



# Department of Communication: Assessment of Problem Solving Skills Among Broadcasting and Electronic Media Students

## Description of Broadcasting and Electronic Media Major

The Department of Communication offers 4 majors: Broadcasting and Electronic Media (BEM), Journalism, Public Relations, and Communication Studies. Within the BEM major, much of our emphasis is on skills and “hands-on” learning. We teach a variety of writing classes and skills classes and a few theory-related classes.

We have approximately 125 majors in the BEM area split between those focused on Broadcast Journalism and those focused on production/sales/management.

Students spend much of their time in lab-based classes learning producing, shooting, and editing techniques.

### Department Objective 1:

One of our objectives beyond teaching skills and writing is the development of problem-solving, creative thinking skills.

### Department Objective 2:

Another department objective is the development of basic writing skills.

### KPIs:

Percentage of students who score in the “Outstanding” rank for the two attributes of 1) Ability to Analyze & Problem Solve and 2) Written Communications on the co-op office’s Employer Evaluation Scale administered to all co-op employers at the end of each semester.

<b>Two Semesters of Rankings on the Employer Evaluation Scale</b>		
<b>Ability to analyze &amp; problem solve</b>	<b>Fall 2005</b>	<b>Spring 2006</b>
Outstanding	50%	58%
Very Good	32%	32%
Acceptable	15%	10%
Poor	3%	0%
Unacceptable	0%	0%
Not Applicable	0%	0%

## Evaluation Process

### Objective One:

We found our co-op employers and Advisory Board Members consistently ranking about 20% of our co-op students in the Acceptable/Poor categories on a co-op administered scale. Only 50% were ranked as Outstanding with regard to this attribute (Ability to analyze & problem solve).

### Use of Results:

We have instituted a “capstone” course – BEM 495 - which incorporates problem-solving and creative thinking as students take on more of a producing role in a television production scenario.

### Results:

Students have increased to 58% in Outstanding category.

### Objective Two:

Once again, 10% of our students were being ranked as only “acceptable” in this area on the co-op scale (Written Communication Skills).

### Use of results:

We are developing a basic grammar course for all majors to begin in fall 2006. (no measurement yet)