

Pre-Mass Comm Major Focus Group 1



Kimberly Brimm
Jalyssa Elleby
Sierra Johnson

Purpose and Objectives

To understand what kind of students are attracted to the School of Mass Communications.

- 🍏 To explore why students choose mass communication and the journalism and telecommunications sequences.
- 🍏 To discover what students expect to learn in their classes
- 🍏 To understand students perspectives about what it is like .to work in the journalism and telecommunications fields.
- 🍏 To explore the benefits of a USF School of Mass Communications education.

Methodology

In order for our team to get the information that we needed, we conducted a focus group with other classmates. The participants were recruited from a Mass Communication and Society class taught by Professor Batchelor and the other an Intro to Telecommunications class taught by Professor Temples. Although our PUR 3500 class was split up into two big groups, our particular group only had the opportunity to conduct one focus group. The focus group was conducted March 9, 2009, and lasted for about thirty minutes. The types of students that were involved in our focus group were freshman's who were looking into the field of Telecommunications. There were five participants in our focus group.

To support the focus group, the technology the team used was using a video camera. The incentives that the team offered the participants were free pizza and free refreshments.

The participants that were involved in this focus group were: Jennifer E., Olivia, Leslie, Jessica and Jennifer.

Results

- 🍏 **To explore why student choose mass communication and the journalism and telecommunications sequences.**

Several of the participants who choose the journalisms and telecommunications sequences were interested in writing.

"I like writing and I know there's a lot of writing involved, but not too much and it's easier than being in straight journalism." -Jessica

Another popular reason why respondents chose their major was because they were interested in working in front and behind the scenes

"I want to have my own T.V. show."-Olivia

"I want to work behind the scenes and I first got into it in high school." -Leslie

Some of the respondent got involved in their field in high school and chose to pursue it as a major

"I first got into it in high school with T.V. production and thought the whole outlook of mass communications is really interesting and it didn't require much math or science, so..."-Leslie

Results Continued

🍏 To discover what students expect to learn in their classes

Most respondents were interested in the hands on aspect of their classes.

"Anything that will teach me how to work with the cameras, the handheld stuff I'm looking forward to."

"I like when professors lecture and then test on their lectures but also take you outside of the classroom and show you real world stuff."

Some respondents stated that there were a couple of classes that they were not looking forward to.

"I'm dreading taking electronic field production just because I just started working with cameras so I know it's a lot of different stuff."

"I'm in critical thinking right now and I didn't think it was going to be that bad, but now that I'm in it I absolutely hate it, so...yeah I definitely."

Respondents who were in the telecommunications sequence were afraid to be in front of the camera despite the fact that they wanted to be on air talent.

"Once I hit 12, I hated being on camera I still don't like seeing myself on camera that often."
-Jessica

🍏 To understand students perspective about what it is like to work in the journalism and telecommunications fields.

Several participants felt that in order to land a job they had to have the proper skills as well as stand out in the field

"You have to be like creative like, do it before somebody else does it." Olivia

"A lot of companies are going to one-man bands style reporters so you have to know how to shoot your own, edit your own stuff, um write your own stuff and be on camera." -Jessica

All respondents agreed that their first job in their field will be something in a small market and low paying.

"What do you consider to be a realistic job in this field after graduation?" -Moderator

"A reporter in the middle of nowhere." - Leslie

- ...somewhere low" Jennifer E

Even though they were in the beginning stages of their sequence they had job they hope to reach one day

"...broadcast I write/produce a radio show everyday, that's what I want to do" -Jennifer E.

Results Continued

"I wanna... Rachel Ray, in corporate daily life, but like have more the actual intellectual twist to it, that will like help college character, just an adult, they should know these things,,I don't know something like that."-Olivia

"I would love to be a director on one of the morning shows...the dream." -Leslie

🍏To explore the benefits of a USF School of Mass Communications education

Many respondents said the location of USF help them choose to attend the university.

"Well, I think one main advantage is the area. Tampa is the best in Florida for what we want to do, so it is the number one advantage right there. We have all these opportunities in Tampa."
-Leslie

"I went to Port Gulf Coast my freshman year and it is an hour and a half away from my home, and that was too far for me. So I came here and my brother was going to school here at the time. So I wanted to go to a bigger school, and it was closer"-Jessica

Some participants perceptions were changed about their field once they started to learn more about it.

"A lot of them like what I have learned about media, it's almost like you don't like it. But you are sitting there telling yourself that you want to be apart of it. You have this internal conflict that you are going to be the bearer of bad news, you know?"-Olivia

Conclusion

Overall, the students didn't really know that much about journalism or telecommunications and the majority chose to attend USF because the location was convenient for them. When asked for their reasoning behind wanting to be a journalism or telecomm major, most students gave general answers like, they like writing, or it seemed interesting. They did like the fact that math and science weren't involved but many expressed their interest in having their own television show or working behind the scenes. Most students that were interested in the telecomm sequence were involved with something similar in high school, so they just wanted to continue along that path.

When asked about the classes that they were looking forward to or the expectations they had, students pointed out that they are waiting to get the hands on experience. Some did acknowledge that it would be challenging learning new material and working with the equipment, and so far some of the classes haven't turned out the way they initially thought they would.

All of the students shared similar answers when it came to what they thought the work field would be like. Having the appropriate skills, standing out, being creative, and being able to work across the board were the most common answers. They also expected to start off in a low paying telecomm job in a small/isolated area, with the understanding that they will have to work their way up.

Some did have mixed feelings about how stable the field would be in the future, however, they did have some big dreams for what direction they wanted their careers to go. Their dreams jobs ranged from being the director of a morning show, to broadcasting daily radio shows, to being an intellectual Rachel Ray.