

# Departmental vs. School Structure

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## **CONTENTS**

Introduction	2
Sample Department Curriculum, Multiple Degree Program	3
News-Ed Option	3
Photojournalism Option	4
Magazine Option	5
Public Relations Option	6
Advertising Degree	8
Breakdown of JMC/Advertising Degrees by Options	9
Sample School Curriculum	10
A Comparison of Total Number of Sections Offered	12
Final Thoughts	12

## Introduction

Marcia Prior-Miller, chair of the Curriculum Committee, felt it would be useful for the director to do a comparison of a department vs. school structure, to facilitate discussion about assessment and its role in refining and developing curriculum.

The department curriculum used as example here is, for the most part [90 percent], a real curriculum from an accredited department that also offers a degree in journalism and mass communication and another in advertising. Some aspects of the curricula—options, expanded premajor offerings for advertising, required courses outside the department—have been changed here for display and comparison purposes.

Curricula are a faculty concern, not an administrative one. *This report is for discussion-starter purposes only.* However, from an administrative standpoint, Greenlee curricula should meet the following accreditation criteria:

- ***Increased emphasis on assessment.*** Outcomes will be monitored, not only of individual courses but of emphases and degree programs.
- ***Equity across core courses.*** Core courses should address all emphases. For instance, law and/or ethics should address advertising and public relations as much as print and broadcast journalism, which we do, and we should not forget visual communication, as do many journalism schools and textbooks.
- ***Equity across emphases and degree programs.*** No emphasis should have a preponderance of courses, as the Accrediting Council sometimes finds in programs that proliferate news courses at the expense of advertising, say, or public relations.
- ***A balance of skills and conceptual courses.*** A curriculum should not favor one or the other as both are needed to enhance synthesis and application.

Typically a department curriculum features required courses and electives by sequence or emphasis areas. A school curriculum features core courses, must-have emphasis courses, and shared electives. Programs get into trouble when, historically, they require a preponderance of one sequence or emphasis area at the expense other options. This report illustrates that phenomenon. Using the same courses as found in the sample departmental structure, the analysis also shows how a school structure results in fewer courses—allowing the unit to offer more shared electives or devoting FTEs to graduate programs.

## DEPARTMENTAL CURRICULA IN JMC and ADVERTISING

### Example 1: Departmental Curriculum News-Editorial Option, 35 hours

#### PREMAJOR

<i>PREFIX</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>SHORT TITLE</i>	<i>CR HOURS</i>
JOURN	201 [news-ed required]	News writing	3

#### REQUIRED

JOURN	269 [shared requirement]	Professional Development	3
JOURN	311 [news-ed required]	News Feature Writing	3
JOURN	315 [news-ed required]	Newspaper Edit	3
JOURN	325 [news-ed required]	Media Law	3
JOURN	326 [news-ed required]	Media Ethics	3
JOURN	413 [news-ed required]	Adv Reporting News	3
JOURN	202 [news-ed required]	News Bureau	3
JOURN	485 [news-ed required]	Adv News Seminar	3

#### PRIMARY ELECTIVES

3 hours from:

JOURN	312 [news-ed elective]	Opinion Writing (3)	
JOURN	322 [magazine elective]	Magazine Design (3)	
JOURN	418 [shared elective]	Tech Science Writing (3)	3

3 hours from:

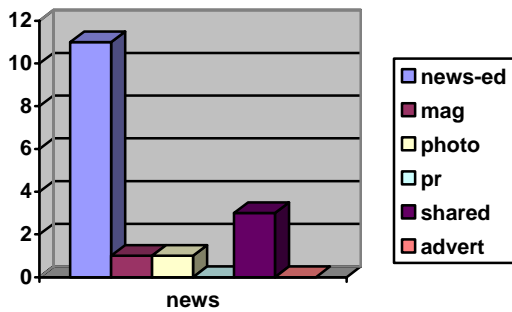
JOURN	230 [photojour elective]	Intro Photojournalism (3)	
JOURN	321 [news-ed elective]	News Design (3)	
JOURN	342 [shared elective]	New Media (3)	
JOURN	385 [news-ed elective]	News writing (3)	3

#### INTERNSHIP

2 hours from:

