business development, The Goldstein Group, New York
Brittanie Schroyer, multimedia technology graduate student, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh
Leo Schwach, assistant media planner, Neo@oglivy, New York
Jennifer Seeley, public relations coordinator, Geico, Washington, D.C.
Meredith Severs, owner, Sweetgrass Event and Design, Charleston, S.C.
Victoria Smith, marketing and communications coordinator, University of Pennsylvania
Thomas Snow, administrator, Campus Outreach D.C., Washington, D.C.
Kelly Soth, account manager, TESSCO Technologies wireless communications, Baltimore
Lara-Anne Stokes, creative assistant, McCarthy Mambro & Bertinom, Boston
Rachel Stroud, marketing manager, Avid Xchange Inc., Charlotte
Jessica Tingle, administrative assistant, National Association of Social Workers, Washington, D.C.
Shawn Tobin, implementation specialist, Au Bon Pain, Boston
Sheida Vaez-Zadeh, communications and outreach coordinator, Samaritan Inns, Washington, D.C.
Lauren Walker, account executive, O'Keeffe & Co., Washington, D.C.
Grant Walsh, sales associate, EmSense Corp. neuroscience metrics, San Francisco
Melissa Walsh, marketing products coordinator, Booksurge (division of Amazon), Florence, S.C.
Katie Wareheim, admissions coordinator, Calvert School, Baltimore
Lauren Wattie, assistant account executive, Vault Communications, Philadelphia
Madeline Wear, marketing coordinator, Charlotte Radiology, Charlotte
Melissa West, sales executive, Escada, U.S. Subco LLC, New York
Allison White, digital planner, PAVE Creative Group, Greensboro
Katherine Whitmore, business development research associate, Micro Men Communications, Cary, N.C.
Andrew Wilen, marketing manager, Target Point, Charlotte
Robert Wilson, customer engineer, EMC Corporation, Charlotte
Jenny (Turner) Wood, research associate, Turner Research Network, Atlanta
Virginia Zint, sales coordinator, Solid State Logic, New York
Kathryn Zujkowski, business intelligence specialist, ListenLogic, Philadelphia

Cinema

Ryan Boyd, production assistant, GMMB broadcast production, Los Angeles
Lily Cameron, video production, Cantaloupe TV, Indianapolis
William Campbell, studio manager, Burning Oak Studios, Raleigh
Benjamin DeLoose, assistant, USA Networks, Los Angeles
Dustin Diamond, film/television production assistant, head of AV, Bridgeman/Packer Dance, New York
Lydia Graeff, tour actor/director, Missoula Children's Theatre, Missoula, Mont.
Michael Malagon, independent film professional, Boston
Michael McCormick, delivery solutions, United Parcel Service, New York
Katherine O'Neill, encode technician, Starz Entertainment, Denver
Lauren Princi, media scheduler, Discovery Communications, Washington, D.C.
Howard Rosell, freelance film crew, Los Angeles
Carissa Trifone, digital vault operator, 20th Century Fox, Los Angeles
Brandy Troxler, administrative assistant, Barbary Post post-production, San Francisco
Laura (Hendricks) Watkins, assistant, Consolidated Planning Inc., Charlotte

7. *List graduates who have established distinguished careers in journalism and mass communications.*

Elon graduates are distinguishing themselves. They have received Pulitzers, Oscars and Emmys.

One was on *The New York Times* team that won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and, before that, directed the computer-assisted reporting project at the *Washington Post* that won a Pulitzer for public service. Another Elon graduate was senior producer of *The Silence of the Lambs*, which won the 1991 Oscar for Best Film. A 2000 graduate has five Emmys as a writer for “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.”

In addition, a 2005 graduate won the World Cinema Audience Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, a 2009 graduate won first place in the nation in the Hearst Journalism Awards competition in television news, and a 2010 graduate was part of the CNN reporting team that won a Peabody Award for its coverage of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

The vast majority of the unit’s graduates are still in their 20s and 30s, so the school defines *distinguished careers* differently than a unit with an established alumni base.

Below is a list of 20 alumni from the School of Communications and its predecessor department whose career trajectories are distinguished at this stage of professional life. A few are now in their 40s, while some on the list graduated only six years ago and are better described as in the process of *building* distinguished careers.

Laith al-Majali (2005)

Film producer and editor, Amman, Jordan (recipient of World Cinema Audience Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival)

Cindy Beidel Aitken (2002)

Communications manager, *National Geographic Society*, Washington, D.C.

Matt Belanger (2005)

Investigative reporter and anchor, WGAL-TV, Harrisburg, Pa.

Rich Blomquist (2000)

Writer and four-time Emmy winner, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, New York

Ryan Buckley (2003)

Writer and producer, CNN, New York

Loren Burlando (1993)

Associate producer, NBC Dateline International, New York

Allison Deibolt (2002)

Senior manager, ad sales marketing and research, Walt Disney International, London

- Wes Durham (1988)
Play-by-play radio announcer, Atlanta Falcons and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets
- Steve Earley (2004)
Social media community coordinator, *Baltimore Sun*
- Doug Finberg (1994)
Executive vice president of marketing, Marvel Studios, Los Angeles
- Scott Gustafson (2000)
Producer, ESPN (recipient of an Emmy for ESPN's production of Winter X Games)
- Dan Haessler (1999)
Media services manager, NFL Films, Philadelphia
- Scott McCrary (2000)
Producer, CBS Newspath, Washington, D.C.
- Jo Craven McGinty (1985)
Reporter and two-time Pulitzer Prize team member, *The New York Times*
- Tom Mullen (2000)
Director of interactive marketing, EMI Music, New York
- Doug Norwood (1984)
Chief of the Style Section copy desk, *The Washington Post*
- Johanna Rautasalo (1998)
Marketing manager, Nokia Mobile Software, Helsinki, Finland
- Kristen Rossi (1996)
Field director, *Entertainment Tonight*, Hollywood
- Troy Senkiewicz (1998)
Owner and producer, Digimax Consulting, Los Angeles
- Scott Warner (1997)
President, Warner Strategies crisis management consultants, Washington, D.C.

Three historically prominent individuals connected to Elon also merit attention, although they attended Elon long before there was a journalism or communications major. One is Marjorie Hunter (Elon, 1942), who spent 25 years as a *New York Times* reporter and became the first woman ever to cover the White House for *The Times*. The other two are prominent filmmakers. Kenneth Utt (Elon, 1942) produced Academy Award-winning films such as *Philadelphia* and *The Silence of the Lambs*. Martin Ritt (attended Elon in the 1930s, awarded an honorary doctorate in 1968) directed *Norma Rae* (Oscar for Best Actress to Sally Field), *Hud* and *Sounder*. All three are deceased.

