

Indiana State University

Student Publications

A Report Analyzing Satisfaction Surveys Conducted with Students and Editors Taking Part in the Indiana Associated Press Managing Editors- Hoosier State Press Association Foundation Job Fair, Feb. 2, 2008, Ball State University

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Introduction

The Office of Student Publications at Indiana State University offered to survey college students and newspaper editors attending a statewide journalism job fair that is conducted annually. The 2008 job fair was conducted Feb. 2 on the campus of Ball State University. Approximately 110 students attended to interview with approximately 44 editors. The great majority of students had pre-registered with specific newspapers or news organizations in which they had interest.

Student Publications' goal in conducting these surveys was to assist the job fair's sponsoring groups — which are the Indiana Associated Press Managing Editors and the Hoosier State Press Association Foundation — in assessing the value of the job fair both to students seeking employment and editors seeking employees. The IAPME is an association of editors and managers who subscribe to and contribute to the Associated Press news report through the Indiana AP's headquarters in Indianapolis. The HSPAF, also based in Indianapolis, is the developmental arm of a statewide advocacy and support organization designed to advance the editorial and financial missions of the state's daily

and nondaily newspapers.

The surveys were distributed, in paper format, to editors at their job fair interview tables and to students at the job fair registration table. No attempt at randomness was applied to these surveys, so their findings cannot be generalized to all students and/or all editors who attended the job fair. Still, the findings may be instructive.

In addition to this report, the job fair organizers are being provided with the complete results.

Scope of the surveys

Two survey forms, one for students and one for editors, were developed with strong input from leaders of the sponsoring groups.

The surveys sought to determine such factors as:

- editors' and students' overall satisfaction with the job fair
- editors' and students' suggestions for improvements that would strengthen the job fair
- what attributes editors and students expected from each other, both during interviews and on the job
- how students and editors judged the other's performance during interviews
- whether editors had hired students based on interviews conducted at previous job fairs
- how long editors (or their news organizations) had been attending the annual job fair
- how important multimedia experience is both to editors and students

An overview of the students surveyed

Of approximately 110 students attending the job fair, 36, or 32.7 percent, completed the survey.

- By class rank, 55.5% were seniors, 16.7% sophomores, 13.9% juniors, 8.3% "other" (two graduate students, one December 2007 graduate) and 5.6% freshmen.
- Nearly two-thirds (61.1%) came from public four-year universities; 38.9% came from private four-year schools.
- Nearly two-thirds (64.28%) reported journalistic majors of various descriptions; 35.72% reported non-journalistic majors.
- An even third of the students had already had at least one internship on a professional newspaper.
- Other previous media work experience included 8.3% who had held a full-time newspaper job, 5.6% who had held a part-time newspaper job and 2.8% each who reported full-time work or an internship with a broadcast outlet.
- †Still, 55.6% came to the job fair having had no "real world" media internships, full-time jobs or part-time jobs.
- A slightly greater number, 58.3% came to the job fair seeking internships.
- Nearly as many, 50%, sought full-time jobs.

- 8.3% sought “other” — freelance writing or, as one said, “just here for advice and info.”
- 5.6% sought a part-time job.
- †As might be expected because this was a job fair at which students knew they would be interviewing with newspaper editors (and not, for example, broadcast managers), newspaper work as a reporter, editor or photographer ranked as the students’ No. 1 employment goal when they were asked to rank “career options.” Other options included magazine, Web, public relations, broadcast, teaching (both high school and college), advertising, marketing and jobs outside media.
- Of the students surveyed, 86.1% had worked on their college newspaper, and for an average of 3.6 semesters.
- That was five times higher than the next closest college media experience cited: 16.7% cited both for having worked for the college news magazine (2.5-semester average) and for the college Web medium (1.7-semester average).