JOURN	369	Internship (1-2)	
JOURN	479	Non Paid Intern (1-2)	2

## Analysis (Figure 1)



**TOTAL: 8 news-ed required, 3 news-ed electives, 1 shared required, 2 shared electives, 1 magazine elective, 1 photojournalism elective**

## Example 1: Departmental Curriculum Photojournalism Option, 32 hours

### PREMAJOR

JOURN	230 [photojournal required]	Intro Photojournalism	3
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### REQUIRED

JOURN	269 [shared requirement]	Professional Development	3
JOURN	325 [news-ed required]	Media Law	3
JOURN	326 [news-ed required]	Media Ethics	3
JOURN	332 [photojournal required]	Visual Ed	3
JOURN	335 [photojournal required]	Intermediate Photojournal	3
JOURN	437 [photojournal required]	Advanced Photojournal	3
JOURN	201 [news-ed premajor]	News writing	3
JOURN	485 [news-ed required]	Adv News Seminar	3

### PRIMARY ELECTIVES

3 hours from:

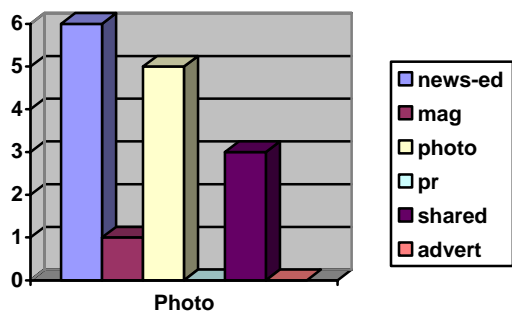
JOURN	321 [news-ed elective]	News Design(3)	
JOURN	323 [magazine elective]	Magazine Design (3)	
JOURN	342 [shared elective]	New Media (3)	
JOURN	434 [photojournal elective]	Photo Illus (3)	
JOURN	202 [news-ed elective]	News Report (3)	
JOURN	385 [shared elective]	Multi Med Sty (3)	3

INTERNSHIP

2 hours from:

JOURN	369	Internship (1-2)	
JOURN	479	Non Paid Intern (1-2)	2

**Analysis (Figure 2)**



**TOTAL: 4 photojournalism required, 1 photojournalism elective, 3 news-ed required, 1 news-ed premajor, 2 news-ed electives, 1 shared requirement, 2 shared electives, 1 magazine elective**

**Example 1: Departmental Curriculum Magazine Sequence, 32 hours**

PREMAJOR

JOURN	280 [magazine required]	Magazine Writing	3
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REQUIRED

Professional magazine requirements, 39 hours

JOURN	269 [shared requirement]	Professional Development	3
JOURN	312 [news-ed elective]	Opinion Writ	3
JOURN	315 [news-ed required]	Editing	3
JOURN	325 [news-ed required]	Media Law	3
JOURN	326 [news-ed required]	Media Ethics	3
JOURN	328 [magazine required]	Magazine Prod Pub	3
JOURN	427 [magazine required]	Adv Magazine Writing	3

PRIMARY ELECTIVES

6 hours from:

JOURN	230 [photojournal elective]	Intro Photojournalism (3)	
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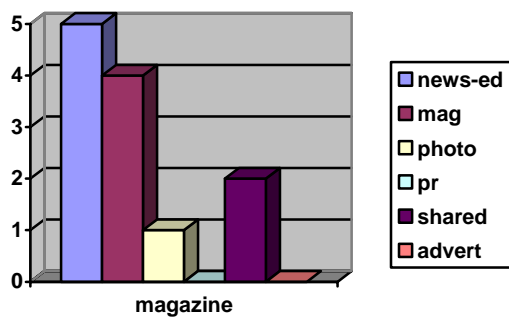
JOURN	323 [magazine elective]	Magazine Design (3)	
JOURN	342 [shared elective]	New Media (3)	
JOURN	201 [news-ed pre-major]	News writing (3)	6

INTERNSHIP

2 hours from:

JOURN	369	Internship (1-2)	
JOURN	479	Non Paid Intern (1-2)	2

**Analysis (Figure 3)**



**TOTAL: 3 magazine required, 3 news-ed required, 1 news-ed elective, 1 news-ed premajor course, 1 shared required, 1 shared elective, 1 magazine elective, 1 photojournalism elective**

