Executive Committee

Approval of the recommendations made by Dean Johnson in his November 24, 2003 memorandum to Provost Prior for new approaches to Journalism Education at Texas A&M University:

1. Develop a newly organized minor and certificate program in Journalism;
2. Create a journalist-in-residence program;
3. Work with faculty and representatives on- and off-campus to develop internship and other practicum experiences for students interested in journalism careers;
4. Appoint an advisory group of journalists;
5. Develop an interdisciplinary major in journalism; and
6. Close the Department of Journalism and its current undergraduate degree programs and transfer the Master’s program in Science and Technology Journalism to another appropriate academic unit.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Martha Louder, Speaker of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Charles A. Johnson, Dean
SUBJECT: Report from Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education

I have attached copies of the report from the Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education. The Committee has produced an excellent report that offers exciting pathways for students interested in pursuing a career in journalism. Also attached is a copy of my response to Committee members in which I express my gratitude for their work. As my response indicates, I accept the Committee's recommendations and look forward to working toward their implementation.

I have also attached a copy of my recommendation to the Dr. David Prior, Executive Vice President and Provost. I recommend that we follow the recommendations of the Committee and move forward to develop new pathways for students interested in journalism at Texas A&M. As the attached memorandum from the Provost indicates, he has accepted my recommendation in principle and asked that I present the recommendation to the Faculty Senate.

I believe we are now on the verge of new exciting options for students interested in journalism careers. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my recommendation. I will be in Qatar from November 29th through December 7th, but Associate Dean Julia Kirk Blackwelder will be available to answer any questions you may have about the recommendation. I will plan to attend the Faculty Senate meeting on December 8th if you believe that is appropriate.

Attachments
To: Charles A. Johnson, Dean
   College of Liberal Arts

From: Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education
      Richard Street, Head, Department of Communication (Chair)
      James Aune, Professor, Department of Communication
      Kelly Brown, Managing Editor, The Bryan-College Station Eagle
      Tom DeFrank, Washington Bureau Chief, New York Daily News
      Barbara Gastel, Associate Professor, Department of Journalism
      M. Jimmie Killingsworth, Professor, Department of English
      Michael Landauer, Lead Editorial Writer—Collin County, The Dallas Morning News
      Jeremy L. Osborne, Journalism Major, Texas A&M University
      Linda L. Putnam, Professor, Department of Communication
      Randall S. Sumpter, Associate Professor, Department of Journalism
      Julia Kirk Blackwelder, Associate Dean (Ex Officio)

Re: Report from the Committee

Executive Summary

In early September 2003, Dean Johnson appointed an 11 person committee to recommend new initiatives in journalism education. The committee consisted of 6 faculty members (2 from journalism, 1 from English, and 3 from communication), 3 professional journalists, 1 student (a journalism major), and an Associate Dean to serve as an ex-officio member. The committee’s charge was to address four issues:

1. What courses offering basic skills and an overview of mass communications should students take if they are interested in a journalistic career? What is the best venue for offering these courses? Some current journalism courses or courses in mass communication may serve this purpose.

2. What advising suggestions or new pathways can be structured for students interested in a journalistic career? These advising tracks, serving a variety of majors, could be viewed as preparatory for movement directly into journalism or a graduate program in journalism.
3. What internship programs can be developed to prepare students for a career in journalism? Are there practicum programs that could serve students well, and how might such programs be managed?

4. Should special relationships be developed with The Battalion, KAMU, and other media outlets at Texas A&M and in the local community to afford students opportunities for exceptional experiences that would serve them well as they pursue their interests in the journalism profession?

Although not explicit in the committee’s charge, earlier conversations with the dean suggested that the answers to these questions would provide the foundation for an interdisciplinary certificate or minor in journalism. However, after reaching agreement on 8 courses (24 hours) that were essential for students interested in journalism, the committee decided to also present an option for an interdisciplinary major in journalism with an additional 6-9 hours coming from other departments in the university.