8. *Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the professions and to improve curriculum and instruction. Discuss measures of graduates' satisfaction with the educational experiences provided by the unit. Describe maintenance of records of alumni employment histories and other alumni records.*

One of the school's assessment measures is an alumni survey, described in #3, to gain the perspectives of graduates about curriculum, instruction and student opportunities. A number of alumni return to campus to visit teachers or be guest speakers in class, and Elon holds events in major cities for alumni. For instance, at AEJMC in St. Louis, all Elon Communications graduates in the area were invited to dinner with the dean.

Beyond the school's efforts, the university's Alumni Office tracks graduates and maintains records of alumni employment histories.

Graduate Program

9. *Show that the unit has defined outcomes in the master's program appropriate to the program, such as a professional project, a thesis or a comprehensive exam demonstrating development of analytical and critical thinking abilities appropriate to the profession.*

The M.A. in Interactive Media program requires students to complete a capstone course in which they create an original, fully functional interactive media presentation. Students often partner with real-world clients to complete their individual project. The project is a culminating experience that should demonstrate analytical mastery of the theories and production elements of interactivity to the satisfaction of the faculty.

Students present their projects in two forums. The first is the iMedia Showcase in April when media professionals come to campus to view the projects and interact with the graduate students. The second presentation comes just before graduation when projects are viewed by faculty, university leaders and the public.

The Accrediting Council requires a professional master's degree seeking accreditation to demonstrate how its graduates attain an additional core competency – contribution to knowledge. The School of Communications has established the following learning outcome for this competency, reflecting the graduate program's mission statement:

Contribute to knowledge

Learning outcome: The student will be able to contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the ability to think strategically across media platforms; plan and create interactive media content; and manage information in a digital age.

ACEJMC expectation: Graduates should be able to "contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work."

The school's Assessment Plan applies three direct measures and two indirect measures in assessing student learning in the M.A. in Interactive Media program. What follows is a summary of data and findings for each measure, concluding with a description of how the school is using the findings to improve curriculum and instruction. The full reports from which these summaries are drawn are available at the end of this section:

E-PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS (direct measure)

All interactive media students complete a professional online portfolio as part of the course of study.

To determine the quality of portfolio content and usability, the graduate program director sent links for iMedia portfolios to a group of media professionals in May 2011. The professionals all currently work with interactive media or evaluate websites as a part of their jobs. The assessment process focused on the portfolios of the 15 students listed in Table 3a (the first 15 students in alphabetical order, as requested). Evaluations and comments were returned directly to the graduate director.

Evaluators responded to eight objectives related to the desired learning outcome to “think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.” Each evaluator had five possible responses: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

Overall, 76 percent of responses ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the stated objectives had been achieved. The information management objective “The portfolio provides information that contributes to knowledge and understanding of the subject matter” received the most positive evaluation (agree or strongly agree for 13 of 15 portfolios). The content creation objective “The portfolio demonstrates an ability to use the tools of technology used in the professions” received the weakest evaluation (9 strongly agree, 1 agree, 3 neutral and 2 disagree).

TEAM PROJECT EVALUATIONS (direct measure)

During the January term, all interactive media students participate in the course Interactive Project for the Public Good, commonly referred to as the fly-in. Four teams spent 8-10 days each in Panama and Costa Rica, working on projects for nonprofit organizations. All projects required teams to do their projects in English and Spanish (one team also created websites for visually impaired users). Once completed and approved by the host organizations, the sites were made publicly accessible.

To determine the quality of the team fly-in projects, the graduate director sent links for the sites to media professionals for evaluation. Nine responses were solicited to help evaluate the overall program, not assess the work of any specific team.

Overall, media professionals believed the fly-in projects met their aim of serving the public good, and most believed the components of each project worked together well. Almost 80 percent of responses ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the stated objectives had been achieved. The strategic thinking objective “The content uses the unique attributes of interactive media to communicate effectively with an audience” received the most positive evaluation (agree or strongly agree in 8 of 9 evaluations), whereas the

objective “The content is well written and organized to achieve the intended purpose” received the weakest evaluation (5 agree or strongly agree, with 4 neutral).

Because of the nature of the winter term project, students have less than four weeks to fly to another country, collect information, edit it, create interactive sites, re-contact with their host organizations, ensure that all information is accurate in two languages, and present their final projects to the School of Communications. It exposes students to real-world work situations and is a good measure of students’ ability to work in teams, meet deadlines, and provide finished products that meet clients’ needs.

END-OF-PROGRAM EXAMINATION (direct measure)

A 30-question examination was administered to the 2010-11 class at the conclusion of the iMedia program, with questions addressing each part of the learning outcome.

For example, a series of questions about strategic thinking included one about “the Gutenberg Parenthesis.” The content creation section included questions about kerning, photo resolution and keyframes. The section on information management included items about usability tests and product recommendation features.

To assess the knowledge gained by the 2011 graduates, the same exam was administered to the incoming 2011-12 class at the start of the opening course.

Results showed a significant gain in knowledge by those who spent a year in the graduate program. Overall, the pre- and post-test revealed a 28 percent difference (incoming students answered 40 percent correctly and graduates-to-be 68 percent). The largest difference (37 percent) occurred in the set of questions related to content creation – the skills component of the program. Differences were less dramatic, but still present, for the areas of conceptual thinking and information management.

By the way, 81 percent of graduates correctly answered “the Gutenberg Parenthesis” question compared to 47 percent of incoming students. The kerning question showed a difference of 97 percent to 52 percent, and the item about product recommendation features on websites had a 69 percent to 32 percent difference in knowledge.

EXIT INTERVIEWS (indirect measure)

To learn student perceptions of the iMedia program and gather ideas for improvements, the graduate director conducted individual exit interviews at the end of the program. Twenty-eight of 32 students in the 2010-11 class participated. They collectively called the iMedia program an excellent experience that provided them skills and a mindset that will help them professionally, and 26 of the 28 said they would enroll again.

The fly-in course, Interactive Project for the Public Good, was the highlight of the program for many students. One student hired as a digital analyst in Washington said the fly-in was crucial to his hiring because it gave him experience working for a client as part of a team.

Exit-interview feedback, combined with an iMedia survey on equipment and training, revealed a need to restructure the Digital Media Workshop that begins the program. Students said the intense use of digital cameras during winter term requires more workshops and instruction beforehand.