**Example 1: Departmental Curriculum  
Public Relations Option, 35 hours**

PREMAJOR

<i>PREFIX</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>SHORT TITLE</i>	<i>CR HOURS</i>
JOURN	261 [pr required]	Principles of PR	3

REQUIRED

Professional program in Public Relations requirements, 48 hours

JOURN	269 [shared required]	Professional Development	3
JOURN	325 [news-ed required]	Media Law	3
JOURN	326 [news-ed required]	Media Ethics	3
JOURN	360 [pr required]	P R Tech	3
JOURN	368 [pr required]	P R Publication	3

JOURN	382 [advert/pr required]	AD/PR Research Strategies	3
JOURN	405 [pr required]	P R Plan Mgt	3
JOURN	465 [pr required]	P R Campaigns	3
JOURN	201 [news-ed premajor]	News writing	3

PRIMARY ELECTIVES

3 hours from:

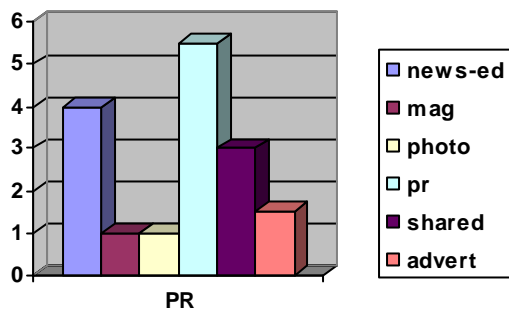
JOURN	230 [photojour elective]	Intro Photojournal (3)	
JOURN	312 [news-ed elective]	Opinion Writ (3)	
JOURN	323 [magazine elective]	Magazine Design (3)	
JOURN	342 [shared elective]	New Media (3)	
JOURN	418 [shared elective]	Tech Science Writ (3)	
JOURN	456 [advertising required]	Adverting Campaigns (3)	3

INTERNSHIP

2 hours from:

JOURN	369	Internship (1-2)	
JOURN	479	Non Paid Int (1-2)	2

**Analysis (Figure 4)**



**TOTAL: 5 PR required, 1 ad & pr required, 2 news-ed required, 1 news-ed premajor, 1 news-ed elective, 1 photojournalism elective, 1 magazine elective, 3 shared electives, 1 advertising required**

## Advertising Degree, 32 hours

### PREMAJOR

<i>PREFIX</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>SHORT TITLE</i>	<i>CR HOURS</i>
JOURN	261 [advert required]	Intro to Advrt	3

### REQUIRED

Professional program in Public Relations requirements, 48 hours

JOURN	269 [shared required]	Professional Development	3
JOURN	325 [news-ed required]	Media Law	3
JOURN	326 [advert required]	Advert Media	3
JOURN	360 [advert required]	Advert Copy	3
JOURN	368 [advert required]	Ad Research	3
JOURN	382 [advert/pr required]	AD/PR Resrch Strat	3
JOURN	405 [advert required]	Advert Campns	3

### PRIMARY ELECTIVES

6 hours from:

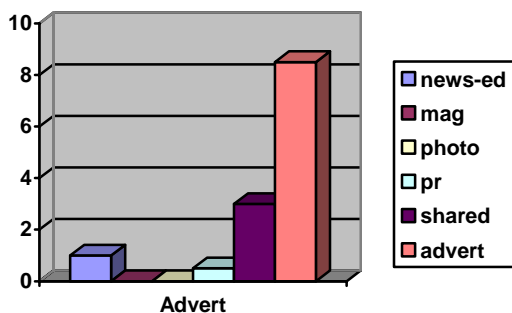
JOURN	342 [shared elective]	New Media	
JOURN	452 [advert elective]	Adv. Advert Media	
JOURN	453 [advert elective]	Intermed. Advert Campns	
JOURN	454 [advert elective]	Advert Seminar	
JOURN	455 [shared elective]	Advanced Copywriting	6

### INTERNSHIP

2 hours from:

JOURN	369	Internship (1-2)	
JOURN	479	Non Paid Intern (1-2)	2

## Analysis (Figure 5)



**TOTAL: 5 Advert required, 3 advert electives, 1 [advert/pr required], 1 news-ed required, 2 shared elective, 1 shared required**