An overview of the editors surveyed

Of approximately 44 editors attending the job fair, 17, or 32.7 percent, completed the survey. About these editors:

- By daily circulation levels, 41.1% represented papers of circulations between 20,000 and 30,000; 23.5% came from papers with circulations of less than 10,000; 11.8% came from papers of 10,000 to 20,000 circulation; 7.8% were from papers in the 60,000-70,000 level; 5.9% came from papers in the 30,000-40,000 range. (Again, these are daily, and not Sunday, circulation levels.)
- All of the papers were dailies.
- More than half (52.9%) of the editors reported that a representative of their news organization had attended the job fair either between 11 and 15 years (23.5%) or for 16 or more years (29.4%); another 35.3% reported 2 to 5 years’ attendance; 11.8% reported 6 to 10 years’ attendance.
- More than a third of the editors said their organizations had, at previous job fairs, hired either for an internship (42.1%) or a full-time job (36.8%).
- 15.8% said they had gathered resumes for future openings but had not hired based on job fair interviews.
- †In terms of the 2008 job fair, 70.6% said they came to the event to interview for internships, and 41.2% of editors said they came to interview for “immediate job opening (s).” (The editors were allowed multiple responses, so the numbers do not add to 100%.)
- A majority of editors also reported they were interviewing for other than immediate job openings or internships: 76.5% for hiring “beyond the next six months” and 74.7% for anticipated openings “within the next six months.”
- Other reasons cited for their attending the job fair: 47.1% cited both their desire to network with fellow editors and to support IAPME and HSPAF; 41.2% said they wanted to gauge the quality of current students.

Quantity of interviews — the students’ perspectives

Two survey questions asked students how many editors they interviewed with and

how satisfied the students were with those quantities. Those questions revealed:

- Students interviewed with an average of 7.3 interviewers.
- The highest number of interviews reported by a student was 16; the lowest was 2.
- Nearly 95% of the students reported satisfaction with the number of interviews: 54.3% were “very satisfied” and 40% were “moderately satisfied.”
- †5.7% were “moderately dissatisfied,” but none were “very dissatisfied.”

Quantity of interviews — the editors’ perspectives

Likewise, two survey questions asked editors how many students they interviewed with and how satisfied the editors were with those quantities. The results:

- Editors interviewed with an average of 24.9 students.
- The highest number of interviews reported was 35; the lowest was 12.
- All editors reported being satisfied with the quantity interviewed: 70.6% said they were “very satisfied” and 29.4% said they were “moderately satisfied.”

Attributes sought in an employer — the students’ perspective

The student survey asked: “What in your view are the three most important attributes a potential employer should possess to help you make a successful transition from college media to the next level?” Because of the question’s open-ended nature and its multiple-response format, the responses are more qualitative than quantitative. Accordingly, little attempt is made to grade the responses numerically other than to count responses. All told, 36 responses were given from 26 students; 10 students did not attempt to answer the question, for whatever reasons.

In summary, students indicated strong desire for a continuing support system from editors: mentoring, patience, approachability, new employee orientation, on-the-job training, willingness to teach and open-mindedness to new ideas, among others.

One student expressed a common desire for the editor’s “availability [and a] willingness to work closely with new employees and answer questions.” Another sought “continued guidance to allow me to grow as a journalist.”

Attributes sought in an employee — the editors’ perspective

The editor survey asked: “What in your view are the three most important attributes a college journalist must possess to attract your attention as a potential employee or intern?” Here again, because of this question’s open-ended nature and its multiple-response format, the responses are more qualitative than quantitative. And again, little attempt is made to grade the responses numerically other than to count responses. All told, 50 responses were given from 17 editors.

In summary, editors placed great emphasis on journalistic instincts such as curiosity (the most-often cited attribute) and “passion for journalism” (second-most-often cited attribute).

Great emphasis was also placed on multimedia experience. One editor cited the need for applicants to show the “ability to cross platforms of editing, design, web.” Another looked for “versatility – the ability to be skilled in various aspects of the newsroom.”

Also prominently cited were: enthusiasm; creativity; writing skills; willingness to work hard; ethical journalistic practice; commitment to fairness and accuracy; a “calling for journalism”; and an “indication that student is working toward gaining a well-rounded experience.”

How students assessed editors — and how editors assessed students

When interviewer and interviewee sit across a table from one another and a job is potentially on the line, they form a nexus where expectations can synchronize, contrast or clash.

