

## Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC  
Undergraduate program  
2016-2017

Name of Institution: **University of Mississippi**

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Jeffrey S. Vitter, chancellor**

Name of Unit: **Meek School of Journalism and New Media**

Name and Title of Administrator: **Will Norton Jr., dean**

Date of 2016 - 2017 Accrediting Visit: **Oct. 30-Nov. 3, 2016**

If the unit is currently accredited, please provide the following information:

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **Feb. 20-23, 2011**

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: **Reaccreditation**

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: **Reaccreditation**

Recommendation by 2016 - 2017 Visiting Team: **Reaccreditation**

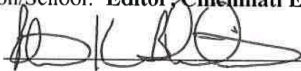
*Prepared and submitted by:*

### Team Chair

Name and Title: **Peter Bhatia**

Organization/School: **Editor, Cincinnati Enquirer**

Signature

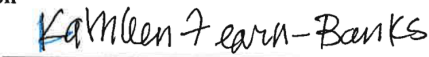


### Team Members

Name and Title: **Kathleen Fearn-Banks**

Organization/School: **Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Washington**

Signature



Name and Title: **Michel Haigh**

Organization/School: **Associate Professor, College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University**

Signature



## PART I: General information

Name of Institution: University of Mississippi  
Name of Unit: Meek School of Journalism & New Media  
Year of Visit: AY 2016-2017

### 1. Check regional association by which the institution now is accredited.

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

### 2. Indicate the institution's type of control; check more than one if necessary.

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

### 3. Provide assurance that the institution has legal authorization to provide education beyond the secondary level in your state.

The University of Mississippi was created by act of the Legislature on 02/20/1844 and admitted students in 1848. It received SACS accreditation on 07/01/1900.

### 4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?

- Yes
- No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: 02/20-23/2011.

### 5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC?

1975

### 6. Attach a copy of the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

As an academic unit of the University of Mississippi, the Meek School of Journalism and New Media will lead and excel by engaging minds, transforming lives, serving others and encouraging intellectual curiosity grounded in free expression and critical thinking . Rev 10-13-2014

**7. What are the type and length of terms?**

Semesters of 14 weeks  
Summer sessions of four weeks  
Intersessions of two weeks

**8. Check the programs offered in journalism/mass communications:**

Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree  
 Ph.D. degree

**9. List the specific degrees being reviewed by ACEJMC. \*Indicate online degrees.**

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (BAJ) (seeking renewal)  
Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications (BSIMC) (seeking initial)

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:**

(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)  
Both degrees require 124 semester hours.

**11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.**

Three (3) semester hours

**12. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered and give the name of the person in charge.**

Name of Sequence or Specialty Person in Charge  
Bachelor of Arts In Journalism (major) Debora Wenger  
News-Editorial (emphasis) Debora Wenger  
Broadcast (emphasis) Debora Wenger  
Public Relations (specialization) Debora Wenger  
Magazine Publishing (specialization) Debora Wenger  
Media Management (specialization) Debora Wenger

Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing  
Communications (major) Scott Fiene  
Public Relations (specialization) Scott Fiene  
Magazine Publishing (specialization) Scott Fiene  
Media Management (specialization) Scott Fiene

**13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:**

20,827 (including regionals/excluding medical center)

**14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence and total (if the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total):**

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Undergraduate majors</u>
Bachelor of Arts In Journalism	448
Unclassified (pre-emphasis)	102
News-Editorial (emphasis)	118
Broadcast (emphasis)	228
Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing	
Communications	874
Public Relations (specialization)	67
Magazine Publishing (specialization)	24
Media Management (specialization)	7
Total	1,322

NOTE: Official numbers for Fall 2016 have become available. They are 460 in the Bachelor of Arts in Journalism degree program and 964 in the Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications degree program. The total rises by 12 in BAJ and 90 in BSIMC.