# BREAKDOWN OF JMC/ADVERTISING MAJOR BY OPTIONS

Figure 1 NEWS-ED OPTION

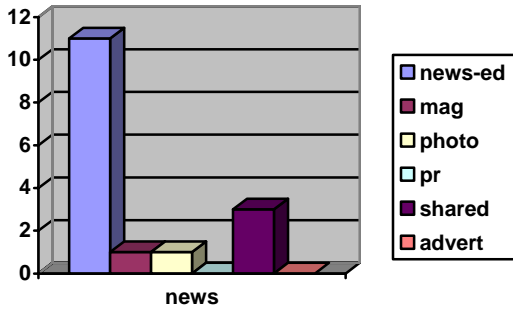


Figure 2 PHOTOJOURNALISM OPTION

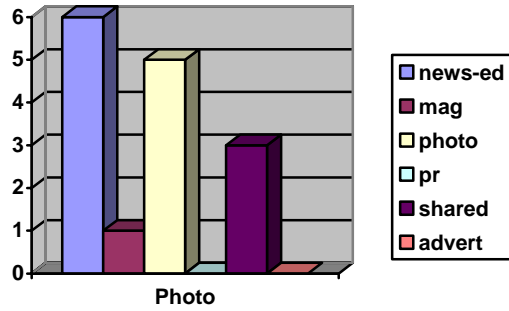


Figure 3 MAGAZINE OPTION

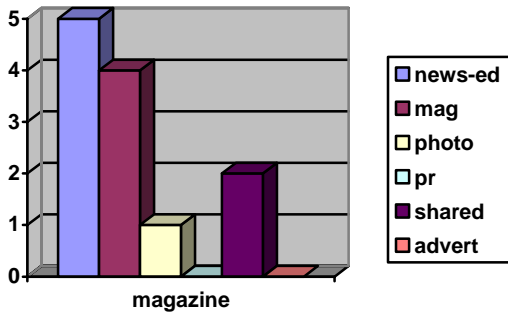
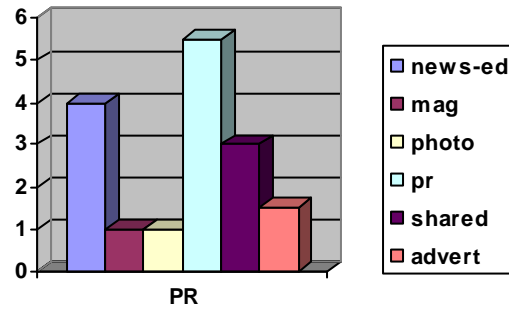
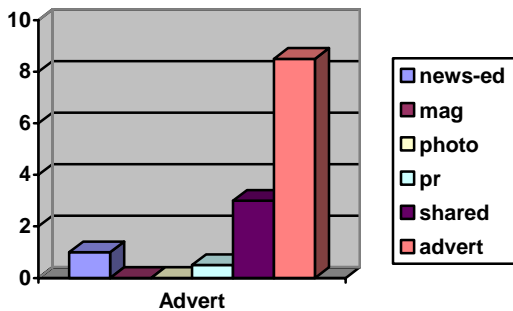


Figure 4 PUBLIC RELATIONS OPTION



## ADVERTISING MAJOR

Figure 5 ADVERTISING



## Example 2: School Structure

### SAMPLE CURRICULUM

#### Premajor

Mass Media and Society                      Fall  
 Professional Development                  Spring

#### Core Courses

Writing Across the Media                      Fall and Spring  
 Visual Communication                          Fall and Spring  
 Media Law    Fall and Spring  
 Media Ethics                                        Fall and Spring

#### Journalism & Mass Communication Degree

<b>News-Ed</b>	<b>Magazine</b>	<b>Photojourn*</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>
Reporting	Magazine Writing	Photojournalism	PR Principles
Editing	Mag Production	Intermediate	PR Strategies
Adv. Reporting	Adv. Mag. Writing	Advanced	Techniques
Feature Writing	Magazine Design	Photo editing*	Campaigns

\* *Note: Visual Communication class required in core. Savings via school curriculum could add another photojournalism class, photo editing, say.*