Students were particularly appreciative of program flexibility. The program offers students a broad skill set in the first semester and then provides the opportunity in the spring to deepen knowledge in one area. Think about the letter T. The top bar of the T represents the broad foundation, while the leg of the T represents depth. Some students went deep in a particular area; others found the breadth of the program an advantage. “I thought I’d be an expert in one thing,” one student said, “but for my [new] position, I need to know a little of it all. This was good for me.”

Some students said courses geared toward strategic thinking and information management tended to overlap. Others said the more conceptual courses pulled the program together.

GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT (indirect measure)

Because the interactive media program is a professional one, its aim is to prepare students for media positions or in professions that use interactive media skills. The success of graduates in finding jobs is an indirect measure of program quality.

The School of Communications collects employment data on its graduates through Career Services. Ross Wade, assistant director of career services, is located in McEwen and works specifically with Communications, including the graduate program. He holds informational job search/résumé/portfolio sessions with iMedia students in the fall and spring terms and is the principal organizer of the iMedia Showcase. He stays in touch with graduates through LinkedIn, Facebook, email and blogs, as well as traditional means of contact – like phone calls.

From the inaugural 2009-10 class, the school is in contact with 35 of the 36 graduates. All 35 have positions that draw all or in part on their interactive media skill sets.

The 2010-11 class graduated in May 2011, and 22 of the 32 graduates were employed by the end of July. This means 69 percent of recent graduates had secured a position within two months of program completion. This already is well above the 60 percent of master’s degree recipients having a full-time job within six months of graduation, as

reported in AEJMC's employment report compiled by the Cox Center at the University of Georgia.

A table listing iMedia graduates from both classes with their position, organization and city is provided in the fuller report at the end of this standard.

COMPLETING THE LOOP

The M.A. in Interactive Media program benefits from five assessment measures designed to help the school analyze curriculum, instruction and programs in order to improve future student learning.

Faculty teaching in the graduate program discussed the assessment results, and here are two specific areas of programmatic improvement as a result:

- ◆ Exit interviews and the e-portfolio evaluations by professionals revealed a need for more video instruction. Graduate students said they especially sensed this need in the winter term fly-ins when gathering content on deadline. In response, the school added two days of video instruction in the Digital Media Workshop in August. The graduate program director also arranged for more intense workshops related to video work during some of the weekly Proseminar sessions in the fall term.

- ◆ Faculty conversations about ways to strengthen the iMedia program have led to the addition of a candidate interview component in the selection of future classes. While the vast majority of iMedia students perform successfully in the program, faculty believe the interview component will help detect the occasional applicant not well-suited for an intensive interactive media program. The school is working with the Graduate Admissions Office to establish the protocols for this added component in the selection process.

Assessment Reports for the Undergraduate Program

The School of Communications uses two direct measures and three indirect measures to assess student learning in the undergraduate program. The following reports were compiled by Associate Dean Don A. Grady in summer 2011, with assistance from Byung Lee (senior exam), Nagatha Tonkins (internship evaluations), Rob Springer (student surveys) and Colin Donohue (student awards). These reports serve as the foundation for the assessment summaries reported in Standard 9.

Senior Examination

(direct measure)

The senior assessment exam is based on the Elon Eleven, the school's distinctive approach to ACEJMC's values and competences, and the corresponding student learning outcomes.

The 50-question exam was given to entering students in all sections of the opening course (COM 100 Communications in a Global Age) in fall 2011 and to seniors in all sections of the capstone course (COM 495 Great Ideas) in spring 2011, with these comparative results:

Elon Eleven	Entering students Fall 2011 (251 students)	Seniors Spring 2011 (131 students)	Difference in student learning
1. Truth, accuracy and fairness	44.2%	89.2%	+ 45.0%
2. Freedom of expression	32.6%	73.2%	+ 40.6%
3. Ethical ways of thinking	47.0%	76.5%	+ 29.5%
4. History and roles of media in society	47.5%	81.8%	+ 34.3%
5. Diversity of audiences in a global age	48.5%	78.0%	+ 29.5%
6. Write clearly and accurately	47.0%	85.8%	+ 38.8%
7. Use the tools of technology	53.8%	84.4%	+ 30.6%
8. Apply theories presenting images/information	49.3%	75.0%	+ 25.7%
9. Engage in research and critical evaluation	42.6%	83.4%	+ 40.8%
10. Understand data and statistics	42.1%	69.8%	+ 27.7%
11. Think creatively and analytically	51.6%	68.3%	+ 16.7%
TOTAL	45.8%	79.2%	+ 33.4%

The exam, administered without students receiving a study guide in advance, seeks to measure their grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding. The multiple-choice questions have five possible answers, so pure randomness should receive approximately 20 percent.

The school's previous senior exam was 100 questions, half focused on core courses and half focused on various curricular areas. In 2009-10, the school decided to modify the exam to concentrate on core content, and the exam went through a year of revising and retesting before it became the current exam given as a pre- and post-test.

In fall 2010, the exam was modified to 66 questions, six common questions for each of values and competencies. The exam was further streamlined to 50 questions in spring 2011, with 4 or 5 questions for each of student learning outcomes. The revised exam was administered in winter, spring and fall 2011.

The assessment exam is administered online to both entering students and seniors during a designated class or final exam period. Seniors take the exam at the end of the capstone course (COM 495). First-year students take the exam within the first week of the semester in the introductory course (COM 100).

Senior students who took the combination of exams during all of 2010-11 averaged 76.6 percent, about 10 percent higher than a year earlier because questions were updated to more accurately reflect what they learned in class, as shown below:

	# of exam takers	Average	Standard deviation	Highest	Lowest
2010-11	243	76.6%	8.8	96%	52%
2009-10	231	67.0%	8.3	83%	30%

Senior Journalism majors scored the highest on the exam. Broadcast News students scored 79.6 percent and Print/Online Concentration students followed with a score of 79 percent. Journalism majors were followed by Broadcast & New Media students (77 percent), Strategic Communications students (76.8 percent), Communication Science students (72.7 percent) and Cinema students (72.2 percent).

Students' test scores were related positively with their GPAs. The correlation coefficient, which shows the strength and direction of a linear relationship between the two variables, was 0.39 for all students. The correlation coefficient of the two variables for individual concentrations ranged from 0.16 to 0.54 (except for Communication Science majors, which had few participants). The moderate level of the correlation indicated that the senior assessment exam measures substantially what GPA does not.

Students who took the exam in spring scored higher than those in fall across all majors. Most Elon students graduate in spring, so these students have an advantage over students taking the exam in the fall who may not yet have had other core courses such as Media Law and Ethics.