Fall 2016 Total 1,424 (+102 or 7.7%)

**15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Attach separate pages if necessary. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (Campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

<u>Jour 102 Introduction to Multimedia Writing</u>	<u>Spring 2016</u>	<u>Fall 2016</u>
Section 1	16	-
Section 2	17	19
Section 3	17	20
Section 4	17	20
Section 5	17	18
Section 6	17	20
Section 7	17	16
Section 8	4*	18
Section 11	-	20

*\*Section 8 of Jour 102 was combined in Spring 2016 with Section 5 of IMC 205 (total 14) and limited to students in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.*

Jour 271 News Reporting

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	-	-
Section 2	20	8
Section 3	16	15
Section 4	19	17
Section 5	-	-
Section 6	-	11
Section 7	-	18
Section 8	19	-

Jour 273 Creative Visual Thinking

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	20	20
Section 2	20	20
Section 3	20	20
Section 4	20	19
Section 5	20	20
Section 6	-	20
Section 7	20	20
Section 8	20	19
Section 9	20	-
Section 10	20	18
Section 11	-	19

Jour 375 Photojournalism

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	17	17
Section 2	16	-
Section 3	18	-
Section 4	15	-
Section 5	-	19
Section 6	-	-
Section 7	-	17

Jour 377 Advanced Reporting

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	16	-
Section 2	8	19
Section 3	-	19

Jour 378 TV Reporting

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	11	11
Section 2	13	19

<u>Jour 379 Editing</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	14	18
Section 2	15	18

<u>Jour 403 Advanced Photojournalism</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	10	-

<u>Jour 472 Feature Writing</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	20	13

<u>Jour 480 Advanced TV Reporting</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	16	0
Section 2	16	14
Section 3	-	8

<u>Jour 500 Journalism Innovation</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	19	14
Section 2	19	17
Section 3	19	15

<u>Jour 577 Depth Reporting</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	13	-

<u>IMC 205 Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications</u>		
	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	18	17
Section 2	20	20
Section 3	20	20
Section 4	20	20
Section 5	10*	20
Section 6	20	20
Section 7	20	-
Section 8	20	20
Section 9	20	19
Section 10	13	18
Section 11	20	18
Section 12	19	17
Section 13	20	20
Section 14	18	16
Web 1 (online)	-	19

*\*Section 8 of Jour 102 in Spring 2016 was combined with Section 5 of IMC 205 (total 14) and limited to students in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.*

IMC 390 Introduction to Writing for Advertising

	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Section 1	18	20
Section 2	20	20
Section 3	18	19
Section 4	18	20
Section 5	18	17
Section 6	20	20
Section 7	19	17
Section 8	20	20
Section 9	-	20
Section 10	-	20
Section 11	-	20

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2016-2017 academic year:**

\$4,705,146

**Percentage increase or decrease in three years: +19.11**

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$1,994,200**

	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017*</b>
Teaching salaries (FT)	\$1,327,467	\$1,446,073	\$1,841,323	\$1,994,200
Adjunct instructors	251,270	213,773	331,700	348,865
Non-payroll	\$1,618,410	\$1,573,743	\$1,685,517	\$1,629,630
Payroll	\$2,230,110	\$2,268,481	\$2,898,330	\$3,075,516
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,848,520</b>	<b>\$3,842,224</b>	<b>\$4,583,847</b>	<b>\$4,705,146</b>

**Percent Change from 2013-2014** +/- 0 +19.3 +2.65

**Percent Change from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017: +22.26**

\*2016-2017 figures are anticipated. (The university announced a general round of budget reductions in October.)

**17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.**

Spring 2016 (28 total)

Professors (5)

Will Norton

Brad Schultz

Samir Husni

Nancy Dupont

Joe Atkins

Associate Professors (5)

Kathleen Wickham

Kristen Swain

Debora Wenger (sabbatical in Spring 2016)

Curtis Wilkie\*

Mark Dolan

Assistant Professors (12)

Patricia Thompson*	Cynthia Joyce	Chris Sparks
Charles Mitchell	Mikki Harris	Robert Magee
James Lumpp	Vanessa Gregory	* <i>Not tenure track</i>
Scott Fiene	Alysia Steele	
Darren Sanefski	Evangeline Robinson	

Instructors (6)

Robin Street (senior lecturer)	Emily Bowen-Moore
R.J. Morgan	Jennifer Sadler
Mike Tonos	Jason Cain

Fall 2016 (including rank changes) (29 total)

Professors (6)

Will Norton	Joe Atkins	Nancy Dupont
Samir Husni	Brad Schultz	Kathleen Wickham

Associate Professors (5)

Debora Wenger	Kristen Swain	Charles Mitchell
Mark Dolan	Curtis Wilkie*	* <i>not tenure track</i>

