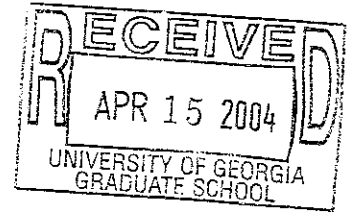




The University of Georgia

College of Journalism and Mass Communication



April 13, 2004

Dean Maureen Grasso  
Graduate School  
Boyd Building  
UGA Campus

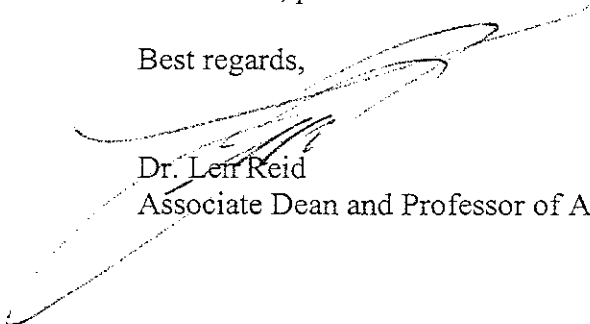
Dear Dean Grasso:

Enclosed are copies of a proposal to deactivate the Grady College's MMC degree. Attached to the proposal are three documents: (1) a table of MA/MS/MMC degree programs in journalism & mass communication; (2) recommendation from the College's ad hoc committee pertaining to the MA and MMC degree programs; and (3) comments from three assessment surveys of Grady graduate students.

The proposal was developed in accordance with the information posted at [www.curriculumsystems.uga.edu/Policies/aaps4.html](http://www.curriculumsystems.uga.edu/Policies/aaps4.html). As required, I submit the copies to you for proper routing.

If you require any additional information, please contact me.

Best regards,



Dr. Leif Reid

Associate Dean and Professor of Advertising

4/13/04

**Deactivation of the Master of Mass Communication (MMC) Degree  
Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication  
The University of Georgia**

**I. Basic Information**

1. University of Georgia  
April 5, 2004
1. Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication
2. NA
3. Master of Mass Communication (MMC)
4. Deactivation of MMC Degree Program
5. August, 2004
6. Abstract of MMC Program

In the 1980s, the Grady College proposed adding a non-thesis option to the College's MA degree program. The Graduate College disapproved the MA non-thesis proposal, but offered an alternative – Grady could offer a non-thesis degree: the MMC.

The MMC was approved as a professional degree. In the *UGA Graduate Bulletin*, the degree is described as follows:

*The Master of Mass Communication degree serves those students whose career goals indicate that additional course work will be more advantageous to them than the completion of the traditional thesis that is required of the Master of Arts. The additional course work provides the opportunity for more breadth and depth of exposure to areas which lay the foundations of career development whether in additional mass communication courses or in cognate courses that tie into the candidate's goals. A total of 33 semester hours of graduate course work are required to complete the program.*

The MMC is listed in the *UGA Graduate Bulletin* with the Professional Degrees. This listing conveys to prospects that the MMC is something

that it is not – a skills training-oriented degree program. Both the MA and MMC are professional degrees by definition – the two programs deal with the structure, performance, and issues of mass media industries, but the focus is on theory, research, and managerial topics.

The difference between the MA and MMC degrees is two courses – MA students complete 9 courses and write a thesis; MMC students complete 11 courses and do not write a thesis.

## **IX. Conditions for Deactivation of MMC Program**

### **2. Reasons for Deactivating**

- a. The Grady College is one of two universities/colleges to offer the MMC degree. The other is the University of South Carolina. Peer institutions offer thesis and non-thesis options in their MS or MA programs in JMC (see attachment on JMC programs).
- b. An ad hoc self-study committee recommended the elimination of the MMC degree program. The graduate faculty of the Grady College voted unanimously to deactivate the MMC program (see ad hoc Self-Study attachment).
- c. Program assessment surveys and forums held with MA and MMC students reveal that enrolled students are dissatisfied with the MMC degree program. The chief complaint is that program focuses on theory/research, not on skills training (see attachment on assessment survey comments).
- d. Enrolled and prospective have a misperception about the MMC degree. Although it is clearly communicated in Grady information materials (e.g., homepage, brochure, interpersonal contacts, etc.) that the focus is on theory/research, and despite our efforts to communicate otherwise, students enroll thinking that the MMC provides skills training (i.e., many want a second undergraduate degree and think the MMC will serve that purpose).

### **3. Program Completion of Enrolled MMC Students**

Enrolled students will finish their degree programs without disruption. MMC select from the same JMC graduate seminars and courses as MA students.

