

Multi-Year Programmatic Review

Sports Journalism 2024

1. Please provide a narrative that explains the program history, how the program supports the current or future needs of the given professional area, and the future direction of the program. Also, please discuss the program's alignment with Husson University's mission and the College's strategic planning. (Annual Program Assessment Form 1&3)

The Sports Journalism program prepares students to become a multi-media sports journalist. Students learn how to write and relate information for multiple platforms including print, radio, TV and the Web. Students gain hands-on experience reporting sports news, conducting interviews and providing play-by-play along with commentary. Depending on the semester, students work live on the campus radio station WHSN 89.3-FM, the NESCom Broadcast Network, the student run online newspaper, *The Spectator* or the television productions the *NESCom Connection* and *The Locker Room*.

Students learn about multiple careers including sports producer and/or podcaster and are introduced to the career field of sports information in their freshman year, first semester.

In 2023 Husson discontinued the journalism department and began only offering sports journalism. In the fall of 2025 all journalism students will be graduated, creating the first year with no journalism students in the program. This will lead to more opportunities for sports related assignments and continued assessment of all classes to accommodate sports students.

Alignment of a Sports Journalism Program with Husson University's Mission

Professional Preparation

Career-focused Curriculum: Our sports journalism program offers courses and training that prepare students for careers in sports media, including roles such as sports reporters, broadcasters, digital content creators and sports information assistants. This directly supports Husson's mission of preparing students for professional careers.

Industry-Relevant Skills: The program teaches essential skills such as reporting, writing, broadcasting, and multimedia production, ensuring that graduates are ready to enter the workforce in the evolving field of sports journalism.

Informed by Sciences and Humanities

Interdisciplinary Approach: Sports journalism inherently integrates aspects of the sciences (e.g., understanding sports physiology, sport management, analytics) and humanities (e.g., ethics, storytelling, communication). This interdisciplinary approach ensures that the program is well-rounded and aligns with the university's mission.

Ethical and Analytical Training: Courses in media ethics, journalism and journalism ethics provide a robust foundation informed by the sciences and humanities, fostering critical thinking and ethical decision-making in students.

Alignment with the College's Strategic Planning

Enhancing Academic Programs

Curriculum Development: The sports journalism program is designed to meet current industry standards and incorporate emerging trends in sports media, such as digital journalism, social media engagement, and any trends coming from the sports information career field.

Continuous Improvement: Regular updates to the curriculum based on feedback from industry professionals and academic advancements ensure that the program remains relevant and effective.

Expanding Partnerships and Collaborations

Industry Connections: Establishing partnerships with Husson athletics, Husson Sports Management Program, the University of Maine Athletics Department and local news outlets, provides students with internships, mentorships, and real-world experience.

Guest Speakers and Workshops: Bringing in professionals from the journalism and sports journalism industry to conduct workshops and lectures enhances learning and provide networking opportunities for students.

Promoting Student Success and Retention

Support Systems: Offering resources such as career counseling from Husson's Career Services department, academic advising, and mentorship programs can help students navigate their educational and career paths successfully.

Integrating Technology and Innovation

Advanced Tools and Techniques: Teaching students to use the latest technologies in digital content creation, video editing, social media management, and photography prepares them for the technological demands of the industry.

Conclusion

The sports journalism program at Husson University aligns closely with the university’s mission of preparing students for professional careers through interdisciplinary education. The program supports the mission by offering a career-focused curriculum that integrates the sciences and humanities, thus preparing students for dynamic roles in the evolving field of sports journalism.

2. Please identify data sources utilized in this report (Examples may include but are not limited to feedback from consultants, advisory board reports, admissions/retention data, data from student learning assessments, etc.) (Annual Program Assessment Form 2, 4, 5, 6, 7):

Data source	Date of collection	Description
Husson University Athletics	Continuous	Routinely meet with SID director to discuss industry needs.
WABI-TV	Annually	Meet with news staff to discuss industry trends.
WWII	Annually	Meet with news staff to discuss industry trends.
University of Maine athletics	June 2024	Zoom session with Tyson McHatten
Husson Sport Management	Continuous	Meet routinely to discuss industry needs.

3. Please identify the programmatic goals that have been worked on since the last review, and provide updates on their current status. (Annual Program Assessment Form 5,7):

GOAL	EVIDENCE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS MET, NOT MET, ONGOING
Increase enrollment	Freshmen enrollment and total enrollment in the major.	Freshmen enrollment remains below a 2020 high of 12.	Not met
Enhance advising skills for students and graduates	Student feedback	Met (advised) with all students before sign-ups, documented their intentions. Followed up utilizing CAMS	Met

		and checked each student for fall. Corrected several mistakes student made taking classes they did not need.	
Professional Development	Student evaluations	Attend podcast conference annual, meet with local TV administration.	Met

4. Please provide an evaluation of curricular effectiveness, including at least one direct and indirect measure of student learning. Within this analysis please incorporate rates of retention and graduation and factors of alumni success. (Annual Program Assessment Form 5,6,7)

Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Tool & Results	Notes
NEWS REPORTING AND WRITING	Each assignment has a rubric with television news stories utilizing two rubrics, one for writing and report, a second for technical skills.	
Direct: Multiple rubrics with grades		
Indirect: Student feedback in class with peers, exit interviews, industry feedback.		