Assistant Professors (10)

Patricia Thompson*	Mikki Harris	Chris Sparks
Scott Fiene	Vanessa Gregory	Robert Magee
Darren Sanefski	Alysia Steele	* <i>not tenure track</i>
Cynthia Joyce	Evangeline Robinson	

Instructors (8)

Robin Street (senior lecturer)	Emily Bowen-Moore	Ji Hoon Heo*
R.J. Morgan	Jennifer Sadler	* <i>unofficial until 1-1-2017</i>
Mike Tonos	Jason Cain	
	John Baker	

*Net Changes: From Spring to Fall, the Meek School gained one professor via promotion and one associate professor via promotion. The school lost one assistant professor to retirement and gained two instructors. At the time of the site visit, searches are underway for one assistant professor (tenure track) and one instructor.*

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2016. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2016.**

Spring 2016 (28)

Andrew Abernathy	Ann Becker	Allison Estes
Joseph Abide	Mark Burson	Stefanie Goodwiller
Angela Atkins	Yulia Churakova	Jim Goodwin



Debbie Hall  
 Amy Ingram  
 Timothy Ivy  
 Will Jacks  
 Ellen Kellum  
 Andy Knaf  
 Maury Lane

Ellen Meacham  
 Abigail Meisel  
 Mary Randall  
 Bill Rose  
 Kevin Seddon  
 Bobby Steele  
 Michael Thompson

Summer Hill-Vinson  
 Peyton Warrington  
 Rachel West  
 Phil West  
 Ryan Whittington

Fall 2016 (29)

Andrew Abernathy  
 Joe Abide  
 Angela Atkins  
 Ann Becker  
 Allison Buchanan  
 Mark Burson\*  
 Bill Dabney  
 Allison Estes  
 Roy Frostenson\*  
 Stefanie Goodwiller

Debbie Hall  
 Claire Hick-Nelson  
 Summer Hill-Vinson  
 Timothy Ivy  
 Will Jacks  
 Ellen Kellum  
 Andy Knaf  
 Joshua McCoy  
 Ellen Meacham  
 Lareeca Rucker

Lucy Schultze  
 Steve Sowers  
 Bobby Steele  
 Christina Steube  
 Michael Thompson  
 Jane Walton  
 Peyton Warrington  
 Rachel West  
 Kathryn York

- *\*Burson leads a career preparation seminar for IMC and develops contacts for jobs/internships*
- *\*\*Frostenson is assistant director of student media /teaches media sales 1 time per year*
- *\*\*\* Guest teachers in May Intersession have included Lee Tyner, university attorney, for Media Law and Randall Pinkston, \*Burson leads a career preparation seminar for IMC and develops contacts for jobs/internships*

**19. Schools on the semester system:**

**For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.**

Year	Total Graduates	Number	Percent
2015-2016 academic year	204*	204	100
2014-2015 academic year	159**	159	100

\* as of Aug. 1, 2016 BAJ-78; BSIMC-126 \*\* BAJ-71; BSIMC-88

## **PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration**

*The policies and practices of the unit ensure that it has an effectively and fairly administered working and learning environment.*

The Meek School of Journalism and New Media was founded in 2009, continuing a tradition of journalism education at the University of Mississippi that dates to 1947. Ole Miss is the flagship university of the state, dating to 1848. ACEJMC has accredited the Meek School and its predecessors since 1975. A \$5.3 million gift from Dr. Ed and Becky Meek endowed the creation of the school independent from its previous home in the College of Liberal Arts.

The school is also home to the Overby Center for the Study of Southern Journalism and Politics, funded by a Freedom Forum \$5 million gift that also allowed the renovation of the school's primary home, Farley Hall.

The school has seen explosive growth since the arrival of the current dean (who is on his second tour of duty at Ole Miss), a curricular overhaul, and, most important, the introduction of a B.S. degree in Integrated Marketing Communications, approved by trustees in 2010, in addition to the existing B.A. degree in Journalism. The school reported 445 total majors in spring 2010. That had grown to 1,424 majors by fall 2016, more than tripling. It has generally been the fastest-growing unit since its creation among the 14 that make up the university. IMC majors are roughly double the number in journalism. The school's budget grew 22.26 percent from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017. (There are professional and academic master's programs in the school, but they are not up for review.)

