

**Providence University College and Theological Seminary**  
**Bachelor of Arts, Communications and Media (3-year, 4-year Advanced, 4-year Honours majors)**

**Assessment Report**

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Objective	Measurement Means	Benchmark for Success	Results and Implications
<p>The student will demonstrate media literacy as a foundation for further work in the field of media and communication.  <b>Supporting Goal 6</b></p>	<p>DIRECT: Final Paper grades in 433.3x classes;  INDIRECT: Student Feedback on Course and Instructor Form for 433.3x classes.</p>	<p>DIRECT: 80% of students achieve 80% or higher on Final Paper in 433.3x classes;  INDIRECT: Student Feedback on Course and Instructor Form is generally positive.</p>	<p>Benchmark for success <b>NOT ACHIEVED</b>. See Assessment comments below.</p>
<p>The student will recognize and articulate how media works in order to create meaningful media.  <b>Supporting Goal 2</b></p>	<p>DIRECT: Final Exam in 431.11 Intro to C&amp;M;  INDIRECT: Student Feedback on Course and Instructor Form for 431.11.</p>	<p>DIRECT: 80% of students achieve 80% or higher in Final Exam in 431.11 Intro to C&amp;M;  INDIRECT: Student Feedback on Course and Instructor Form is generally positive.</p>	<p>Benchmark for success <b>NOT ACHIEVED</b>. See Assessment comments below.</p>
<p>The student will be prepared for employment in areas such as Canadian mainstream media, government policy creation, or for further studies either in media production or in Communications and Media Studies at a graduate level.  <b>Supporting Goal 5</b></p>	<p>DIRECT: Practicum Rubrics TBD;  INDIRECT: Alumni survey regarding employment rates and further studies.</p>	<p>DIRECT: Practicum Rubrics TBD;  INDIRECT: Alumni survey regarding employment rates and further studies.</p>	<p>It is <b>NOT CLEAR</b> whether this benchmark for success has been achieved or not. See Assessment comments below.</p>

## ASSESSMENT

### **Objective 1: The student will demonstrate media literacy as a foundation for further work in the field of media and communication. Supporting Goal 6**

433.3x courses consist of the following upper-level courses that focus on particular media: 433.31 Media in Crisis: Radio and Print; 433.32 Television; 433.34 Photography; 433.35 New Media; 433.36 Film; and 433.37 Topics in Communications and Media. Each of these courses require the student to write a final research paper (consisting of 8-10 pages, using at least 5-8 acceptable academic sources), which should demonstrate a critical engagement with the medium on which the course is based, and must demonstrate the integration of course materials and concepts. The student is free to choose whatever topic related to that medium they wish to discuss. The paper should demonstrate a deeper critical engagement with the medium, or its content. The rubric for the final papers in these courses focuses on a couple of important areas: Integration of knowledge; and Depth of Discussion. In terms of Integration of knowledge, the paper is graded on how well it demonstrates full understanding and application of concepts learned in the course. Also, the paper is graded on how well concepts are integrated into the writer's own insights, and how well the writer provides concluding remarks that show analysis and synthesis of ideas. These elements contribute to 32% of the final paper grade; the other elements, such as citation, topic, cohesiveness, and so on—elements which point to general writing skill and academic prowess—contribute the remaining 68% of the final paper grade.

There have been five instances of 433.3x courses in the last three years (Fall 2019-Winter 2022), as outlined in the following table:

	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	Fall 2020	Winter 2022
<b>433.32 Television</b>	4 students, 3 of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper (75%)			
<b>433.34D Photography</b>		4 students, 1 of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper (25%)		
<b>433.36D Film</b>				4 students, 2 of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper (50%)
<b>433.37D Topics in Communications and Media: Exploring <i>Firefly</i></b>			1 student, 0 of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper (0%)	
<b>433.37D Topics in Communications and Media: <i>Dollhouse</i></b>	3 students, 0 of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper (0%)			

In Fall 2019, three students were enrolled in 433.37D Topics in Communications and Media, focusing on the television series *Dollhouse*. The “D” affixed to the course code indicates that the course was delivered as a “directed study.” This means that the course was not a part of the regular schedule and students generally have a more tailored delivery of the curriculum. Such a format can favour students who work well independently, but can disadvantage students who have more difficulty working on their own, and keeping up with course materials that are posted online. The average final paper score for those students was 56%. While there is no rubric information available that could elucidate their performance on this particular assignment, it is clear that they have not met the benchmark score.