To gather students’ and editors’ perspectives on this issue, the surveys asked parallel questions.

Students were asked: “Think of all of the editors with whom you interviewed at this year’s job fair. Overall, how would you rate them collectively, using a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being the highest), on these criteria:

“A) Their responsiveness to your questions and their concern about your individual situation

“B) Their advice concerning the current media job market

“C) Their feedback on your resume, cover letter and/or work samples

“D) Their clarity in describing the positions they have available or expect to have available

“E) Their explanations of expectations they hold for new hires, especially those right out of college

“F) Their professionalism during interactions with you”

Editors were asked: “Now, think of the quality of the students you interviewed at this year’s job fair. Overall, how would you rate them collectively, using a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being the highest) on these criteria:

“A) Classroom preparedness for the current professional work force

“B) Preparedness through publication experience for the current professional work force

“C) Awareness of the changing nature of newspapers (new media, economic pressures, etc.)

“D) Interview preparation for the job fair

“E) Interview performance during the job fair

“F) Quality of resumes and cover letters presented at the job fair

“G) Quality of story samples and portfolios presented at job fair”

The results here contain a significant contrast: Overall, students rated the editors lower on their listed criteria than editors rated the students on their listed criteria.

Cumulatively (for criteria A-F listed on previous page), students gave editors these average ratings*:

- 33.33% 4 Excellent
- 42.33% 3 Good
- 20% 2 Fair
- 3.33% 1 Poor

Comparatively, editors gave students these average scores* for criteria A-G (listed on previous page):

- 26.89% 4 Excellent
- 58.83% 3 Good
- 14.29% 2 Fair
- 0% 1 Poor

In sum:

- Editors earned a combined 75.66% average for grades of excellent and good, compared with a combined 85.72% average for excellent and good earned by students in the editors' ratings of them. Students, thus, graded editors 10 percentage points more negatively than editors graded students.

- Editors were graded at a combined 23.33% for fair and poor, compared with a combined 14.29% for fair and poor that students earned from their interviewers. Again, students graded editors considerably more negatively (in this case 9 percentage points) than editors graded students.

Students gave editors their highest ratings for being responsive to their questions and for being attuned to the student's individual situation (27.8% excellent, 63.9% good) and for their professionalism (72.2% excellent, 25% good).

Students gave their lowest ratings to editors in the areas of advice concerning the current media job market (25.7% fair and 2.8% poor compared with 27.8% excellent); feedback on resume, cover letter and work samples (32.4% fair and 8.8% poor compared with 32.4% excellent); descriptions of current or anticipated openings (22.2% fair and 2.8% poor compared with 27.8 excellent); and descriptions of expectations for newly hired employees (28.6% fair and 5.6% poor compared with 22.9% excellent).

These fair and poor scores were statistical evidence of qualitative concerns students cited about some of their interviewers. In response to an open-ended question that asked about their concerns, students wrote:

- "There were no design/graphics editors on hand."
- "Only one [editor] gave me advice on my resume and clips."
- "One [editor] did not even look at my work before interviewing."
- "It seems like a catch-22, you need experience to get experience, but no one wants to take a chance on you."

Students also were asked to categorize, generally, the apparent hiring intentions of the editors with whom they interviewed. More than a third (37.5%) of the students surveyed said that most editors "seemed to be interviewing for openings expected within the next six months." Nearly another third (31.3%) responded that most editors "seemed to be gathering resumes for their files only." About one-sixth (15.6%) reported that most editors "seemed to have jobs or internships for which they were actively hiring"; another 15.6% said that most editors "seemed to be interviewing for possible openings beyond the next six months."

Editors gave students highest ratings for their "awareness of the changing nature of newspapers (new media, economic pressures, etc.)" — 100% combined between excellent (41.2%) and good (58.8%). Editors also gave students high ratings for their interview performance and for the quality of their resumes and cover letters. Both earned a combined excellent-plus-good rating of 94.1%. Editors also gave students a combined excellent-plus-good score of 88.2% for their interview preparation.