The large distinction in learning between entering students and seniors on the assessment exam demonstrates the impact of the instructional program on student learning.

Student Internships

(direct measure)

An internship is a form of experiential education that extends the classroom beyond the walls of the university. The School of Communications requires that all students complete at least one professional internship before graduation. Because an internship is both required and supervised by the school through its full-time internship director, it provides valuable information about student learning and qualifies as a direct measure of assessment.

All students must complete at least 1 credit hour of COM 381 Communications Internship, based on at least 80 work hours per credit hour. Students may enroll in 2 hours of internship credit with 160 or more work hours. By the time of graduation, students may complete multiple internship experiences for a maximum of 4 hours of internship credit, which is consistent with ACEJMC policy that says internship credit may not exceed the equivalent of a course (Elon has 4-credit-hour courses).

Generally, students must have completed their sophomore year and possess at least a 2.0 grade point average to be eligible to register for an internship. For students to receive academic credit, internships must be approved in advance by the school's internship office. The grade a student receives in an internship is based on the evaluation of five components: a portfolio (15%); midterm and final reflection papers (10%); a case study (15%); work-site supervisor's evaluation (50%); and a presentation/debriefing (10%). A description of each of these assignments is included in the course syllabus.

As an assessment tool, the school compiles data from three sources: descriptive data concerning the number, credit hours, and types of internships; an analysis of student learning outcomes (the Elon Eleven) as reflected in work-site supervisor evaluations; and a survey of interns soliciting their opinions of their experiences. Here are key findings:

Descriptive Data

In the 2010-11 academic year, 268 students completed professional internships for a cumulative 445 credit hours. More than 80 percent (226 internships) were completed during summer 2010, 8 in fall 2010, 14 in winter term 2011, and 20 in spring 2011.

Five students conducted internships internationally (Argentina, Australia, Honduras, India and Nicaragua), 26 Communications students completed internships through the summer Elon in Los Angeles program, and 15 students completed internships through the summer Elon in New York City program. States and cities with the highest number of Elon interns included North Carolina (76), New York (59), Los Angeles (35), Washington, D.C. (13) and Maryland (11).

Internships were categorized according to the type of employer. Top employers for internships were television stations/networks (19%), nonprofit organizations (17%), public relations/advertising/marketing agencies (15%), for-profit companies (13%), and photo/video/TV/film production and distribution companies (10%). Other students interned at newspapers, radio stations, sports teams/conferences, government, music production and distribution companies, book publishers, talent agencies, academic organizations, and web-based companies.

The list of specific internship sites is impressive. Internship sites include Weber Shandwick, Hess Corporation, "60 Minutes," The Colbert Report, Pierce-Cote Advertising, Defense Intelligence Agency, Bravo, Trone Advertising, CondeNast GQ Magazine, Grand Ole Opry, New York Rangers, Essence Magazine, The White House, O Magazine, Lux Magazine, VH1/MTV, Spike TV, NBC Nightly News; Sony Pictures, Country Music Television, CBS Radio, ESPN, Food Network, Abrams Artists Agency, JSS Productions, Green Pine Films, NBC Universal, University of North Carolina Center for Public Television, TVGuide.com, Delaware Democratic Party, WESH2 News, MMI Public Relations, Partners Healthcare, Fox Sports En Espanol, The Lynnwood Foundation, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Some of the Elon in LA program internship sites included Warner Music Group, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Lionsgate Entertainment, Paramount, Fremantle Media, MTV Networks, A&E Television, "The Mentalist," and Sunshine, Sachs and Associates.

Some of the Elon in New York program internship sites included Food Network, Fox Sports en Espanol, Michael Howard Studios, Peppercorn Strategic Communications, CBS Radio, Fremantle Media, Nautica Apparel Inc., and the Alvin Ailey America Dance Foundation.

Communications students were selected as participants of the Scripps Howard Foundation Internship Program. The Scripps Howard Foundation awarded two students, Drew Smith (NBC Nightly News) and Alex Trice (Magical Elves Inc.) with \$500 scholarships and \$3,000 stipends to assist with expenses as part of their digital media internships.

Student Learning Outcomes

The work-site supervisor evaluation form directly addresses the Elon Eleven values and competencies. The evaluation form also asks supervisors to evaluate other traditional areas of internship performance, including interpersonal skills, dependability and punctuality. Students learning outcomes on the evaluation form are operationalized as follows:

**Internship Supervisor Evaluation Form
Operationalization of Student Learning Outcomes**

	Student Learning Outcomes	Evaluation Form Questions
1	Apply truth, accuracy, fairness	Shows the ability to incorporate objective information in written, aural or visual form consistent with professional requirements.
2	Describe the principles of free speech and press	Able to apply legal principles (such as libel, privacy, copyright) that pertain to the work environment.
3	Explain and apply ethical ways of thinking	Demonstrates ethical behavior that is appropriate for the professional workplace.
4	Describe history and roles of media	Demonstrates knowledge of the historical and contemporary contexts of the workplace environment.
5	Communicate with diverse audiences	Shows an awareness of diverse audiences in the creation of communication content.
6	Write clearly and accurately	Has the ability to write clearly and accurately using an appropriate style and format for specific audiences.
7	Use tools of technology	Demonstrates the ability to use computer applications and equipment in the workplace.
8	Apply theories in presenting images and information	Able to prepare images and information using the theories and aesthetic principles.
9	Engage in research and critical evaluation	Demonstrates the ability to engage in research and the evaluation of content that is consistent with the requirements of the workplace.
10	Understand data and statistics	Has the ability to use basic numerical and statistical concepts, as required by the work environment
11	Think creatively and analytically	Shows creativity in completing work assignments.

Internship supervisors assessed the work of students from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (or Not Applicable to the work environment or internship) on each of the items that follow.