The full report is divided into four sections. First, we offer an analysis of the fiscal, institutional, and departmental context of journalism education at Texas A&M. Our recommendations were strongly influenced by these exigencies. Second, we provide a framework for an interdisciplinary major, minor, and certificate in journalism. We realize this framework is dramatically different from the current journalism degree programs and will likely need to go through the process of institutional approval. Third, we present hypothetical examples of possible “pathways” to pursue a journalistic career based on the proposed framework. These pathways include options for students who major, minor, or receive a certificate in journalism. Finally, we share our views of the prospects of success or failure of the proposed framework for new initiatives in journalism education.
Report from the Committee to Recommend
New Initiatives in Journalism Education

Academic curricula are developed within a context that includes the university's mission, the availability of resources, the nature of the discipline, and the history of the institution. During our deliberations, it became apparent that our committee must consider these factors in an effort to formulate a framework for new pathways in journalism education. This report is divided into four sections: (1) the context of journalism education at Texas A&M University, (2) a framework for multiple pathways for educating students interested in journalism careers, (3) examples of curricular pathways to careers in journalism, and (4) reflections on keys to the success of the proposed framework.

**Contextual Considerations**

In the spirit of a land grant institution, Texas A&M should offer a quality education to students interested in a career in journalism. However, two factors work against offering a comprehensive program in journalism that includes graduate and undergraduate degrees with multiple specialties (e.g., journalism, public relations, mass communication). First, the full-time faculty of the department have declined from 16 to 8 members over the past decade, the department has lacked a permanent head for more than 4 years, and, as documented elsewhere, the department has been contending with a range of other problems. Our committee had no argument with the claim that it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring the department to the level of a high-quality, comprehensive program. Second, we are well aware of the budget cuts affecting the university. In FY04, the budget for the Department of Journalism was cut almost 40%. We operated under the assumption that no additional funds would be available for journalism education. Our committee also understood that Texas A&M likely will no longer have a Department of Journalism.

The committee agreed that the university could provide journalism education without a journalism department. A student need not have a degree in journalism to pursue a career in this field. Such a student should be passionate about journalism and should have a course of study that teaches both the principles and the craft of journalism. However, while a prospective journalist may come from any number of academic majors, one of the major pathways through which journalists do enter the field is with a degree in journalism. Often students with a journalism degree receive preferential treatment in obtaining a position; hence, majoring in journalism is regarded as an asset. Many top-notch students who desire a journalism career will not come to TAMU unless a major were available.

During our deliberations, we identified 8 core journalism courses (discussed later), including 7 currently in the program (realizing some would need to be revised to meet the new curriculum) and 1 that would need to be created as a journalist-in-residence fellows program. Since these core courses account for 24 credits, our committee agreed that Texas A&M University could offer an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree in journalism by having the student select 6-9 hours of coursework from designated courses in other departments. Therefore, the proposed journalism framework calls for three options—a major, a minor, and a certificate.
Having these options as pathways into a career in journalism should be very attractive to the best students. This recommendation is consistent with option 2 suggested by the Committee to Effect Change in Journalism.

Finally, the pedagogy of journalism education from a liberal arts perspective differs from the pedagogy of a professional school approach to journalism. These divisions were evident in our deliberations and reflect issues in the current national debate over journalism education. Rather than letting these differences divide our committee, we chose to embrace them. Hence, the proposed framework for journalism education attempts to offer a quality undergraduate experience in the liberal arts tradition, but integrated with the skills, talents, and experience of practicing journalists.

A Framework for Journalism Education at Texas A&M

Following the model of other interdisciplinary programs (e.g., American Studies, International Studies), the College of Liberal Arts should offer an interdisciplinary major, minor, and certificate in journalism.

The Mission of the New Journalism Initiative

With the assumption that the program would retain current FY04 funding levels, we propose that Texas A&M create a small, selective program for journalism education. Students in the program would receive instruction on the principles and ethics of mass communication, instruction in the craft of journalism, and additional knowledge in a field of interest (e.g., political science, history, media studies). Academics and media professionals would jointly provide the instruction in the hope of optimally integrating theory and practice to enhance the students' educational experience.