Students received lower scores for how well classroom and college publication experiences appear to have prepared them for the work force. Classroom preparedness was graded at 23.5% fair, compared with 29.4% excellent; college publication experience

was rated 29.4% fair, compared with the same percentage excellent; work sample presentation was rated at 23.5% poor compared with 11.8% excellent.

Editors were asked to list specific strengths and weaknesses they saw in students they interviewed.

Among strengths they noted:

- “Diverse portfolios: designers do web and print, reporters do videos, etc.”
- “A good base of writing experience for college and professional papers”
- “Very talented in page layout/graphics reporting — OUTSTANDING”
- “Awareness of the tight job market”
- “Willingness to consider range of jobs and newspaper sizes”
- “Tech savvy”
- “Well prepared, good interviews”

Among weaknesses they noted:

- “[Lack of] experience in covering significant spot news and not having a variety of reporting experience”
- “Some students two years behind regarding practice or hands-on experience”
- “Some indecision on career paths”
- “Not a lot of good questions asked”
- “Some had cumbersome portfolios.”
- “More writing students need more video and audio experience.”
- “Lack of experience beyond college publications (although it has improved) ”
- “[Interview] preparation—knowledge of the communities where newspapers are based”
- “Writing”
- “Not enough quality clips”

* These averages were reached by adding together the percentages cited for each of the four grading levels (excellent, good, fair and poor) and dividing those by the number of criteria (six for students, seven for editors). Example: In the editor survey, the percentages for “excellent” ratings were 29.4 (A), 29.4 (B), 41.2 (C), 23.5 (D), 23.5 (E), 29.4 (F) and 11.8 (G). The total of those percentages is 188.2. That number divided by 7 = 26.89.

Editors’ advice on resumes, cover letters and work samples

Surveyed editors were asked to offer advice to students to help them in their job searches — specifically advice on resumes, cover letters and work samples/portfolios.

Here are some of their suggestions.

On what they look for in a quality resume:

- “A good resume tells me, or helps me, see the amount of determinism the candidate has.”
- “Relevant variety of experiences, skills and other relevant qualities (Spanish, numbers, etc.), not just classes”
- “Like a newspaper design: easy to follow, easy to read”
- “Keep it concise.”
- “Proofread—reference name had transposed letters.”
- “Make their graduation date more prominent.”

On what they expect from a cover letter:

- “Show knowledge of the publication you are writing to.”
- †“Be bold! Tell us why we need you! Bowl us over with your skills.”
- “Get the name of the paper correct.”
- “Spell names correctly.”
- “No typos”
- †“Succinct statement of goal”
- “Highlight [your] qualifications.”
- “Indicate flexibility.”
- “[Show] passion for telling a story in all ways.”
- “[Demonstrate] writing qualities.”

On what they want from work samples:

- “Multimedia—only received two CD/DVDs and only a couple of portfolio

URLs. Want to see good work in action!”

- †“Variety of clips and other work, not just features!”
- †“Both design/writing/clips, not just one”
- †“Restraint in the number of clips (no more than six, please)”
- †“Only put in the best. Rather see two great clips than 10 clips that feature briefs, are repetitive”
- “Put it on a disc I can take with me!”
- “Have copies available.”

The value of multimedia experience — the editors’ perspective

In today’s news media world, where the online Web seems to be overtaking the printed web, how important are multimedia skills to surveyed editors who interviewed at the job fair?

Editors were asked: “In today’s media environment, how important to your news organization, on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being the highest), is multimedia experience (video/audio production, Web page development, blogging, podcasting, etc.)?”

More than two-thirds (68.75%) of editors surveyed reported that such skills are very important. Another quarter (precisely 25%) found those skills moderately important. A minority (6.25%) reported that multimedia skills are moderately unimportant.

These comments also were instructive:

- “New hires must have multimedia skills.”
- †“We probably wouldn’t hire an applicant without it.”
- “It’s growing in importance. We need to find ways to make money from it.”

The value of multimedia experience — the students’ perspective

Responses from surveyed students indicate there is a high level of just the kind of multimedia experiences that editors said they desire.