**Work-site Supervisor Evaluation
(Fall 2010, Winter 2011, Spring 2011)**

	Learning Outcomes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1	Apply truth, accuracy and fairness	58%	35%	3%			5%
2	Describe principles of free speech and press	39%	22%	10%		2 %	27%
3	Explain and apply ethical ways of thinking	78%	12%	7%	2%		
4	Describe history and roles of media	46%	32%	10%			12%

5	Communicate with diverse audiences	59%	34 %	5%			2 %
6	Write clearly and accurately	49%	37%	7%			7 %
7	Use tools of technology	76%	24 %				
8	Apply theories in presenting images and information	51%	27%	2%			20%
9	Engage in research and critical evaluation	59%	29%	5%	2 %		5%
10	Understanding data and statistics	34%	34 %	5%			27%
11	Think creatively and analytically	61%	27%	7 %	5%		
	Good interpersonal skills	66%	21%	7%	5%		
	Reliable, punctual and consistent	71%	22%		7%		
	Appropriate grooming and appearance	71%	24%	2%			2%
	Open to constructive criticism	71%	24%	5%			
	Dependable in completing work assignments	71%	20%	5%	2%	2%	
	Demonstrate common sense	68%	22%	7%			2%

Students received evaluations of 90 percent or above (“strongly agree” or “agree”) on four of the values and competencies in the Elon Eleven: using tools of technology (100%), ability to apply truth, accuracy and fairness (93%), communicating with diverse audiences (93%), and ability to explain and apply ethical ways of thinking (90%). In addition, employers evaluated students at 85 percent or above on three additional learning outcomes: ability to engage in research and critical evaluation (88%), thinking creatively and analytically (88%), and writing clearly and accurately (86%).

“Strongly agree” and “agree” scores were not as high in four areas because employers indicated that these areas were as “not applicable” to their work environment: describing the principles of free speech and press, understanding data and statistics, applying theories in presenting images and information, and describing history and roles of media.

Other traditional internship evaluation areas also received high evaluations. Employers indicated that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following: open to constructive criticism (95%), appropriate grooming and appearance (95%), punctual and consistent (93%), reliable, dependable in completing work assignments (91%), demonstrates common sense (90%) and good interpersonal skills (87%).

The internship supervisor evaluation form was revised in fall 2010. Below are results from summer 2010 internships using the previous form (the learning outcome “valuing truth, accuracy and fairness” was not included on the former evaluation form):

Summer 2010 (Previous Form)

	Learning Outcomes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1	Valuing truth, accuracy, fairness	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Understanding of laws, regulations and issues that pertain to work environment	46%	24%	8%	1%	3%	18%
3	Appropriate ethical behavior for professional workplace	81%	13%	1%	1%	3%	1%
4	Knowledge of well known individuals, history and /or issues pertaining to the profession	38%	29%	12%	1%	2%	18%
5	Shows awareness of diversity in the workplace and in the creation of communication content	50%	28%	5%	1%	3%	13%
6	Clear, correct and appropriate writing skills	58%	28%	4%	1%	3%	6%
7	Knowledge of and the ability to use computer applications	77%	16%	3%		3%	1%
8	Understanding of theoretical concepts related to the presentation of images and information	47%	29%	6%	1%	2%	15%
9	Research and information seeking skills	68%	22%	5%	1%	3%	1%
10	Ability to use basic numerical and statistical concepts	36%	20%	4%		3%	37%
11a	Ability to analyze, solve problems and think critically	57%	34%	5%	1%	3%	

11b	Shows creative potential in completing work assignments	66%	25%	5%	1%	3%	
	Knowledgeable of script style and formats	44%	27%	7%	1%	3%	18%
	Appearance, grooming and attire appropriate for workplace	81%	13%	2%		3%	1%
	Ability to receive constructive criticism	76%	17%	2%		3%	1%
	Dependable to complete assignments on time	73%	18%	3%	1%	3%	1%
	Demonstrates a level of common sense required of a professional	76%	17%	3%		3%	1%
	Ability to evaluate the work of self and others	43%	34%	8%	1%	3%	11%
	Ability to work independently in completing tasks	69%	22%	4%		4%	1%
	Demonstrates good interpersonal communications skills	79%	15%	2%		4%	1%
	Reliability, punctuality and attendance	78%	12%	4%	1%	4%	1%

Survey of Interns

The Elon Career Center collected data concerning all internships completed in the university in 2010-11. The purpose of the “Student Evaluation of Internship” online survey was to solicit and assess students’ opinions of their internship experience. The Office of Institutional Research provided breakout data for students completing internships in the School of Communications. Fifty-eight percent of the 268 Communications interns responded to the online survey.

Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement in the following areas: career development, student learning, strength of skills, and site evaluation statements:

Career Development

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Helped me feel better prepared to enter the job market	42%	44%	9%	4%	1%
Clarified my graduate school plans	8%	20%	44 %	25%	2%
Clarified my future career goals	22%	47 %	21 %	9%	1%
Helped me assess my strengths	25%	63%	8%	5%	
Helped me assess my weaknesses	23%	57%	13%	7%	
Clarified my major	23%	37%	28%	11%	2%
Clarified my minor	11%	8%	59%	15%	7%

Learning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Allowed me to see connections (relationships) between classroom knowledge and the workplace	33 %	51%	12%	3%	1%
Helped me understand classroom theories	15%	37%	32%	15%	3%
Provided me with specific knowledge skills relevant to my career path	37%	43%	14%	6%	1%
Was related to my major	48%	46%	3 %	3%	
Was related to my minor	9%	19%	38%	23%	11%
Was related to other academic interests	20%	43%	28%	6%	3%
Challenged me to do my best work	49%	37%	7%	6%	1%

Strength of Skills as a Result of Internship Experience

	Much Stronger	Stronger	No Change	Weaker
Analytical and problem solving skills	18%	51%	30%	1%
Research skills	25%	45%	30%	1%
Technical/computer skills	23%	51%	26%	
Ability to work as part of a team	27%	45%	28%	

Understanding of community, national, or global issues	23%	40%	36%	1%
Verbal communication	29%	50%	21%	
Written communication	24%	58%	18%	
Multi-tasking	37%	45%	18%	
Leadership	20%	36 %	43%	1%
Self-confidence	34%	51%	15%	1%
Integrity and trust	24%	42%	33%	1%
Flexibility	31 %	48 %	20%	1%
Fast learner	36%	50%	15%	
Creativity	30%	42%	26%	2%
Initiative/motivation	31%	50 %	19%	1%
Professional demeanor	38%	46%	16%	1%
Organizational skills	34%	41%	25%	
Entrepreneurial skills	14%	33%	51%	1%

Site Evaluation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was given adequate training, direction and supervision at my internship site.	38%	47%	8%	7%	
I received feedback from my site supervisor regarding my performance	42 %	43%	8%	6%	1%
My internship site provided me with a quality work environment	53%	32%	12%	2%	1%
I was given meaningful and challenging work while at my internship site.	46%	32%	10%	11%	1%
Elon prepared me for my internship.	27%	50%	17%	4%	1%

Analysis

Three sources of data were used in the assessment of communications internships: descriptive data concerning the number of credit hours and types of internships; an internship supervisor evaluation that reflects the student learning outcomes; and an online survey of students soliciting their evaluation of the internship experience.