#### 4. Impact on Faculty Lives

The impact on faculty lives will be positive: (1) faculty will have no dissatisfied MMC students in their graduate courses (e.g., complaining about too much theory/research) and (2) the size of graduate seminars and courses will decrease from 25 or more students per seminar to 12 to 15 students.

#### 5. Impact on Other Grady Degree Programs

Deactivation of the MMC program will have no impact on the Ph.D. program. The impact on the MA program will be positive – the learning environment and educational experience of MA students will improve. There will be no MMC students in graduate courses complaining about course/program content.

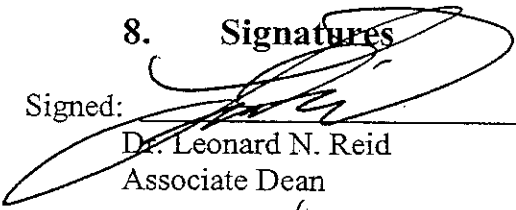
Deactivation of the MMC program may reduce graduate student enrollment at the master's level. However, elimination of MMC students will likely be offset by the admission of more MA students.

#### 6. Future Plans for Deactivation Degree Program


The Grady College will submit a proposal for an MA non-thesis option. If that proposal is approved, the MMC will not be reactivated. If the non-thesis proposal is disapproved, the MMC may or may not be activated.

#### 8. Signatures


Signed:



Dr. Leonard N. Reid  
Associate Dean



Dr. John Soloski  
Dean



Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School

## Comments From Assessment Surveys

### 2000-01 Survey

MMC students expressed dissatisfaction with the orientation of their programs: their criticism centered on the fact that there is too much focus on theoretical and methodological dimensions and not enough focus on the practical aspects of mass communication practices.

### 2001-02 Survey

Once again, MMC students expressed the strongest dissatisfactions. Their dissatisfaction was, as it has been over the years, linked to the orientation of the program -- that there is too much focus on theoretical and methodological dimensions and not enough focus on the practical aspects of mass communication practices.

### 2002-03 Survey

Once again, MMC students expressed the overwhelming majority of the complaints. Their dissatisfaction was, as it has been over the years, linked to the orientation of the program -- that there is too much focus on theoretical and methodological dimensions and not enough focus on the practical aspects of mass communication practices.

## Master's Degree Programs in Journalism and Mass Communications

<u>University</u>	<u>Thesis Degree (hours)</u>	<u>Non-thesis Degree option (hours)</u>	<u>MMC</u>
Alabama	MA (30)	MA (33)	
Arkansas	MA (30)	no	
California	no	MJ (36)	
California State-Fullerton	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Central Florida	MA (30)	MA (33)	
Colorado	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Columbia	no	MS (30-34)	
Florida	MA (30)	MA (32)	
Florida State	MA (33)	MA (36)	
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>MA (30)</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>33 hours</b>
Illinois	MS (9 units)	MS (9 units)	
Indiana	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Iowa	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Iowa State	MS (32)	MS (32)	
Kansas	MS (36)	MS (36)	
Kentucky	MC (30)	MC (30)	
Louisiana State	<b>MMC (31)</b>	<b>no</b>	
Marquette	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Maryland	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Miami	MA (30)	MA (36)	
Michigan State	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Minnesota	MA (37)	MA (32)	
Missouri	MA (42-43)	MA (42-43)	
Nebraska	MA (30)	MA (36)	
Nevada/Las Vegas	MA (30)	MA (36)	
North Carolina	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Ohio State*	MA (45)	MA (45)	

Ohio*	MS (49)	MS (53)	
Oklahoma	MA (30)	MA (33)	
Oregon*	MA/MS (46)	MA/MS (46)	
Penn State	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Southern California	MA (40)	MA (40)	
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>MA (30)</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>33 hours</b>
Stanford*	MA (45)	MA (45)	
Syracuse	MA (36)	MA (36)	
Tennessee	MS (30)	MS (33)	
Texas	MA (36)	MA (33)	
Texas Tech	MA (31)	MA (37)	
Utah	MA/MS (30)	MA/MS (33)	
VCU	no	MA (37)	
Washington State	MA (33)	MA (36)	
West Virginia	MS (30)	MS (36)	
Wisconsin	MA (24)	MA (30)	

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\* quarter system; under quarter system our degrees were: MA (50), MMC (55)