The growth has not come without stress, even as it fulfills the school's vision of staying up to speed on the rapidly evolving worlds of journalism and strategic communication while never losing sight of the importance of the values of free expression. Facilities – Farley Hall and Bishop Hall, where student media (part of the school) are based -- were both designed for about a third of what they now house. Growth means the percentage of adjuncts has grown, too, though this is partly attributable to an increase in the percentage of faculty on tenure track and release time for scholarship and service.

The popularity of the IMC major has won support from the university. This includes faculty growth from roughly 20 FTEs in 2009-2010 to 29 in 2016-2017. Three new faculty lines were approved for 2016-2017.

The school used the self-study process to address some ongoing concerns. The university approved a new, full-time assistant dean for student services in response to problems with tracking of students. The new assistant dean began work in October 2015 and has responsibility for that tracking, scholarship management, advising of new and transfer undergraduate students, among other duties. The self-study work also led to new focus on recruitment of students of color and a refocusing on ACEJMC's core values and competencies in IMC courses.

Will Norton Jr. has served as dean of the Meek School since its creation. He previously served as department chair from 1979-90. The associate dean for academics and operations and assistant dean of student media report directly to the dean. The director of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association, the director of the Mississippi Center for Freedom of Information and the director of Magazine Innovation Center all report to the dean. All are part of the school. The program directors for the

bachelor's degree programs in journalism and integrated marketing communications report to the associate dean.

The student newspaper, founded in 1911, is part of the school, as are a radio station, nightly TV newscast, and the yearbook. Student media positions are paid. The assistant dean of student media, her staff and faculty are resources and advisers for student media.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.**

The strategic plan, last revised in 2014, begins with clear articulations of vision, mission, and priorities:

*OUR VISION*

*The Meek School is a global community of truth seekers and storytellers, dedicated to instilling standards of professional excellence and guiding students in pursuit of meaningful careers.*

*OUR MISSION*

*As an academic unit of the University of Mississippi, the Meek School of Journalism and New Media will lead and excel by engaging minds, transforming lives, serving others and encouraging intellectual curiosity grounded in free expression and critical thinking.*

*OUR PRIORITIES*

- *Attract top talent – both students and faculty;*
- *Inspire and engage students and the larger communications audience, either in the classroom or with the creative and scholarly work we produce; and*
- *Cultivate lifelong relationships with graduates, supporters and those in the profession.*

An executive summary sets clear parameters for strategy:

*The assumptions and context within which these strategic initiatives will occur are as follows:*

- *The Bachelor of Arts in Journalism program will stabilize at about 450 students. Curriculum will continue to emphasize the basic principles – strong and accurate reporting, clear writing and thoughtful editing – while also focusing on such new elements as data-driven and visual journalism, audience engagement and analytics and the business of journalism/entrepreneurship.*
- *The Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications will grow to more than 1,000 undergraduate and 100 graduate students, with additional focus on digital media, database marketing and analytics. The IMC undergraduate program will include new specializations and the IMC graduate*

*program (currently a track in Journalism) will become its own degree.*

- *Although the BSIMC and BAJ are separate degree programs, there will continue to be many synergies between the two in terms of course offerings, curriculum, faculty and more. Combined, the school will have a full-time faculty of about 30 (plus adjuncts and others) who will teach more than 100 course sections a semester. There also will be additional advising and placement staff. Accreditation will be a priority.*
- *Distance learning, online classes, MOOCs and other initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for students – as well as increasing the footprint of the school – will become more prominent.*
- *Additional partnerships will be formed with alumni, media and marketing professionals and others to expand learning opportunities beyond the walls of the school.*
- *A new or significantly expanded facility eventually will be needed to house the school.*

*The media and marketing communications landscape is changing. As such, this plan will evolve as needed. However, the faculty and deans will reference this document as the framework to guide decisions.*

Specific objectives and tactics tied to the priorities, and importantly, specific measurables, follow. Here are excerpts of an example:

*Objective One — Increase awareness and recruitment of prospective students, especially high-aptitude students diverse in terms of race, culture and life experience.*

