Print Media Analysis: Franklin and Marshall College
January 2006 – December 2012
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This report presents data from a search of print media stories about Franklin and Marshall College from January 2006 to December 2012. The data in this summary was compiled by Center for Opinion Research staff using the Lexis-Nexis database. Center staff reviewed every newspaper story mentioning Franklin and Marshall College within the Lexis-Nexis database that appeared between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2012. This analysis shows that while Franklin and Marshall College is recognized nationally because of its alumni, staff, and students, the College’s polling activities are a primary reason for print media coverage of the College. While local newspapers concentrate on the sporting achievements, Franklin and Marshall College’s polling activities are highly recognized as well, particularly among national print media outlets.

Center staff identified an average of 1,598 unique stories per year that included the search terms “Franklin and Marshall” between 2006 and 2012. Stories about the College most often cover either sports or the Franklin and Marshall College Poll, with references to the Franklin and Marshall College Poll representing about 25% of all media coverage of F&M in the last seven years. Such recognition is visible in newspapers throughout the United States. Franklin and Marshall College Poll stories tend to peak in April/May and October/November, coinciding with the primary and general elections (see Figure 1). The peak in F&M Poll stories was the highest during April and October of 2008, an election year that included both a contested presidential primary and general election in Pennsylvania.

Figure 1: Distribution of print media stories referencing Franklin and Marshall College by year.
Coverage for sports teams has increased since 2006, while mentions of specific students have declined. This may be due to the Diplomats national playoff appearances in Lacrosse and Basketball in 2009. Sports stories accounted for 55% of the news print media coverage of F&M that year, compared to the average of 35%. Our alumni recognition tends to hover around 5% and professors/staff recognition is around 7% of the coverage each year.

The College’s presence in major dailies like the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Boston Globe, is significantly increased because of the Poll (see Figure 2). On average, 44 stories about the College appear in a major daily each year and the largest proportion of those stories is about the Franklin and Marshall College Poll.

*Figure 2:* Distribution of major print media stories referencing F&M by year and type.

Besides coverage of sports teams, the Franklin and Marshall College Poll is a mainstay of print reporting about the college. While stories about the Poll are seasonal, coinciding with the state’s election calendar, there is always reporting about the Poll regardless of the time of year.

This analysis includes a narrow scope of media hits generated by the Franklin and Marshall College Poll. First, this analysis does not count stories unless they are unique; therefore, an Associated Press wire story about the Poll is only counted once even though it might appear in multiple papers across the country. Second, this analysis does not include any data about radio, television, or Internet stories about the college or Franklin and Marshall College Poll. We believe references to the F&M Poll in the electronic media are likely to exceed the number of newspaper stories about the Poll. Still, even a look at a narrow media sector demonstrates the F&M Poll’s value to the College’s efforts to increase its visibility locally, regionally, and nationally.