In Fall 2019, four students were enrolled in 433.32 Television. Three of the four students enrolled received a grade of 80% or higher in the final paper (or 75% of the class). While this number is close to the goal benchmark, it does not meet it.

In Winter 2020, four students were enrolled in 433.34D Photography, one of whom achieved 80% or more in final paper. Only 25% of the students met the goal benchmark (the other three students achieved an average close to the benchmark of 76%).

In Fall 2020, one student was enrolled in 433.37D Topics in Communications and Media, focusing on the television series *Firefly*. That student received a grade of 66% on their final paper, not achieving the goal benchmark.

Providence's "Student Feedback on Course and Instructor" form asks students to assess the following: "Overall, this course was a valuable learning experience." As an indirect Measurement Means, the question hopes to ascertain the worth that a student attaches to the course, presumably for their formation for future work. No student evaluations were performed on these instances of 433.3x courses in this time period.

These grades show clearly that the first objective is not being achieved.

Recommendation: It is unclear why these students have not met the benchmark goals. There could be a number of factors, including a lack of understanding of the final assignments, or a particular struggle by these students with the format of these courses, many of which are Directed Studies. Further, it could be that there are better ways of evaluating the competency of media literacy than with this particular outcome. Thus Alternately, the benchmark must be reevaluated (a lower benchmark must be considered). Also, student evaluations need to be performed on these courses on a regular basis.

It should be noted that rubrics were not used early in this assessment cycle. Thus, rubrics need to be used consistently going forward.

## **Objective 2: The student will recognize and articulate how media works in order to create meaningful media. Supporting Goal 2**

There have been two instances of 431.11 Introduction to Communications and Media in the last three years (Fall 2019-Winter 2022). The final exam in 431.11 is a cumulative and comprehensive test of student knowledge, particularly in terms of course content, apart from analysis or application.

In Fall 2019, ten students were enrolled in the class, three of whom achieved 80% or more in the final exam (30%), well below the goal benchmark.

In Fall 2020, thirty-nine students were enrolled in two sections of the class, sixteen of whom achieved 80% or more in the final exam (41%), well below the goal benchmark.

In terms of indirect measurement means, no student evaluations were performed on these instances of 431.11 Introduction to Communications and Media in this time period.

Recommendations: It is unclear why these students have not met the benchmark goals. There could be a number of factors, a prominent possibility being the global pandemic (at least for the instance of the course in Fall 2020). Further, it could be that there are better ways of evaluating student understanding of how media works. Alternately, the benchmark must be reevaluated (a lower benchmark must be considered). Also, student evaluations need to be performed on this course each time it is offered. It is, after all, a required course for all students at Providence.

It should be noted that a student evaluation was received for the instance of the course offered in Fall 2022. For the particular area of whether the course was considered "a valuable learning experience," of twenty-eight students (from a total of sixty-three), twenty-three agreed or strongly agreed (82%). This result is anecdotal, as the current year is not under review, but the results are encouraging.

**Objective 3: The student will be prepared for employment in areas such as Canadian mainstream media, government policy creation, or for further studies either in media production or in Communications and Media Studies at a graduate level. Supporting Goal 5.**

There is currently no Practicum Rubric. Rather, the course is assessed with the following. Students develop a major media and communications project. They propose the form, content, resources, and schedule of projects for this course. A project may be in the form of any type of public media such as radio, television, print, photography and film, and new media. Students enrolled in the 4-year program are encouraged to consider a major research paper or presentation on some aspect of communications and media. Alternatively, work in a "communications and media" capacity in an area of the institution (for instance, Publications or Athletics) will be considered for this course. Work in an area outside of the institution, in a "communications and media" capacity, is also an ideal possibility to fulfill the requirements of the course. Students are required

to submit a proposal of their intended course of work, engage in regular check-ins, and produce a reflection paper at the end of the academic year, in which they reflect on their experience. However, the grades mostly reflect completion rather than assess any specific objectives. This would be improved through the use of a Rubric which might assess competency.

Furthermore, while the collection of employment rate data has occurred, Providence does not have an easy way to draw program-specific employment rate information from its collected survey raw data at this time.

Recommendations: Benchmarks for success need to be clearly formulated. A proper Practicum Rubric needs to be constructed in order to measure this particular objective. Also, a more efficient and effective method to extract program-specific employment rate data is required.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that program objectives are not being met. The Communications and Media program at Providence is in need of some attention. What perhaps is not seen in this assessment is that the program coordinator (who has been in the position for the last 15 years) has been tasked with increased administrative work without teaching relief (this has resulted in fewer class instances in the last few years, and might have contributed to decreased student performance). It should be noted, though, that the introductory course in the discipline of Communications and Media (431.11) is required for all students. The Fall 2022 student evaluations are mostly positive and substantially so, which is encouraging. Nevertheless, the performance of students in these classes points to a very strong disconnect between the stated program objectives and student achievement of those objectives. This is a sobering assessment.