Descriptive data support the conclusion that the school is successful in placing students in appropriate and impressive local, national and international internship sites. Work-site

supervisor evaluations support the conclusion that interns demonstrate a high level of performance during the internship. Data for communications interns from the Elon Career Center online survey support the conclusion that the internship contributed to students' career development, learning, and strength of skill and that most communications interns had a worthwhile experience.

Internship Office Key Tasks, 2010-11

The Internships Office completed the following key tasks in the 2010-11 academic year:

- Developed and conducted internship readiness seminars for students
- Conducted more than 200 student appointments to assist students with internship searches
- Emailed each student a list of websites tailored to their interests to aid them with their internship search
- Organized summer debriefs with faculty
- Conducted student internship debriefs for winter, spring and fall terms
- Developed a student / parent brochure on the internships office
- Assisted Career Services with search for internship software
- Developed weekly Internship Hotlists for students of internship opportunities
- Maintained blog: www.internnetwork.wordpress.com
- Established a twitter account: <http://twitter.com/cominternships>
- Established new internship contacts
- Included professional portfolios/reels as a requirement for COM 381
- Conducted successful internship site visits with Abrams Artists Agency, New York Rangers, Lux Magazine, Essence Magazine, CBS Radio, GQ Magazine, Michael Howard Studios, Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, and the Food Network in New York
- Conducted local site visits with ISP and Media for Ministries
- Developed and presented a training session for internship supervisors
- Developed and implemented TGIF (Three Great Internship Fridays) including a speed networking activity and luncheon
- Organized Scripps Howard Foundation internship grant selection
- Identified interns for 60 Minutes and NBC Nightly News
- Accompanied one student to NABJ convention in San Diego
- Completed internship assessment for winter, spring, summer and fall for Career Services
- Assisted in modifying final evaluation tool for supervisors
- Conducted nine classroom presentations on searching for internships
- Provided website updates
- Led efforts for online registration process
- Communicated with Registrar and Bursar to provide timely student registration for course
- Provided touring high school students with email of websites on high school internship opportunities

Student Surveys

(indirect measure)

The School of Communications regularly compiles and analyzes data from student surveys. Graduating students evaluated the quality of their educational experiences on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the university's Senior Survey. The Office of Institutional Research provided breakout data to the School of Communications, and a comparison with university and national results follows.

National Survey of Student Engagement

Elon University annually participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement, the nation's most comprehensive assessment of higher education practices. NSSE is sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning.

The 2009-10 survey polled 362,000 randomly selected freshmen and seniors at 564 U.S. four-year colleges and universities. At Elon, 572 seniors completed the survey, and the Office of Institutional Research provided the School of Communications a breakout of the 123 responses by Communications seniors. Here are key findings (results indicate the percentage of students who marked the top two of the four possible responses):

General Evaluation

Evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution (excellent, good, fair or poor):

School of Communications	97%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	86%

Evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution (excellent, good, fair, poor):

School of Communications	89%
Elon University average	83%
NSSE national average	72%

Spent significant amounts of time studying and on academic work (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	83%
Elon University average	84%
NSSE national average	81%

Active Learning

Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	85%
Elon University average	86%
NSSE national average	73%

Made a class presentation (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	81%
Elon University average	87%
NSSE national average	61%

Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	96%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	61%

Included diverse perspectives (by race, religion, gender, political) in class discussions or assignments (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	64%
Elon University average	63%
NSSE national average	63%

Talked about career plans with a faculty member or adviser (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	50%
Elon University average	61%
NSSE national average	43%

Academic Experiences

Coursework emphasizes analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	88%
Elon University average	90%
NSSE national average	86%

Coursework emphasizes applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (very often, often, sometimes, never):

School of Communications	84%
Elon University average	85%
NSSE national average	82%

Acquiring a broad general education (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	93%
Elon University average	93%
NSSE national average	84%

Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	88%
Elon University average	79%
NSSE national average	74%

Writing clearly and effectively (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	89%
Elon University average	85%
NSSE national average	78%

Speaking clearly and effectively (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	86%
Elon University average	83%
NSSE national average	73%

Analyzing quantitative problems (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	64%
Elon University average	70%
NSSE national average	76%

Developing a personal code of values and ethics (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	78%
Elon University average	69%
NSSE national average	61%

Thinking critically and analytically (very much, quite a bit, some, very little):

School of Communications	92%
Elon University average	94%
NSSE national average	88%

Analysis

According to NSSE results, seniors evaluated the School of Communications above university and national averages in the areas of educational experience, quality of academic advising, requirement for papers/projects, inclusion of diverse perspectives, acquiring work-related knowledge/skills, requirement to write clearly and effectively, requirement to speak clearly and effectively, and development of a personal code of values and ethics.

The results also indicate that seniors believe the School was generally consistent with the institutional and national averages in the areas of acquiring a broad general education,

amount of time spent studying, asking questions in class, emphasis on analyzing ideas, applying theories or concepts, and thinking critically and analytically.

Two areas of concern arose from the 2009-10 survey:

Analyzing quantitative problems. Normally, the school would be pleased that almost two-thirds of seniors said they were required to complete work that involved analyzing quantitative problems. Yet this ranked behind the university (70%) and national (76%) averages. While students said they are engaged in thinking critically and analytically (92%), fewer said they use quantitative methods in analyzing problems. The faculty believe that students are taught that both qualitative and quantitative methods are valid approaches for research and problem solving. Many students are taught specific quantitative methods in the Communication Research course, and all students apply either qualitative or quantitative approaches in conducting research for a required original research paper in the Great Ideas capstone course. Nevertheless, the NSSE data are clear: approximately a third of students do not believe they are required to analyze quantitative problems.

Talking about career plans with a faculty member or adviser. According to the survey, half of Communication seniors said they talked with their faculty adviser about career plans. While this result exceeds the national average (43%), it is below the university average (61%). One explanation is the School of Communications has a full-time career counselor, and, as a result, students seek advice and assistance regarding careers from Ross Wade, assistant director of Career Services for the School of Communications. Most professors teaching the capstone course require seniors to schedule an appointment with the career office to discuss their future plans. Faculty say they do talk with students about career plans. Students may have interpreted this question to refer specifically to talking with a faculty adviser rather than using the dedicated services of the school's career office.

University's Senior Survey

Elon conducts a survey of graduating seniors each year. The Senior Survey is administered at the end of spring term. Three email invitations to participate were sent to graduating students, and results were collected approximately 10 days after graduation.