The interdisciplinary major

The committee recommends an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism with 30-33 required hours. A possible framework for the curriculum would be:

1. 6 hours of principles, ethics, and theoretical foundations in mass communication
   JOUR 102: American Mass Media (revised to include some of the material in JOUR 409 History of Mass Media)
   JOUR 301: Mass Communication, Law, and Society

2. 12 hours in the craft of journalism
   JOUR 200 Mass Media Information
   JOUR 203 Media Writing I
   JOUR 303 Media Writing II
   JOUR 304 Editing for the Mass Media

Since these are research and writing courses, we assume critical thinking and ethics will be important features of the instruction. As a result, these courses are relevant not only to print journalism, but to journalism through other media as well.
3. 6 hours of career development

JOUR 4xx: Journalism as a Profession (This would be a newly created course based on a journalist-in-residence fellows program. Prominent journalists would come to A&M for about 3-4 days at a time to teach the class, visit with students, grade writing assignments, and present public lectures.)

Jour 484: Internship
(Internships could be developed and existing internships maintained at a number of outlets—for example, the Battalion, KAMU, The Eagle, KBTX, local radio stations—as well as through contacts with former students and others who are practicing journalists.)

4. 6-9 additional hours in a field of study selected from a list of courses in Liberal Arts. For example,

Political Science Emphasis
POLS 302 Mass Media and Politics
POLS 313 Public Opinion

Economics Emphasis
ECON 312 Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy
ECON 435 Economics of Resource Scarcity

Communication Emphasis
COMM 456 Telecommunication and Media Management
COMM 458 Global Media

The interdisciplinary minor and certificate
The committee recommends a minor or certificate (depending on the student's degree requirements) in journalism with 18 required hours. A possible framework for the curriculum would be:

1. 3-6 hours of principles, ethics, and theoretical foundations in journalism, selected from:
   JOUR 102: American Mass Media (revised to include some of the material in JOUR 409 History of Mass Media)
   JOUR 301: Mass Communication, Law, and Society

2. 6-9 hours in the craft of journalism, selected from:
   JOUR 200 Mass Media Information
   JOUR 203 Media Writing I
   JOUR 303 Media Writing II
   JOUR 304 Editing for the Mass Media
3. 6 hours of career education
   JOUR 4xx: Journalism as a Profession
   Jour 484: Internship

4. The student's academic major (e.g., Political Science, Telecommunication Media Studies, English, Biology) would provide additional hours in a field of study.

Resource needs
As mentioned above, this framework is proposed with the assumption of no additional resources. This program could be delivered with 5 faculty fte assuming 1 or 2 fte would be lecturers.

1.0 fte—administer the program, manage the internships, coordinate the journalist-in-residence fellows program (JOUR 4xx: Journalism as a Profession)
4.0 fte to teach 9-10 sections of JOUR courses each semester

The journalist-in-residence fellows program also creates a new opportunity for including journalism alumni in the educational process and could lead to fund-raising efforts to help grow the program into something unique, robust, and meaningful. It provides a vessel for tapping into this previously underutilized development resource, not just for funds, but also for connections that would help students find internships and jobs.

Implementation Plan
Place a 2-year moratorium on new majors/minors. Because of the instructional obligations to students currently seeking journalism degrees at Texas A&M, there should be a 2 year moratorium on new majors and minors in journalism. The first students would enter the new major and minor/certificate program in September, 2005.

Limit new student enrollment in the program to 50 each year. In the multiple pathways model, approximately 25 new students should be majors and 25 should be minors or certificate students. Thus, at any one time, there would be no more than 200 students (100 majors and 100 minors) in the program.

Create an advisory board. An approximately 5-7 member advisory board of academics and practicing journalists should be formed to provide feedback on performance and suggestions for enhancing education. Discussion among the advisory board and teaching faculty could produce innovative pedagogy as well as help ensure that the program fairly balances providing a liberal arts education and suiting the needs of the profession.

Conduct a formal review of the program after 5 years. The Dean’s office and the Advisory Board should review the program annually. However, after 5 years, a formal evaluation should be undertaken to ascertain whether the program is fulfilling its mission of providing multiple pathways for students interested in journalism careers.
Multiple Pathways to Careers in Journalism

In this section of the report, we offer several hypothetical examples of diverse pathways through which a student in the proposed program could prepare for a career in journalism.