## REFLECTION ON PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2018, a program review was undertaken. The following recommendations were made:

### **Recommendation 1a:**

Continue to work toward clear and measurable outcomes (consistent with the discipline of university-level Media Studies in Canada) for the Communications and Media Program at Providence University College.

RESPONSE: This new assessment plan is a step towards creating clear and measurable outcomes. The implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.

### **Recommendation 2a:**

There must be an effort toward sustained development of external opportunities for internships.

RESPONSE: There has not been an effort towards sustained development of external opportunities for internships. But there have been multiple stakeholders in the local media landscape that have reached out to Providence that are interested in hosting interns. The implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.

### **Recommendation 2b:**

The lab fee model should be changed, and those fees should be rolled into general student fees. In other words, some of the student fees should be relegated for the use of the Music and Media Lab, and the collection of lab fees in Communications and Media and Music courses should be abolished.

RESPONSE: The lab fee model has been abolished. The implementation of this recommendation is complete.

### **Recommendation 2c:**

Work on establishing closer ties with the Providence Marketing and Communications Department.

RESPONSE: Due to changes in staffing, this recommendation has been abandoned.

**Recommendation 2d:**

Develop existing practical course offerings in Communications and Media at Providence.

RESPONSE: This is an ongoing discussion, and there have been recent developments in terms of developing course offerings in the area of Film Studies. These new practical course offerings might be offered as early as May 2023. The implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.

**Recommendation 2e:**

Expand with new practical course offerings in Communications and Media at Providence.

RESPONSE: See the response to Recommendation 2d above.

**Recommendation 2f:**

Consider the creation of an Audio-Visual Production Lab (for use by multiple segments of the institution).

RESPONSE: A Media Lab was established in an unused space of the institution, a space that had historically been used as "studio" space. Funds were funnelled through "lab fees" that were contributed to by Music as well as Communications and Media students.

Since 2018, there have been some changes to our programming. There are no longer students enrolled in a Music program at Providence, and lab fees in Communications and Media courses are no longer collected. The reasons for these changes are many, but some are that students are mostly equipped with technological tools when they come to post-secondary education. A lab did little to equip students: they had very good cameras on their mobile phones, and very good editing software on their personal computers. That said, the Media Lab was being used (for a time) by Student Council for the production of internal videos and other content for student information purposes. The space is now being considered for further use by the newly-established Centre for On-Demand Education at Providence. This implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.



**Recommendation 5a:**

Increase the number of courses that either introduce or reinforce the notion of an integrated Christian worldview. Following this, consider making competency a priority of the program.

RESPONSE: In light of recent recommendations, this recommendation has been abandoned.

**Recommendation 5b:**

Increase the number of courses that either introduce or reinforce the notion of ethical leadership.

RESPONSE: In light of recent recommendations, this recommendation has been abandoned.

**Recommendation 5c:**

Develop global intelligence as a reinforced idea throughout the program.

RESPONSE: In light of recent recommendations, this recommendation has been abandoned.

**Recommendation 5d:**

Assessment of the outcomes tends to be weak. The variety and effectiveness of means of assessment need to be improved.

RESPONSE: This new assessment plan is a step towards creating clear and measurable outcomes. The implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.

## **SENATE PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE SENATE**

We note that institutional goals 2, 5, 6 (Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical Leadership, and Literacy) are supported through program objectives.

Based on marks given and the benchmark established, the level of “success” was not achieved. We appreciated the reflection on this point and concur with the recommendation that “...the benchmark must be reevaluated (a lower benchmark must be considered).” Further, it is the feeling of the committee that the inclusion of the required introductory course (431.11) should be reconsidered based on the make-up of students versus elective courses.

We appreciated the attention to and reflection on past recommendations from the 2018 program review.

We concur with the recommendation that clear benchmarks and rubric be established.

We noted the observation that “...while the collection of employment rate data has occurred, Providence does not have an easy way to draw program-specific employment rate information from its collected survey raw data at this time.” We encourage connection with the Alumni department to address this metric.

We present this review to the Senate as one that meets the Program Review criteria.

**REVIEW RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED BY THE SENATE, AUGUST 30, 2023.**