*Tactics to achieve:*

- *Maintain and distribute accurate program descriptions and other recruitment materials in digital form on the school's website and in printed form as part of the recruitment process.*
- *Support and document significant work produced and awards and other honors won by students and faculty in the Meek School.*
- *Establish and maintain contact with prospective students identified:*
  - *At recruiting events of the Office of Admissions, with special attention to those for Opportunity Scholars (underserved populations);*
  - *At events for National Merit Scholars, through Summer College programs of the Division of Outreach;*
  - *At regional and national scholastic press events and other programs, including but not limited to the Freedom Forum Diversity Institute's Free Spirit Conference;*
  - *By alumni recruiters.*
- *Reserve and dedicate a substantial portion of the school's scholarship or other enrichment funds for Meek School majors enrolled in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College or as Provost Scholars.*

- *Expand the role of the Meek School-based Mississippi Scholastic Press Association in recruiting students. The focus will be broadened to include students who have an interest in both media and integrated marketing communications careers. Efforts will include skills workshops for high school students and advisers and scholarships through MSPA for high-performing high school students who enroll in the Meek School.*
- *Endorse and support financially the work of Meek School or campus organizations that help build a sense of community for students, particularly those serving international and/or minority students, such as the UMABJ and others.*
- *Explore the possibility of creating an initiative designed to attract minority students to degrees in Integrated Marketing Communication.*

*Metrics for Success:*

- *Uniformity and clarity of public information about the Meek School and its programs will be achieved and maintained across all platforms. (Dean's office):*
- *Select faculty research, publications and recognitions will have been documented in news releases and in digital media. (Research Committee)*
- *Select student awards and recognitions will have been documented in news releases and in digital media. (SMC director)*
- *The Meek School will have recorded a 100 percent participation rate at all campus browse fairs, college preview days and other events (Dean's office):*
- *Letters and school information will be sent to prospective students identified at conferences and conventions. (Dean's office)*
- *Correspondence will be established and maintained with any and all students identified as prospective undergraduates by alumni. (Dean's office)*
- *Students of color will match or exceed the proportion in the university. Optimally, the proportion of African-American students will mirror or exceed Mississippi demographics. (Diversity Committee)*
- *The average entering ACT score for Meek School students will trend upward at least .1 percentage point each year. (Dean's office)*
- *The average four year-retention rate will trend upward at least 1 percentage point each year. (Advising director)*

**b) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.**

Sections of the school's bylaws clearly spell out the faculty's responsibilities:

*The School of Journalism and New Media is administered through a system of shared governance between the school administration and the school faculty. In developing policy and procedures and in administering the school, the administration and the faculty may consult with students, alumni of the school and members of the communication industry, when appropriate.*

*The faculty shall be the primary policy-setting body. The faculty may establish rules and procedures governing all aspects of the academic programs of the school and may advise the school administration*

*on any other matter. Such rules and regulations shall be published and generally available to interested persons. Rules and regulations of the school faculty shall take effect on their adoption unless otherwise stated. The faculty may establish standing and temporary committees, designate the manner of their appointment and delegate to them such authority, as it deems appropriate.*

And the dean's:

*The dean is the officer primarily charged with the administration of the school. The dean is the presiding officer of the school faculty and the chief adviser to the provost in regard to the school's welfare and shall be in general charge, under the provost, of the administrative work of the school. The dean shall submit recommendations to the office of the provost concerning the appointment, reappointment, non-reappointment, promotion, granting of continuous appointment, demotion, transfer, dismissal or removal of members of the school faculty and staff. All requisitions chargeable to funds apportioned to the school are subject to approval by the dean or the dean's designee.*

*In preparing budgetary recommendations or in recommending the appointment, reappointment, non-reappointment, promotion, granting of continuous appointment, demotion, transfer, dismissal, or removal of members of the school faculty, the dean shall consult with the appropriate committee of the school faculty. If the recommendation of the committee differs from the dean's recommendation, the dean shall so inform the provost.*

There were four faculty meetings during the 2015-2016 academic year. Faculty serve on 10 committees as well as committees stipulated in the bylaws such as Undergraduate Curriculum/Assessment, Promotion and Tenure, and Graduate Faculty.