Pathways for a major in journalism

Journalism major, comparative cultural studies-international minor. Suppose a student was interested in becoming a foreign correspondent, with particular interests in Latin America. The student could major in journalism and minor in comparative cultural studies-international. The minor would provide grounding in international affairs. Moreover, as part of the student’s requirements for a journalism degree, he or she could add interdisciplinary electives such as HIST 342 Latin America Since 1916, POLS 423 US-Latin American Relations, and SOCI 423 Internationalization and Social Change. Coursework in the craft and principles of journalism could be applied in a study abroad experience that was coupled with an internship with a newspaper, television station, or government agency in Latin America.

Journalism major, political science minor. Suppose a student was interested in political reporting. This student could major in journalism and minor in political science. In addition to POLS 206 and POLS 207, the student could complete the minor by taking POLS 313 Public Opinion, POLS 359 American Political Thought, and POLS 435 Voting Behavior. In addition to JOUR coursework directed to journalism skills and principles, the student could complete the requirements for the interdisciplinary journalism major by taking other courses such as HIST 457 American Economic History, COMM 440 Political Communication, and SOCI 419 Social Class in Contemporary Society. Although competitive, summer internships in Washington, DC are plentiful. For example, a number of internships are available through the Institute on Political Journalism at Georgetown University, CNN, and the Washington Post.

Journalism major, general interests. Suppose a student was interested in becoming a journalist but was unsure of a specific specialty. Having the flexibility to major in journalism yet have time to explore one’s interests, consider various internship possibilities, work in a newsroom, and visit with practicing journalists (e.g., through the journalist-in-residence fellows program) will appeal to those students who want to become journalists but are not sure about a specific field.

Pathways for a minor/certificate in journalism

Major in biology, minor in journalism. Suppose a student wishes to major in biology and seek a career in science journalism, environmental journalism, or medical journalism. The student might be advised to pursue a BA degree in biology and to minor in journalism. Internship possibilities include internships nationwide through the American Association for the Advancement of Science mass media fellowship program, other media internships with science journalists within or outside Texas, internships at scientific journals with editors at Texas A&M or elsewhere, and internships in science public information on campus (for example, at extension services) and at other institutions. The combination of a biology major and a journalism minor would prepare students for jobs in science journalism and science public information. It also would be excellent background for master’s degree study in science journalism.
**Major in telecommunication media studies, minor in journalism.** Suppose a student was interested in media policy and ownership. If this student wanted to be an analyst or activist, he or she could major in telecommunication media studies and take courses such as COMM 350 Theories of Mediated Communication, COMM 354 Political Economy of Telecommunication, COMM 435 Rhetoric of Television and Film, and COMM 454 Telecommunication Policy. By minoring in journalism, the student would learn the craft of writing opinions and editorials from an informed and ethical foundation of objective fact-finding and reporting. The student could pursue internship possibilities with various media watchdog groups (across the political spectrum) including FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), Accuracy in Media (AIM), the Media Institute, and the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC).

**Major in political science, certificate in journalism.** A journalism minor or certificate also could enhance the career mobility of political science majors who plan any number of occupations. Journalism course work that emphasizes clear writing and critical thinking already is a pathway for A&M students planning to study law. Others could benefit, too. For instance, a political science major interested in campaign management could learn how to prepare a candidate for public scrutiny by taking one or both of the media writing courses offered in the minor as well as JOUR 200, Mass Media Information. Matched to an appropriate internship with a political writer through JOUR 484, the student also could learn firsthand what separates failed from successful candidacies.

**Major in English, minor in journalism.** Suppose a student wanted to pursue a career in technical communication, freelance writing, editing, or publishing. English majors could prepare themselves for such fields by combining either of two concentrations in English, professional writing or creative writing, with a minor in journalism. The English coursework would help them acquire the creative or technical aspects of good writing whereas the journalism coursework would allow them to tailor these skills to a particular genre of media writing (e.g., newspaper, Internet, magazines) thereby increasing their employment prospects for pursuing a career as a writer.