5. Please describe future programmatic goals such as experiential, interdisciplinary, competency based, JDEI, or other relevant programmatic initiatives. (Annual Program Assessment Form 3, 7)

Future Programmatic Goals for the Sports Journalism Program at Husson University

1. Experiential Learning: Beginning in the fall of 2024, we will integrate more broadcasts of Husson games into the curriculum, starting with freshmen. This hands-on approach will immerse students immediately in various roles in broadcast and sports information, fostering practical skills from the outset. By working directly on live broadcasts, students will gain invaluable experience that mirrors real-world scenarios, preparing them for careers in sports journalism, sports information and broadcasting.

2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: We plan to collaborate with other departments to offer interdisciplinary courses and projects. For example, partnerships with the Marketing department can provide insights into promotion, while collaboration with our Extended Reality program can introduce students to cutting-edge virtual and augmented reality technologies in

sports media. These interdisciplinary efforts will enhance students' understanding of the broader sports industry and equip them with diverse skills.

3. Competency-Based Education: Our curriculum is designed around developing specific competencies essential for sports journalism. This includes not only technical skills in broadcasting and writing but also critical thinking, ethical reporting, and audience engagement. By the end of their studies, students will have a portfolio of work that demonstrates their proficiency in these areas.

4. JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Initiatives: We are committed to incorporating JEDI principles into our program, which is why we have Dr. Maria Cahill teach Cross Cultural Communication as a mandatory class. This diversifies our curriculum to include a wider range of perspectives in sports journalism, addressing issues of representation in sports media, and ensuring our classroom and extracurricular activities foster an inclusive environment.

5. Enhanced Studio Production: Our magazine-style interview shows, shot in our TV studio and the XR lab, will evolve to become more reflective of the high production values seen on major networks like ESPN. This includes upgrading our studio technology, incorporating advanced graphics and editing techniques, and training students in high-level production skills. These enhancements will provide students with a competitive edge in the job market.

6. Digital and Social Media Integration: Recognizing the importance of digital platforms, we place an emphasis on social media and online content creation. Students learn to produce engaging digital content, manage sports media accounts, and analyze audience metrics to understand the impact of their work. This ensures they are well-versed in the latest trends and tools in sports journalism.

By implementing these programmatic goals, we aim to provide a comprehensive and forward-thinking education that equips our students with the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to succeed in the dynamic field of sports journalism.

6. Please provide a summary of findings and recommendations based on this self-study.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations for the Sports Journalism Program at Husson University

Program History and Alignment with Institutional Mission

The Sports Journalism program at Husson University has evolved significantly to meet the demands of the contemporary sports media landscape. Initially offering a broader journalism curriculum, the program is working to focus exclusively on sports journalism, providing students with targeted training and hands-on experience across multiple platforms, including print, radio, TV, podcasting and online media. This shift aligns with Husson University's mission to prepare students for professional careers through a career-focused curriculum and an interdisciplinary approach.

The program supports current and future needs in sports journalism by equipping students with industry-relevant skills such as reporting, writing, broadcasting, and multimedia production. Additionally, it fosters critical thinking and ethical decision-making through courses in media ethics and journalism. The integration of experiential learning, such as live broadcasts of Husson games, and interdisciplinary collaborations with departments like Marketing and

Extended Reality, further enhance the program's alignment with the university's mission and strategic planning.

Data Sources

- **Husson University Athletics:** Continuous meetings with the SID director to discuss industry needs.
- **WABI-TV and WVII:** Annual meetings with news staff to discuss industry trends.
- **University of Maine Athletics:** June 2024 Zoom session with Tyson McHatten.
- **Husson Sport Management:** Continuous meetings to discuss industry needs.

Programmatic Goals and Updates

1. **Increase Enrollment:**
 - Evidence: Freshmen enrollment and total enrollment in the major.
 - Status: Not met; freshmen enrollment remains below the 2020 high of 12.
2. **Enhance Advising Skills:**
 - Evidence: Student feedback.
 - Status: Met; all students were advised before sign-ups, and corrections were made using CAMS.
3. **Professional Development:**
 - Evidence: Student evaluations.
 - Status: Met; attended an annual podcast conference and met with local TV administration.

Evaluation of Curricular Effectiveness

Student Learning Outcome: News Reporting and Writing

- **Direct Measure:** Multiple rubrics with grades for assignments, including television news stories.
- **Indirect Measure:** Student feedback, exit interviews, and industry feedback.

The program has shown effectiveness in providing a robust foundation in news reporting and writing, supported by direct and indirect assessment tools.

Future Programmatic Goals

1. **Experiential Learning:**
 - Beginning in fall 2024, more broadcasts of Husson games will be integrated into the curriculum to provide immediate, hands-on experience.
2. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:**
 - Partnerships with the Marketing department and the Extended Reality program will introduce students to sports management, promotion, and cutting-edge technologies in sports media.
3. **Competency-Based Education:**
 - The curriculum will focus on developing competencies in technical skills, critical thinking, ethical reporting, and audience engagement.
4. **JEDI Initiatives:**
 - Dr. Maria Cahill will teach Cross Cultural Communication as a mandatory class to ensure a diverse and inclusive curriculum.

5. **Enhanced Studio Production:**

- o Magazine-style interview shows will reflect high production values seen on major networks like ESPN, with upgrades to studio technology and training in advanced production skills.

6. **Digital and Social Media Integration:**

- o Emphasis on social media and online content creation will ensure students are skilled in the latest digital trends and tools.

By addressing these goals, the Sports Journalism program aims to offer a comprehensive and forward-thinking education that prepares students for successful careers in the dynamic field of sports journalism.