RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION TO CHANGE ITS NAME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Recommendation for Action

That the name of the Department of Mass Communication be changed to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication effective Semester 3, 1998-99.

Rationale

First, the new name will describe more accurately what the department teaches. Although two of the department’s four sub-majors focus on journalism (the four sub-majors are Print Journalism, Broadcast Journalism, Public Relations, and Media Studies), nothing in the department’s name suggests that it is the site of journalism education at UWM. Students who are wondering where to find instruction in journalism on campus sometimes have a hard time finding it.

Second, the new name would clarify the department’s mission for high school students interested in journalism who wish to attend a UW System campus. UW--Eau Claire has a Department of Communication and Journalism. UW--Madison has a School of Journalism and Mass Communication located within its College of Letters and Science. UW--Oshkosh has a Department of Journalism, as does UW--River Falls. The name change would communicate clearly to interested high school students in southeast Wisconsin that they need not travel to Madison or even farther to receive journalism education; it is available right here at UWM.

Third, the new name would help department graduates when they compete for journalism jobs with students from programs that have the explicit “journalism” label. At the moment, UWM journalism students have to explain to prospective employers that they really did go through an intensive journalism program. The name change would eliminate some of the confusion.

Finally, the name change would represent a link with the department’s proud past. The current Department of Mass Communication is the result of a 1970 merger between the (at the time) long-established Department of Journalism and the more recently created radio-television concentration in the then-Department of Speech Communication. Much has changed since 1970, but one constant is that a principal focus of the department’s activities is journalism. The department wishes to communicate that message with its name as well as with its curriculum.

Approved unanimously by the faculty of the Department of Mass Communication, July 27, 1998