**Pre-law track, certificate in journalism.** Suppose a pre-law student majoring in political science or communication was interested in law in and of the mass media, concentrating either on media coverage of legal issues or on constitutional issues related to the First Amendment. The political science student would construct a pathway that included POLS 310 Legal Research, POLS 353 Constitutional Rights and Liberties, POLS 355 U.S. Constitutional Development, and POLS 356 Law, Politics, and Policy as courses in the major. Similarly, the communication student would take COMM 243 Argumentation and Debate, COMM 460 Contemporary Issues: Freedom of Speech, COMM 480 Religious Communication: Church and State Conflict, and COMM 464 Telecommunication Policy to satisfy degree requirements within the major. The minor in journalism would provide a foundation in journalism skills that the student could hone with an internship with a first amendment advocacy group (e.g., ACLU, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education).
The Prospects for the Proposed Program

The Prospect for Success

The proposed interdisciplinary program in journalism education has at least four attractive attributes. First, its small size (no more than 200 students, 100 of whom would be majors) will be very attractive to both students and teachers. Smaller classes mean that students will have more personalized educational experiences and greater opportunity to interact with both academics and professional journalists. Moreover, because of its limited size, the program could admit, both to the major and to the minor, students who are among the most academically talented high school or Texas A&M students. Criteria for admission might include GPA, SAT scores, GSP, career goals, and the essay submitted for TAMU admissions.

Second, involving practicing journalists will give students a rare opportunity to study journalism from the perspective of those within the profession. The journalist-in-residence fellows program has the potential to be a particularly valuable resource for both students and the university as state, national, and world-renowned media professionals are brought to the campus to visit with students, provide feedback on their work, and present lectures to the university community.

Third, the interdisciplinary focus of the program contributes to the goal of multiple and diverse pathways to journalism careers as shown in the aforementioned examples. Moreover, it relies on the expertise of practicing journalists. In this sense, the program embraces the values of both liberal arts and professional models of education.

Finally, the program requires no new resources. Currently, there are 6 tenured faculty and two senior lecturers in journalism (8 fte). The proposed program could be managed with 5 fte. Moreover, this plan retains a degree in journalism even without a journalism department. The availability of a degree in journalism will be appealing to high school students who want a degree in this field.

The Prospect for Failure

Although our committee sees a number of advantages in the proposed framework for journalism education, we are realistic about potential pitfalls. First, although some majors at the Texas A&M University have small numbers of students, we are not aware of any other academic major formally limited to 25 students per year. If no precedent exists, the administration may be reluctant to set one for the proposed program. Also, the potential gains in the quality of education for aspiring journalists are countered by a loss of efficiency in journalism education. For example, although the current journalism budget is approximately 60% of its FY03 funding, the proposed framework serves only 40% of the number of students (approximately 500) who were majors in FY03.

Second, the success of the plan depends on three critical contingencies. Will the current faculty in journalism be placed in other departments, or will they remain within Liberal Arts as a "unit" under college supervision? If the former, then receiving departments must be willing to allow these faculty to teach at least partly in the journalism program. Even then, the 8 fte
currently in journalism could be reduced to 4.0 fte as these faculty meet teaching obligations in
the receiving department. If the plan is to have current faculty remain as a unit within the
college, will the university accept an arrangement where faculty are not affiliated with any
department? Will faculty members with opportunities elsewhere in the university be willing to
be situated in such a unit?

If such a unit is created, what if a current faculty member leaves the university? Unless
the teaching of journalism coincides with the academic interests of another department, it will be
very difficult to attract a Research I teacher-scholar in one department who will partly be
responsible for journalism education. A third contingency relates to the Director of the Program.
The program will clearly need a coordinator who will have a tenure home in another department.
The coordinator will have a number of duties related to the journalism program and would likely
need staff support or perhaps the support of a graduate assistant to help with the journalist-in-
residence and the internship programs.