Overall, 355 graduating seniors (31%) participated in the 2009-10 survey. Students responded to questions in four areas: Elon Experiences, contribution to development, general education, and programs and services. Key findings relevant to the ACEJMC values and competencies are below:

Elon Experiences

The Elon Experiences represent learning beyond the classroom. There are five: internships, study abroad, service, leadership and undergraduate research. The university believes that participating in these programs contributes to the total college educational experience.

Participation in these learning activities is documented in the Elon Experiences Transcript. Some of these experiences are required or embedded by some programs – for instance, the School of Communications requires an internship of all students. As a result, the level of participation varies across schools within the institution. The percentage of communications seniors as compared with all graduating seniors who participated in one or more the five Elon Experiences before graduation are indicated below:

Internship

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	81%

Leadership position

School of Communications	77%
Elon University	66%

Volunteer/service activity

School of Communications	78%
Elon University	80%

Study abroad

School of Communications	73%
Elon University	79%

Undergraduate research

School of Communications	44%
Elon University	41%

Contribution to Development

Graduating seniors were asked to rate the amount that Elon contributed to their development in selected skills and traits. Responses could be “very much,” “quite a bit,” “some” and “very little.” Below is a comparison of the combined percentage scores (“very much,” “quite a bit” and “some) for Communications and all graduating seniors:

Academic ability

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	98%

Analytical ability

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	99%

Computer skills

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	90%

Creativity		
School of Communications		98%
Elon University		92%
Leadership ability		
School of Communications		95%
Elon University		95%
Verbal communication		
School of Communications		99%
Elon University		97%
Written communication		
School of Communications		100%
Elon University		97%

General Education

Students were asked to assess how satisfied they were with general education goals. Most students, including Communications seniors, said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with selected general education goals.

Effective writing skills		
School of Communications		90%
Elon University		90%

Effective speaking skills		
School of Communications		95%
Elon University		94%

Ability to apply complex quantitative reasoning skills		
School of Communications		86%
Elon University		91%

Information literacy skills		
School of Communications		96%
Elon University		94%

Ability to communicate effectively with people from other nations and cultures		
School of Communications		86%
Elon University		89%

Applying ethical decision-making skills		
School of Communications		97%
Elon University		96%

Programs and Services

The senior survey also gave students the opportunity to evaluate institutional programs, services and facilities. Generally, Communications seniors indicated that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the programs and services.

Classrooms

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	96%

Library services

School of Communications	99%
Elon University	96%

Computers

School of Communications	94%
Elon University	94%

Academic advising

School of Communications	90%
Elon University	84%

Career services

School of Communications	74%
Elon University	68%

Analysis

Seniors evaluated the School of Communications at a high level (above 90%) in 15 of the 23 of the areas. Consistent with NSSE results, student evaluations were above the university averages in 15 areas: participation in internships, leadership and undergraduate research; contribution to academic ability, computer skills, creativity, verbal and written communication; and satisfaction with effective speaking skills, information literacy skills and applying ethical decision making skills; and with programs and services, including classrooms, library services, academic advising and career services.

Students in the school evaluated only four of the 23 areas below the university average: participation in volunteer/services activities, participation in study abroad, ability to apply complex quantitative reasoning skills, and ability to communicate effectively with people from other nations and cultures.

Generally, these positive findings are consistent with the spirit of ACEJMC values and competencies and the corresponding student learning outcomes of the School of Communications. The results do suggest that more consideration be given to quantitative analytical skills and attention to issues of diverse peoples and perspectives.

Student Awards

(indirect measure)

Student successes are an external indicator of the quality of the educational experience. The following narrative provides evidence of recognitions and awards received by School of Communications students and by student media during 2010-11.

National and Regional Awards

Faculty mentors encourage students to enter their work into state, regional and national competitions. Students in each major and concentration have been successful in winning awards.

Journalism (print/online news)

The Pendulum, Elon's weekly student newspaper, was named a finalist in the Pacemaker and Online Pacemaker competition and second place in the Infographic competition in 2011. In 2009, *The Pendulum* won a national Pacemaker Award, the highest honor from Associated Collegiate Press. ACP also awarded the following to *The Pendulum* at its 2010 conference: first place in Best of Show newspaper competition, first place in Publication Website Small School, and sixth place in the Special Edition Four-Year category.

At the regional SPJ level, *Pendulum* students were recognized in the following categories: General Column Writing (first place), Feature Photography (second place), Online Sports Reporting (second place) and Editorial Writing (second place).

At the North Carolina College Media Association, students from the *Pendulum* and *Phi Psi Cli* yearbook were recognized in the following categories: Best of Show—Newspaper (first place), Best of Show—Online (first place), Photography (first and third places), Design (second place), News Writing (third place and honorable mention), Feature Writing (second place and two honorable mentions), Sports Writing (first and third places), Opinion Writing (honorable mention), Best of Show—Yearbook (second place), Student Life Copy (third place) and Inside Spread Design (second place).

Journalism (broadcast news)

Two broadcast journalism majors finished in the Top 10 in the Hearst Journalism Awards competition in television news. Senior Drew Smith finished third, and junior Samantha Baranowski finished 10th. Both students were actively involved in Phoenix14News, the student-produced weekly newscast. Overall in 2011, Elon ranked eighth nationally in the broadcast news category. In 2009, Elon's Randy Gyllenhaal won the national championship in television news.

Phoenix14News won first place in the 2011 College Television Awards newscast competition, sponsored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation. Five students and the faculty adviser accepted the collegiate Emmy award for best college news show, which was the first ever for the show.

The Radio Television Digital News Association named Phoenix14 the best newscast in the Carolinas, awarded one student first place for Feature Reporting, recognized another student as the Student Journalist of the Year, and awarded scholarships to three students. Phoenix14 also placed third in the Society of Professional Journalists Region 2 competition, and two Phoenix14 students won awards in the Student News Competition and Student Sports Competition from the Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts.

Broadcast and New Media

Eight students placed in several BEA competitions, including three students who placed first in the Authorship Projects Category for work they did at the 2010 Internet Governance Forum in Vilnius, Lithuania. Other recipients were a group of Interactive Media students who placed second in the Group Authorship Projects Category, one student who placed first in the Promotional Category (PSA, commercial, persuasive), one student who placed first in the Instructional/Educational Category, one student who placed third in the Instructional/Educational Category, two students who received honorable mention in the Narrative Video Category, and one student who received honorable mention in the Short Form Category. In addition, three students had a class video project named as a finalist for a PBS television special.