When asked to identify multimedia skills they possessed, nearly three-fourths (70%) reported they could assemble photo slide shows; 56.7% said they could create a “reader/user blogging feature”; 46.7% said they could both shoot video and record audio; 23.3% said they could both edit video and prepare a podcast; 20% said they could edit

audio.

About a third (30%) reported knowledge of Web and design editing formats (HTML, CSS, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, interactive graphics).

Overall assessment of job fair — the students' perspective

Bottom line, how did surveyed students attending the job fair grade it?

Students were asked: "Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being the highest), how would rate the quality of this year's IAPME/HSPAF Job Fair?"

"Excellent" was the response of 42.9% "Good" was the answer from 54.3%. The combined excellent-plus-good response was 97.2%.

In another question, students were asked: "Considering all factors, was this year's IAPME/HSPAF Job Fair worth your time and effort to attend?"

In response, 80% of students answered "yes." Curiously, 17.1% did not respond, suggesting, perhaps, that they did not understand the question. Or, it being the last question, perhaps survey fatigue had set in and they did not give the question their full attention.

Qualitatively, the question about the job fair being worth students' time and effort received several complimentary answers:

- † "Yes, because I was able to network and find out a little about some Indiana daily publications."
- "Yes, it's important to meet face-to-face with potential employers."
- "Yes, I gained a lot of practical advice, and I feel much more informed about positions available in this industry."
- † "Yes! I talked to a number of potential employers, enjoyed the keynote speaker's address and learned a lot about the field. Thank you!"
- "Yes. I learned a lot and it was valuable interview experience!"
- † "Yes, I feel more confident and prepared for other interviews I might have later on, and I have made some good contacts."
- † "Yes. Getting an opportunity to converse with several real-world people is always worthwhile."

The question received no negative responses — unless one counts the answer "none" as negative, but that seems more unresponsive to the question than anything else.

Overall assessment of job fair — the editors' perspective

Likewise, how did surveyed editors attending the job fair grade it?

Editors were asked: "Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being the highest), how would rate the quality of this year's IAPME/HSPAF Job Fair?"

The editors' assessment of the job fair exceeded even the 92.2% excellent-plus-good rating given it by the students. Surveyed editors gave the event a combined excellent-plus-good rating of 100% — 70.6% excellent and 29.4% good.

Editors also were asked to list the event's strengths and weaknesses. Some responses:
Strengths:

- "[The] number of talented students, the variety of their interests, number of colleges, and number of papers"

- “Organiz[ation], great facility”
- “Good format; love the resume book”
- “Like the format. Busy ’til 4 p.m.! Good to sit with students.”
- “A lot of hungry people who seem willing to please and learn”
- “The quality of page designers”
- “Strong newspaper interest”
- “Promotion of event”
- “Luncheon speaker”

Weaknesses:

- “Too many interviews this year”
- “Mind-numbing by the end of the day”
- “Weather is always lousy this time of year. Could it be held later?”
- “Too many students think they can graduate and go to work at The Indianapolis Star. Define irony: The Star today interviewed 25 people for 0 openings. Small dailies interviewed a fraction and have many more opportunities.”
- “Need a better way to stick to the schedule (particularly in the afternoon session)”
- “Name tags for students would be nice.”
- “No-shows”
- “Pizza could have been better.”

Suggestions for improvement — the students’ perspective

Surveyed students were asked how they believed the job fair could be improved.

Here are selected responses:

About interviewers:

- †“Have publications from Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Kentucky if possible.”
- “Enforce the appointment schedule.”
- “Bring people who are actually hiring.”
- “[Provide] a wider variety, including TV and radio broadcasting opportunities, as well as magazine and web opportunities.”
- †“Tell interviewers to be more up-front about what jobs they have available and what qualifications they are looking for.”

About logistics:

- “[Provide] extra chairs in the interview room so students don’t have to stand while waiting for interviews.”
- “The assembly hall [lunch] echoed, so it was kind of hard to hear and understand the speaker.”
- “The [interview] room was a bit noisy.”
- “[Serve] fruit to balance out the pizza!”
- “Hold job fair on multiple days in case of foul weather.”