Finally, the proposed curriculum offers just two survey courses (JOUR 102: American
Mass Media and JOUR 301: Mass Communication, Law, and Society) and four courses on the
craft of investigating, reporting, writing, and editing. Other courses historically taught in the
department (e.g., public relations, international communication, photojournalism) are not part of
the curriculum. Yet, some of the current journalism faculty teach these courses and may have
less expertise in teaching the courses recommended in the proposed curriculum. Hence, while
the proposed program needs only 5 fte, there may not currently be 5 faculty available to teach
these courses. Thus, the new program would also need to rely on adjunct faculty to teach some
of these classes, namely, JOUR 203, 303, and 304.

Summary
In summary, the Committee for New Initiatives in Journalism Education understands the
challenges facing the implementation of the new program for journalism education.
Nevertheless, we believe that the proposed plan is the most feasible alternative to current
journalism education in that it requires no new resources and has the potential to offer a quality
(and perhaps highly visible) undergraduate educational experience that provides a liberal arts
education with a professional focus.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education

FROM: Charles A. Johnson, Dean

SUBJECT: Report from Committee

I have read your report on new pathways for journalism education, and I want to express my appreciation for your work. I accept the recommendations in your report and now want to move forward in developing new approaches to journalism education that would offer extraordinary opportunities to students interested in careers in this field.

Your report acknowledges three important points: (1) currently the Department of Journalism cannot effectively offer a comprehensive program in journalism at the graduate and undergraduate levels, (2) funding to bring the program to acceptable levels is not available, and (3) having a Department of Journalism is not essential for providing journalism education for students at Texas A&M University.

Recognizing these points, you offer an exciting set of pathways for students interested in journalism careers. I am pleased, therefore, to recommend formally to the Provost that we undertake new approaches to journalism education. If the Provost approves and the Department of Journalism is closed, we will follow the recommendations of the Committee to Effect Change in Journalism placing high priority on providing the classes, advising, and support for undergraduate and graduate students currently in the program. Further, we will work with permanent faculty currently in the program to find positions within the University to continue pursuing their professional interests, including their continuing to teach journalism classes.

I have previously made commitments to assuring that students currently enrolled as journalism majors will receive the highest quality education at Texas A&M University. Let me reaffirm that commitment. While we are implementing the plans outlined below, we will continue to support current faculty in Journalism and hire additional visiting faculty as needed to provide instruction for currently enrolled journalism majors. We will also provide the advising support and support for professional development to allow journalism majors to succeed when they graduate. I believe that currently enrolled majors will also benefit from several of the initiatives discussed below and that will be implemented in the coming year.
Your report calls for creation of a minor or certificate program in journalism, which I support. The report identifies a series of six courses that might serve as the core set of courses for a minor or certificate in journalism, with the possible addition of a course focusing on career education and an internship. I believe the six courses you identify as elements of this core curriculum seem reasonable, especially since they correspond to several courses currently in the journalism curriculum.

Your work on combining existing majors and a journalism minor/certificate offers multiple pathways to journalism careers that would open new opportunities to students at the University. The prospective pathways you suggest for students interested in science journalism, telecommunications, politics, writing, and other areas illustrate the point well that students can pursue journalistic careers in areas that build from strong majors at the University. I will ask our Undergraduate Student Services office to work with departments across the College to develop these and other possible major/minor combinations.

Your report calls for the creation of a journalist-in-residence fellows program. This idea is one that I have mentioned in various forums, and I believe it would serve the students and University well. Building course work around such a visiting program will be challenging. Nevertheless, the idea of bringing journalists to Texas A&M under such a program is a good one. To maintain current links with the journalism profession and to explore the possibilities of this program, I will allocate $25,000 in non-base funding for each of the next three years to support a journalist-in-residence program, while we seek support from possible funding sources for a permanent endowment of a journalist-in-residence program.

Your report suggests the development of internships with a number of outlets, including the Battalion, KAMU, The Eagle, KBTX, local radio stations, and with other media outlets that may have connections to Texas A&M through former students. As I have stated previously, I believe internship experiences are critical to launching a successful entry into the journalism profession, so we will need to work very hard to secure regular internships for students. I will support journalism faculty and program advisors in creating internships for students interested in journalism. The advisory board you recommend should be created, and I believe could be helpful especially in this area.