#### Advertising Degree

Advertising Media
Copywriting
Ad Research
Campaigns

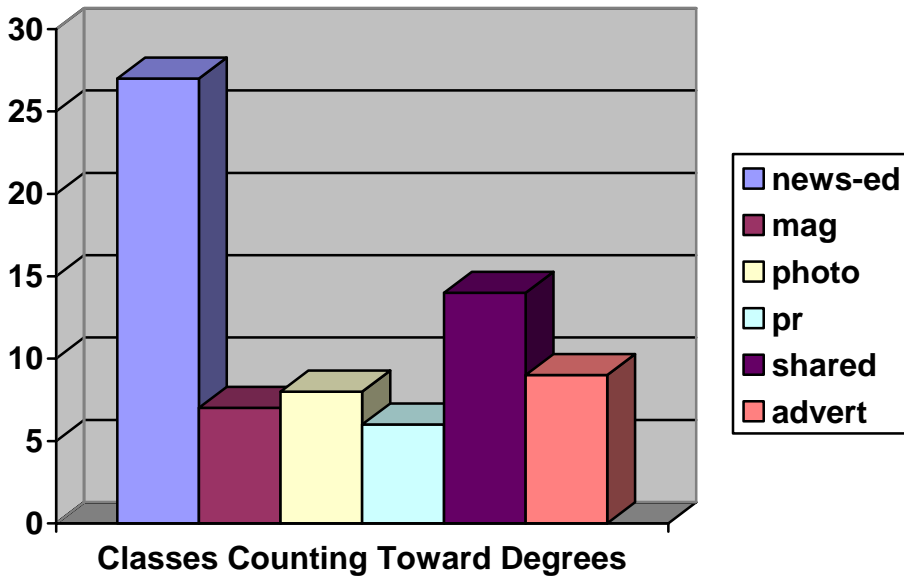
#### Shared Electives

<b>News-Ed</b>	<b>Magazine</b>	<b>Photojourn</b>	<b>Public Rel</b>	<b>Advert</b>
News Bureau	New Media	Adv. Seminar	PR Planning	Adv. Media
Opinion	New Elective	New Elective	Tech Sci Writ	Seminar
News Design	New Elective	New Elective	New Elective	Adv. Copy
New Elective	New Elective	New Elective	New Elective	New Elective

*Note: Shared electives represent existing courses. Savings via School curriculum typically would result in more shared electives.*

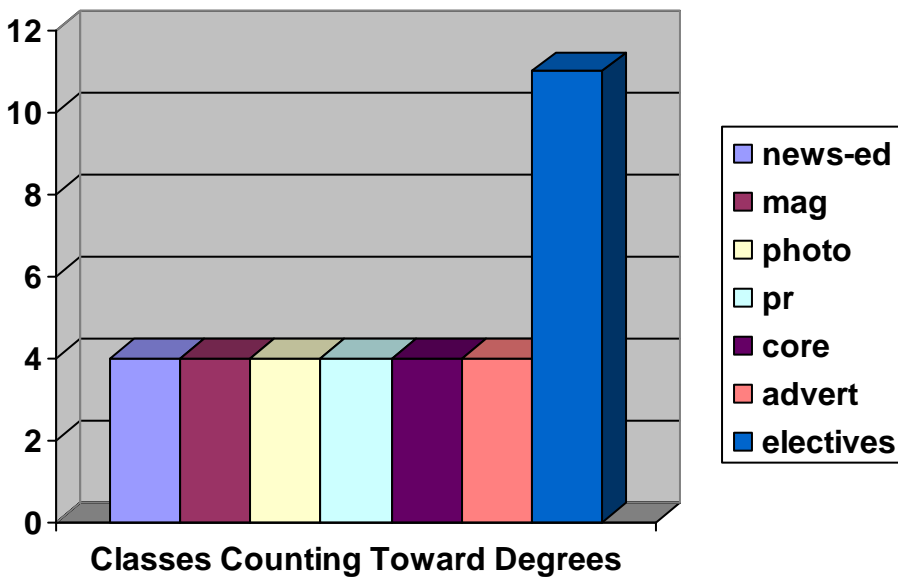
# A COMPARISON OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS OFFERED