Cinema

Student Philip Kimbrough won the Sprite Refreshing Films Contest for his film "CEASE & DECEASED." The Coca-Cola Company flew Kimbrough to Los Angeles where his film premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival this summer. Overall, 14 students were selected to participate in the nationwide Sprite competition, a program that gives future moviemakers a chance to create real films with industry pros and celebrities.

Strategic Communications

Elon's student team finished third in the 2011 Bateman Case Study Competition, a national competition established by the Public Relations Society of America to give university students an opportunity to exercise analytical skills and judgment required for public relations problem solving. The team presented its "Better Luck with Your Buck" financial literacy case study campaign to executives of Ally Financial in New York. Overall, 49 teams from universities across the country entered the 2011 contest.

Live Oak Communications, Elon's student-run communications agency, was recognized with an honorable mention in the media relations category from the North Carolina Public Relations Society of America's InSpire Awards. Live Oak was given the award for its work on "Campout! Carolina," a campaign for EarthShare North Carolina. The award is presented by PRSA to "honor communication programs that have achieved great success."

Communication Science

A student was an inaugural alumnus of Elon's Civic Engagement Scholar program, which is designed for students wanting to make a positive change by partnering with local organizations in need of assistance. The three-year program requires a senior project in which the scholar develops a relationship with a community partner. Alex Moss worked with "Sustainable Alamance," which helps people with criminal histories seek employment opportunities. His senior project involved maintaining and promoting a community garden to benefit the organization.

Student Meaghan Britain was accepted into the Congress-Bundestag Exchange program, a highly competitive opportunity that gives students a full-year work-study scholarship with a strong focus on cultural exchange between the United States and Germany.

University Awards

The School of Communications also had its first student, Gabrielle Dean, inducted into Phi Beta Kappa honor society. Ten majors were inducted in Phi Kappa Phi (top 10 percent of the graduating class), the nation's oldest and largest academic honor society. Twelve students were selected for membership in Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society. ODK inductees are in the top 35 percent of their class and exhibit outstanding leadership in more than one area in the university community. Communications students won three ODK awards in 2011: Iris Holt McEwen Community Service Award, Student Communications Media Award, and the Ward Family Learning in Action Award.

University Research

The university's undergraduate research office confers numerous awards annually for excellence in undergraduate research. In 2010-11, communications major Caitlin O'Donnell was the recipient of a Lumen Prize, the university's premier award that comes with a \$15,000 scholarship. O'Donnell, one of only 15 rising juniors to receive the award, received the distinction for her project titled: "The Media of White America: Press Coverage and Treatment of Historically Outcast Members of Society."

The university sponsors an annual celebration of student achievement in academics and the arts called "CELEBRATE!" During the week-long event, competitively selected students participate in the Student Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) where blind reviewed

student research is presented. This year, 12 faculty members mentored students with research projects for SURF. Senior Stephen Ferguson’s research on news coverage of scandals in the Catholic Church was featured in a series of online university profiles of undergraduate research. Communications students have had a strong showing in this competition every year. The following table illustrates School of Communications student participation.

SURF presentations by Communications students

Year	# in Posters	# Presentations
2008	2	15
2009	2	9
2010	2	15
2011	2	11

In addition, communications major Hanna Nelson, presented her research on “Portrayals and Stereotypes of the German People within United States’ Social Media Platforms” during the 2011 Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE).

Last year, 21 students published their blind-reviewed research in *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*. The Fall 2010 issue of the electronic journal published 10 articles by students. Research topics ranged from political and health communications to online personality style and privacy. The Spring 2011 issue of the journal consisted of 11 student articles on topics ranging from social media to viral videos to guerrilla advertising. Most of the papers originate as research projects in the Great Ideas capstone course. The *Elon Journal* is the only electronic journal for undergraduate student research in journalism and communications.

Several School of Communications faculty work with undergraduate students to bring their research outside of the university to competitive settings. Communications students have been selected each year since 2006 to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). In 2010-11, five Communications students presented research papers.

The following demonstrates student excellence at the national and regional level in undergraduate research. Students participated and were panelists at Internet Governance Forums (IGF-USA) in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Three students attended IGF in Vilnius, Lithuania, in Fall 2010. Students provided real-time online reporting and were panelists at the conference. Students participated on four panels: “Internet Governance Form-USA Report to the Global IGF,” “The Dynamic Coalition on Core Values of the Internet,” “Internet for Youth” and “Core Internet Values and Principles of Internet Governance Across Generations” with Vint Cert (“Father of the Internet”). Fifteen students participated in two Internet Government Forums, one in Washington, D.C., in summer of 2011. Three students participated on a panel called “Digital Natives? Mythbusting Expectations on Youth Online.” Looking to next year, one rising senior already has been invited to participate in two panels at the Global IGF 2011 conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

A *Pendulum* student editor participated on a panel titled “International Opportunities for College Journalists” at the Associated Collegiate Press conference in Fall 2010. He discussed his experience working on a documentary in India during the summer as part of Elon’s Periclean Scholars program. His work featured interviews with people who worked with health care organizations in rural villages.

School Awards

The school annually recognizes the outstanding senior in each curriculum area. Recipients in 2010-11 demonstrated academic and early professional excellence. Sixteen students were honored for their outstanding contributions in and out of the classroom.

Outstanding Senior Awards

Five awards recognize outstanding personal and professional achievements by graduating seniors. These students, selected by a committee of the faculty, demonstrated extraordinary knowledge and ability in their areas of specialization.

Journalism	Drew Smith
Strategic Communications	Anne Hellweg
Broadcast and New Media	Joey Accordino
Cinema	Josh Chagani
Sport & Event Management	Amanda Portoghese

Standing Endowed Awards

The following are awards presented annually that recognize consistent performance at a high level. These awards were established in memory of an outstanding communications professional or sponsored by a communications company or organization.

Mary Ellen Priestley Scholarship	Caitlin O’Donnell
A.J. Fletcher Scholarship	Kirsten Bennett and Lauren Warr
James F. Hurley Legacy Scholarship	Rebecca Smith
Times-News Scholarship	Gabriela Szewcow
Anthony & Olga Duke Communications Scholarship	Neima Abdulahi
D’Angelo Family Scholarship in Honor of Bill Leonard	Samantha Baranowski
Dubois Legacy Scholarship	Dan Koehler and Alison Schiffli
James Wesley Willard II Memorial Scholarship	Addie Haney
Michael Foreman Scholarship	
Sport & Event Management Scholarship	Samantha Brain

Eighty-four new members were inducted into the School of Communications chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the communications honor society. To become a member, students must have an overall 3.0 grade point average, a 3.25 in the School of Communications, and have