The Committee's report calls for creation of a new interdisciplinary journalism degree. Nationwide discussions about journalism education have pointed to the need to find the proper mix of journalistic skills courses and courses that provide future journalists with substantive background knowledge for the stories they are reporting. A new interdisciplinary major, properly designed, would strike an appropriate balance of journalism skills and substantive background, and would place Texas A&M at the forefront of journalism education.
Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education  
November 24, 2003  
Page 3

We will develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary major in journalism. The committee has been properly mindful of the resource constraints in starting a new program. Hence, you have raised questions about whether current journalism faculty could provide the courses for such an interdisciplinary major. You have rightly suggested that new programs would need to be small, thus leading to your recommendation that no more than 50 students be allowed to enter the program as majors or minors in any year. A commitment by the faculty to teach the courses and a formal decision to limit enrollments by the University would be prerequisites to the successful implementation of an interdisciplinary major in journalism. Of course, the development of any new degree program will also require the support of faculty involved in the prospective program, certification that resources are available to support the program, and review by faculty committees in the College and the University. New degrees also require the approval of the Provost, President, Board of Regents, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

One part of your report suggests that there be a two-year moratorium for new students entering any journalism program. I understand the basis for your recommendation, but I think it would be unfair to exclude students from taking journalism courses leading to a minor or a certificate during this phase of our transition. I will, therefore, work with the faculty and the administration to implement the minor or the certificate program for students interested in a journalism career beginning in September 2004.

Once again, I appreciate your careful consideration of options for students interested in pursuing a journalism career. In all, I believe your recommendations will provide exciting new opportunities for students at Texas A&M University.

cc: David B. Prior, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Department of Journalism
MEMORANDUM

TO: David B. Prior, Executive Vice President and Provost

FROM: Charles A. Johnson, Dean

SUBJECT: Recommendation for New Approaches to Journalism Education at Texas A&M University

The College of Liberal Arts has concluded lengthy discussions about journalism education at Texas A&M University that have engaged faculty, students, the University community, interested former students, and the general public. Those discussions have been productive, and ultimately they illuminated new pathways for students interested in pursuing careers in journalism. Hence, I am recommending formally that the College proceed with the following:

1. Develop a newly organized minor and certificate program in Journalism;

2. Create a journalist-in-residence program;

3. Work with faculty and representatives on- and off-campus to develop internship and other practicum experiences for students interested in journalism careers;

4. Appoint an advisory group of journalists;

5. Develop an interdisciplinary major in journalism; and

6. Close the Department of Journalism and its current undergraduate degree programs and transfer the Master’s program in Science and Technology Journalism to another appropriate academic unit.

In developing these recommendations, we have followed University policies in 03.02.02.M1, Policy and Procedure for Effecting Change in Academic Departmental Structure, and 12.01.99.M2 (Section 7.2), The Reduction or Discontinuance of Institutional Programs not Mandated by Financial Exigency. As required by these provisions, I make these recommendations after carefully assessing considerations based on long range judgements about the educational mission of the College and the University. I believe, firmly, that these actions will enhance the educational mission and activities of the University.
The next step in this process requires your approval in principle for these suggested changes and a detailing of the administrative actions necessary to implement the recommendation.

I have appended to this memorandum key documents that mark the College’s deliberations. The documents provide thorough explanations of the process and the reasons for my recommendations. Because of this complete record, I will only summarize the essential points of the process and the recommendations that have emerged in our deliberations.

Overview and Summary of the Process Leading to these Recommendations

The External Review of the Department conducted in the Fall 2001 made the effective case that the current situation facing the Department was untenable (Attachment 1). According to the report, the College faced the choice of (1) investing substantial resources in the Department, (2) merging the Department with the Department of Communication and making significant resource commitments to Journalism, or (3) closing the Department. For reasons I set forth in my July 10, 2003, memorandum to the Department of Journalism (Attachment 2), I concluded that the budget reductions mandated by the University foreclosed the possibilities of making major investments in the Department of Journalism. I recommended, therefore, that we consider new approaches to journalism education at Texas A&M and that we close the Department of Journalism.