## Figure 6: DEPARTMENTAL CURRICULUM



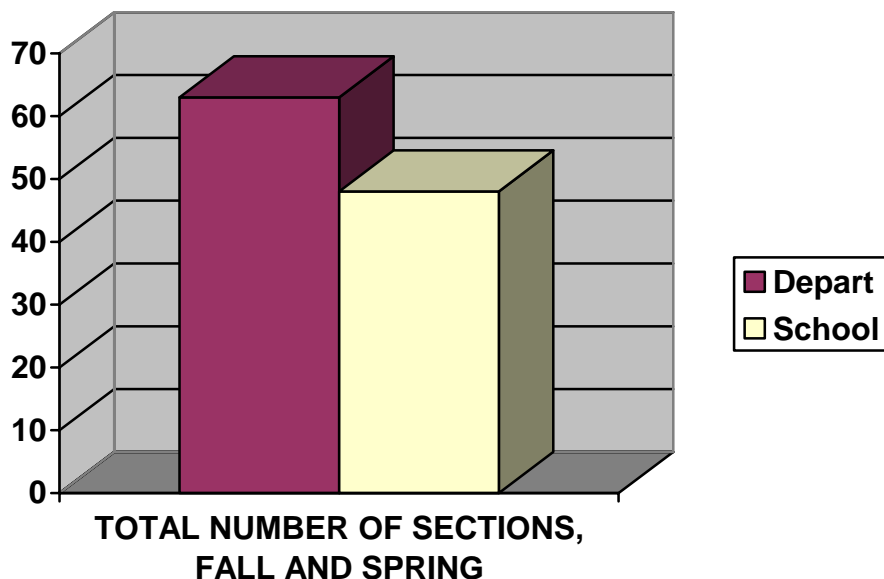
TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS, FALL AND SPRING: 59-64

## Figure 7: SCHOOL CURRICULUM



TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS, FALL AND SPRING: 45-50

**Figure 8: Comparison of Sections Per Academic Year**



Note: Savings of 14 sections per year can go into electives or graduate program. Moreover, school curriculum is balanced across emphases, easier to schedule, and allows for more student-input on course selection, among other benefits.

## **Final thoughts**

At first blush the analysis done here might seem to be at the expense of the news-editorial sequence; but, in reality, that sequence would gain a course in the school structure. Moreover, in a school structure, news-ed professors get to work at a more advanced and in-depth level with students in their own discipline rather than teaching students from so many other disciplines. Also the option of shared electives would allow the news-ed sequence to delve into such courses as sports writing or investigative reporting with the proviso that such electives would be scheduled on a fair rotation basis with other shared electives.

The school model also allows for a more in-depth experience for teachers and students in other emphases as new electives are added and/or rotated in public relations, magazine, photojournalism, etc. The in-depth experience also creates an ideal occasion for professionals in residence, when sufficient funding is forthcoming from outside friends and benefactors.

Students benefit from clearly envisioning their requirements, which can also increase 4-year graduation rates. Also scheduling becomes easier because students can fulfill degree programs via shared electives.

The school model is more flexible than the department model. For instance, students can focus on one emphasis or program or seek a convergence model in a plan of study that features a major and a minor media platform. In other words, a student might major in advertising as his or her primary platform but also concentrate courses in a magazine or an EMS emphasis for a more converged experience.

How does this relate to assessment? A well-structured school curriculum begins with outcomes statements on the first syllabus of a beginning class and ends with a capstone portfolio class that has a direct-measure component—critiques by external members of the profession, say. Moreover, outcomes on syllabi, course descriptions in catalogues, and indirect and direct measures of upper level and portfolio classes can have *an aligned focus*. In essence, those statements, descriptions, courses and capstone class, when assessed as a plan of study, should “total” something tangible in keeping with a unit’s service or educational mission. Students and accreditors should be able to envision all this at a glance.

With a savings in FTE, pooling resources, a school structure might be able to position the Greenlee School for a Ph.D. program in Science and Risk Communication, an initiative enjoying unanimous faculty support.

Finally, Sharon Iorio, one of the top curricular experts in journalism and communication, who spoke at our retreat, responded to an early draft of this analysis of a department vs., school structure.

She wrote:

“I think the (school vs. departmental) comparisons give an accurate picture of the two ways of organizing a program. I thought the graphs were quite nice visual representations of the different approaches. All that I would add is that, from my experiences with various school and departmental curricula here at Wichita State University, when school curriculum is adopted the core has always been standard across sequences/majors with regard to hours and courses; while the must haves or sequence requirements have varied slightly (not always been a uniform number of hours across all sequences/majors, but varied by one course up or down from the average). This was thought necessary to accommodate the different needs for preparing students within the individual sequences.”