\*\* 39 of 43 programs have non-thesis option

\*\*\* 2 of 43 programs have Master of Mass Communication, non-thesis degree

## Comparison of Peer Programs

<u>University</u>	<u>Thesis Degree (hours)</u>	<u>Non-thesis Degree option (hours)</u>	<u>MMC</u>
Alabama	MA (30)	MA (33)	
Florida	MA (30)	MA (32)	
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>MA (30)</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>33 hours</b>
Illinois	MS (9 units)	MS (9 units)	
Indiana	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Iowa	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Michigan State	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Minnesota	MA (37)	MA (32)	
Missouri	MA (42-43)	MA (42-43)	
North Carolina	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Penn State	MA (30)	MA (30)	
Stanford*	MA (45)	MA (45)	
Syracuse	MA (36)	MA (36)	
Tennessee	MS (30)	MS (33)	
Texas	MA (36)	MA (33)	
Wisconsin	MA (24)	MA (30)	

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\* Of 16 peer programs, only UGA is without a non-thesis MA option and with a MMC.



## THE MA PROGRAM

### Recommendations:

- 1) The MMC degree will be phased out as the current entering class completes its work. Appropriate adjustments will be made to all descriptive literature and websites.
- 2) In the fall term of 2003 The Grady College will design an appropriate non-thesis MA degree and will petition the Graduate School for permission to implement the degree. This degree will not replace the MA with Thesis. The non-thesis MA will be designed to assist those students whose primary interest may be to enter the media industries rather than proceed to further advanced study. But as indicated below, the non-thesis MA will be designed in keeping with the primary goals of the graduate programs in the Grady College, and will be described as a research based degree.
- 3) The MA degree program will be recognized as a Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication degree rather than as separate "departmental" degrees. Following completion of two common, required foundation courses, the MA degree will reflect "custom tailored" programs of study developed from graduate seminars and courses offered by the College and from graduate course electives offered by other UGA academic units.

### Rationales:

The Grady MA is a research-based degree. It is the case, however, that the MMC degree (which so far as the review committee can determine is offered by only one other institution, the University of South Carolina), is often perceived by students as a "professional" degree in the narrow sense of that term. Students entering the MMC frequently seem to be seeking training of the sort provided to Grady undergraduates. Despite written descriptions and personal counseling, the misperception remains, and varying levels of dissatisfaction emerge.

The MMC was instituted, in part, because the UGA Graduate School has not traditionally permitted a "non-thesis MA" option. Advice from the Graduate School has suggested that this restriction need no longer apply if peer institutions offer a non-thesis option in our fields. Examination of programs at 43 institutions offering degrees in journalism and mass communication found that 39 of these offer a non-thesis MA option. This will be the basis of a petition for such a degree in Grady. (Arkansas, Georgia, LSU, and South Carolina are the four programs requiring theses for all MA students.)

As a result of this change, emphasis will continue to be on theory, research, and managerial decision making within mass media industries and within the academic disciplines related to the study of mass communication and to a range of specialty fields such as advertising, journalism, public relations, telecommunications, and media studies broadly defined.

The degree requirements will emphasize the integration of 1) mass communication theory, 2) research methods, and 3) application of theory and research in both industrial and academic

settings. The basic goal of the MA program is to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills, while enhancing understanding of mass communicators and audiences, content and media of mass communication, communication systems and processes, effects of mass communication on individuals, social groups and cultures as well as the uses of mass communication in these same contexts.

The degree is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- 1) To develop in each student an advanced and critical understanding of various theories and methods applied in the study of mass communication institutions, processes, and effects.
- 2) To develop in each student the ability to advance managerial decision making and useful knowledge within mass media organizations and/or within the discipline of mass communication studies and its specialty fields using these same theories and methods.
- 3) To prepare each student for careers in mass media organizations or for further graduate study.

Following completion of JRMC 8000 (Proseminar in Mass Communication) and JRMC 8010 (Research Methodology in Mass Communication), students, in consultation with advisors, will design a degree program from JMC and cognate seminars and courses selected to meet particular career goals and aspirations.

*FOR EXAMPLE*, students are free to build programs that might focus on ...

- ...management and/or research methods in advertising, public relations, telecommunications, audience analysis, health communication, journalism.
- ...political communication and public opinion
- ...mass communication theory and methods
- ...journalism techniques and practices
- ...cultural and critical theories and approaches to mass communication
- ...media history
- ...emerging media technologies
- ...media economics
- ...legal and ethical issues in mass communication

Note again, these are merely examples. We anticipate that some students will continue to concentrate their work in departments, completing a specified sequence of courses. Others, however, will move across departments as in the case of the existing Media Studies concentration. Any student may be held to appropriate prerequisite requirements, however, which may necessitate a departmental focus for those desiring advanced courses.

The goals of these changes are to clarify the aims and requirements of the current MA degree and to open that degree for those students seeking a broad-based, but advanced approach to the study of mass communication.

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