Following University policies governing the closure of departments and degree programs, I appointed a Committee to Effect Change in Journalism on July 21, 2003, chaired by Distinguished Professor Howard Kaplan and composed of a majority of three elected and one appointed faculty from Journalism plus two appointed faculty from Communication, to consider issues and concerns about my recommendation (Attachment 3). The report of that Committee set forth general principles for the closure of the Department and its degree programs so that student and faculty interests were protected (Attachment 4). Accepting this report, I agreed that we will place high priority on providing the classes, advising, and support for undergraduate and graduate students currently in the program. Further, we will work with permanent faculty currently in the program to find positions within the University to continue pursuing their professional interests, including their continuing to teach journalism classes.

As required by University policy, on August 25, 2003, I distributed this report to the faculty in Journalism and reported my plans to appoint a second committee to consider new pathways for students interested in pursuing journalism careers (Attachment 5). The results of the survey of faculty views about these actions, as required by University policy, showed that four of eight respondents did not endorse these actions, two did endorse the actions, and two declined to express support or no support, but offered qualified views about the proposal (Attachment 6). Following through with my commitment to develop new pathways for students interested in journalism, I appointed the Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education...
composed of five faculty (two from Journalism, two from Communication, one from English), three former students who were professional journalists, and one journalism student (Attachment 7). The Committee was chaired by Dr. Richard L. Street, Head of the Department of Communication.

The Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education issued its report on October 24, 2003 (Attachment 8). The report acknowledges that: (1) currently the Department of Journalism cannot effectively offer a comprehensive program in journalism at the graduate and undergraduate levels, (2) funding to bring the program to acceptable levels is not available, and (3) having a Department of Journalism is not essential for providing journalism education for students at Texas A&M. The report presents a plan that outlines several pathways for journalism education, including development of a certificate, minor, and interdisciplinary major; a journalist-in-residence program; and an active internship program.

While the Committee includes several caveats regarding the necessity of keeping the number of students in any journalism program small, I accept the Committee's report (Attachment 9). I am, of course, prepared to appoint the leadership necessary from current faculty to implement these new pathways to journalism education.

Summary and Conclusion

During the past 24 months, the Department of Journalism has been under intense review. As this summary memorandum and its attachments show, we have explored virtually every possible avenue for the Department. Ultimately, fiscal constraints and realities about the current program led us to explore new pathways for journalism education at Texas A&M University. The Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education has developed a plan for new pathways for students interested in pursuing careers in journalism. Once again, let me note that I am convinced that these actions are in the best interest of Texas A&M University -- its faculty and its students. We now need to embrace these new pathways and to implement the recommendations highlighted at the beginning of this memorandum.

Attachments
November 24, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Charles A. Johnson, Dean

SUBJECT: Journalism Recommendation

I have reviewed your recommendation that Texas A&M University initiate a new approach to journalism education. The work of the two faculty committees on issues presented by this initiative has been thorough and quite helpful. I am pleased the College has developed a plan assuring students currently in journalism programs that they will continue to receive quality instruction leading to a timely graduation. Moreover, I am also supportive of the recommendation that we embark on the development of a minor or certificate program in journalism, create an advisory committee and a journalist-in-residence program, strengthen internship opportunities and develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary major in journalism. All of this action strikes me as forward thinking.

University guidelines call for me to approve in principle your recommendation that we close the Department of Journalism and its associated degree programs. Based on the work of the Committee to Effect Change in Journalism and the Committee to Recommend New Initiatives in Journalism Education, and the plan you propose in your November 24, 2003, memorandum, I approve in principle your recommendation. University guidelines ask that the Faculty Senate make a recommendation regarding the closure of departments and academic programs. Accordingly, I ask that you present your recommendation to the Faculty Senate for its recommendation. Additionally, I ask that you take the actions necessary to begin implementation of your plan. I recognize that these initiatives will require extensive faculty consultation.

[Signature]
David B. Prior
Executive Vice President
and Provost

Office of the Dean
College of Liberal Arts

DBP:njm NOV 24 2003

REFER TO
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