Suggestions for improvement — the editors’ perspective

Surveyed editors also were asked to offer suggestions concerning how they believed the event could be improved. Selected responses:

- †“Lengthen interview slots or add more breaks.”

- “Formalize the time limit.”
- “The lunch/overflow idea was good, but by the time I got to my table it was filled with newspaper reps!”
- “[Offer] classes on preparing resumes/interviewing.”
- “Invite a broader range of applicants”
- “[Have job fairs] in both spring and fall?”
- “This is a wonderful event!”

Discussion, analysis and conclusions

The results of the two surveys described here call for several points to be emphasized and for conclusions to be drawn:

- Surveyed editors and students clearly and unabashedly agree that the IAPME-HSPAJ job fair approaches excellence when all factors are considered. As earlier noted, the excellent-plus-good ratings from surveyed editors reached 100% — 70.6% excellent, 29.4% good. Students rated the job fair slightly lower, but still their excellent-plus-good rating was 97.2% — 42.9% excellent, 54.3% good. The individuals and organizations planning, hosting and conducting this job fair can take pride that these survey results, as far as they can be generalized, strongly support the long-held view that the job fair is first rate and is of wide service to students, editors, news organizations, colleges/universities and the news industry generally.

- In that spirit, the suggestions for improvement offered by editors and students seem wholly constructive and reachable without major adjustments on the part of the sponsoring organizations. Some suggestions, such as adding broadcast or magazines to the interviewer mix, may be beyond the mission of the two sponsoring organizations; may not. But other suggestions — such as lengthening interview slots, adding another break and providing chairs for students while they are waiting to be interviewed — would seem to be far easier to accomplish.

- It appears interviewers at the job fair presented to students a wide range of circulation sizes and publication schedules — some dailies as small as 5,000 circulation, a couple of papers at the 60,000-plus level with seven-day publishing schedules, and several in between those extremes. Students looking for community journalism opportunities would seem to have had several choices.

- The purpose for the job fair — that is, facilitating the placement of students on the news staffs that need them and providing experience to what we can hope become the working journalists of tomorrow — is validated by at least two results. First, 55.6% of the students have had no “real world” internships or jobs. As aspiring professionals, they certainly can profit from working in an Indiana newsroom. Second, 70.6% of editors came to the job fair looking for interns and 41.2% came to interview for “immediate job openings.” The needs of the newspaper job market are real, and these students can help Indiana’s news organizations fulfill their missions.

- There also is ample evidence that editors had found many hires at previous IAPME-HSPAJ job fairs: 42.1% of editors’ organizations had hired interns; 36.8% had in the past hired full-time staff members from the job fair. At the same time, those percentages would be more impressive if both were 50% or higher.

- Still, great numbers of the editors were interviewing for future possibilities. That is entirely understandable and reflects the economy of today’s newspapers where jobs are

not plentiful and in fact are declining in many respects. Too, as any editor or manager knows, many applicants are not qualified for the positions they seek.

- The job fair enjoys long-lasting support from the news organizations whose editors attended the job fair. More than half of the represented companies have, their editors report, sent interviewers to the job fair for at least 11 years and possibly more than 16 years. The job fair must be returning considerable value to the news organizations to justify that kind of continued commitment.

- Surveyed editors and students found a sufficient quantity of interview opportunities, with slight exception. At least one editor, in fact, found too many interviewees for the time available. More than 70% of editors and more than 50% of students were “very satisfied” with the quantity of interviews; 29.4% of editors and 40% of students were “moderately satisfied” with the quantity.

- Sink-or-swim won’t work as a newsroom philosophy with these students. They seek editors who consistently mentor them, practice patience, demonstrate approachability, give them constructive feedback, understand their newness, find training for them, give them the freedom to perfect their craft and respect their new ideas.

- Editors, in looking for hires, seek people with traditional newsroom values such as curiosity, passion for the “calling” of journalism, creativity, ethical practice, hard work.

- The nurturing that students desire and the traditional news instincts editors espouse may lead to newsroom conflicts if student-employees and editors don’t find a lexicon in which what some will call touchy-feely cannot be made to coexist with a production-driven, news-values agenda. The happy news: strip away a couple of crusty layers from the old editor stereotype and there is a probably an experienced, helpful mentor underneath. To effectively communicate, motivate and maximize interns or just-out-of-college hires, some editors will need to change their approach — without changing the goal: high-quality, community-service journalism. These two orientations need not be mutually exclusive.

- †Further evidence of this student desire for nurturing comes in surveyed students’ ratings of interviewers who, in those students’ views, gave short shrift to reviewing their resumes, clips and related topics during interview sessions. More than a quarter (25.7%) rated interviewers, in the aggregate, only “fair” in the area of offering advice concerning the current job market; another 2.8% gave a rating of poor. Nearly a third (32.4%) rated their interviewers “fair” (and another 8.8% “poor”) in giving feedback about their resume, cover letter and work samples. In terms of expectations for new hires, surveyed students gave a 28.6% “fair” rating to interviewers and a 5.6% “poor” rating. Surveyed students gave a 22.% “fair” rating and 2.8% “poor” rating to interviews for their descriptions of current or anticipated job openings. Some editors may wonder if the students want cheese with their wine, but when a quarter to a third of students give these reactions, editors need to take note and adjust. These perceived shortcomings may arise from a shortage of time during interviews. Obviously, interviewers want to get to their questions to determine which applicants might meet their needs. But perhaps a minute or two spent on feedback and explanations might answer these students’ concerns.

- On the plus side, students gave editor-interviewers high ratings for being responsive to questions and attuned to their individual situations (27.8% excellent, 63.9% good) and for their professionalism (72.2% excellent, 25% good).

- Editors gave students their lowest ratings in the areas of preparedness for the work force. More than a quarter of editors rated the students they interviewed, in the aggregate,

as 29.4% “fair” in the area of experience on college publications; 23.5% rated students “fair” in terms of classroom preparedness. When roughly a quarter of editors, who bring decades of employment interviewing to the job fair tables, find these weaknesses, journalism educators and their students need to take note. A student going into a job interview without having worked on the campus newspaper, magazine or Web medium is at a decided disadvantage and shows a perceived lack of initiative and true interest in journalism.

- The great majority of editors gave students high marks for their understanding of the changing nature of the job market, the effects of new media and the status of the news industry economy. On this topic, editors rated students 41.2% excellent and 58.8% good. Editors also gave students high ratings on interview preparation, interview performance and the quality of resumes and cover letters.

- Editors who are looking for potential hires who possess multimedia awareness and experience would seem to have a ready market before them emanating from Indiana’s colleges and universities. At least responses from surveyed editors and students support that assertion. Of multimedia experience, one surveyed editor wrote, “We probably would not hire an applicant without it.” More than two-thirds (68.75%) of surveyed editors reported that multimedia skills are “very important” in would-be hires. Another quarter rated those skills as “moderately important.” A significant portion of surveyed students reported at least some experience with facets of multimedia — online photo slideshows, blogging, podcasting, shooting video, recording audio and editing both video and audio. College students will, of course, be an increasingly fertile source for experience in these areas; each successive mini-generation of students comes to the university better prepared in multimedia than were their recent predecessors.

- These observations lead to a final conclusion. The IAPME-HSPAJ Job Fair continues to earn its reputation as a must-attend event, both for editors seeking new employees to add dimension to their newsrooms and for college students seeking work opportunities and perspectives on the news business that they are exploring in their classrooms and within their student publications. The event is widely praised for its level of organization. It facilitates well what could be a chaotic and frustrating situation. The few concerns noted about various aspects of the event are minor and the fixes are reachable. This job fair provides an invaluable reality test to students, many of whom are yet unfamiliar with the real world workplace. It exposes editors to new perspectives on such topics as new media. It probably points out to all parties flaws in the business and flaws in the education. That exchange of perspectives is invaluable. Editors need students, students need editors. The IAPME-HSPAJ Job Fair earns high marks from its constituents — both groups of which are preconditioned to be critical — and the survey evidence supports the view that the job fair very well meets the needs it exists to serve.