**c) The unit's administration provides effective leadership within the unit and effectively represents it in dealings with university administration outside the unit and constituencies external to the university.**

The rapid growth of the school has not been without some issues, although they pale in comparison to the school's success. The dean's commitment to a faculty more balanced between Ph.D.s and professionals has led to some dissent among the longer-term tenured faculty. Nonetheless, the dean wins widespread praise for his vision and execution both inside and outside of the school, and, of course, for the school's dramatic growth. This includes central administration. One colleague suggested he had the energy of 10 undergraduates. Another noted the dean has been successful in getting more resources for the school, including faculty, has been a successful fundraiser and has strongly improved the student experience through a variety of experiential journalism programs (some overseas). Very happy students affirm the latter. The dean has wisely placed much of the day-to-day management of the school in the hands of his associate dean, assistant deans and the program leads for journalism and IMC to allow more of his focus on fundraising and alumni. He credits them with able leadership and outstanding hiring decisions. The strength of the leadership team is noticed outside the school on campus. The dean, campus colleagues say, is the leader the school needed and has done exactly what needed to be done. His extraordinary commitment to students and his countless contacts in industry are given effusive praise by alumni. They note he writes 600 handwritten notes a year to admitted students and many have stories of how he personally got them internships when they were undergraduates.

**d) The institution and/or the unit defines and uses a process for selecting and evaluating its administrators.**

Administrators are selected through the familiar search-committee process with the selection decision made by the provost. Administrators are evaluated every four years. The dean was reviewed and reappointed in 2014; the associate dean in 2015.

**e) Faculty, staff and students have avenues to express concerns and have them addressed.**

Formal grievance procedures exist for faculty, staff, and students. The processes are clearly laid out, assuming a resolution cannot be reached in an informal manner. Faculty grievances can advance to formal hearings and ultimately, an appeal to the chancellor. Faculty salary appointment/reappointment issues are not allowed to be grieved. Tenure and promotion-related appeals go to a university committee. A similar process exists for staff, with appeal to the chancellor the final possibility. Students also have the right to take their complaints to the senior leadership of the university. A formal grade appeal process exists. Grade appeals are initially heard by a panel of three senior school faculty.

The university also is part of a system-wide portal that allows anonymous ethics complaints to be made.

**SUMMARY:** The dramatic growth of the Meek School is a remarkable achievement, with credit where credit is due to the dean and his leadership team. The student experience has improved, fueled by faculty growth and strong hires.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

*The unit provides curriculum and instruction, whether on site or online, that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution.**

The school offers two undergraduate degrees: a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (BAJ) and a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications (BSIMC). The school also offers a graduate program in journalism with three separate tracks: academic, professional, and Integrated Marketing Communications. The graduate program is not in the purview of this assessment, but it is important to note because undergraduate students use a number of 500-level courses to complete their bachelor's requirements.

Students seeking a BAJ must take at least 51 hours of general education courses and complete a minor outside the school. Those seeking a BSIMC degree are required to take a minimum of 48 hours of general education requirements plus 24 hours of business courses, which meets the business minor requirements, for a total of 72 hours outside the school.

The school includes this requirement on its checklist for degree completion, and it performs degree audits to make sure it is in compliance with this rule.

The school is in 100 percent compliance with the 72-hour rule.

**b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.**

The unit provides a variety of theoretical and conceptual courses as well as professional skills courses. It should be noted there are a number of 500-level courses available to students at the undergraduate level. Students interviewed indicated they felt prepared to take the graduate-level courses, and they were able to enroll in the courses without having an issue. The faculty teaching the 500-level courses indicate higher standards and additional work for the master's students.

### Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (BAJ)

The BAJ has around 460 undergraduate majors, 32 percent of the school's majors. The BAJ has a 24-hour core requirement. The degree program has two emphases (news editorial or broadcast) and three specializations.

The core classes for all BAJ students include: Intro to Mass Communication; Intro to Multimedia Writing; News Reporting; History of Mass Communication; Communications Law; Photojournalism;



Journalism Innovation; Mass Media Ethics. All are three credit hours.

To complete the BAJ degree requirements, students take 12 additional credits with a news-editorial emphasis: Creative Visual Thinking (3 credit hours); Advanced Reporting (3 credit hours); Editing (3 credit hours); and an elective, or they could take 12 additional credits with a broadcast focus (TV Reporting (3 credit hours); Advanced TV Reporting (3 credit hours); Journalism Practicum (3 credit hours); and an elective.

Students are encouraged to but not required to pursue one of the three specializations (public relations, magazine service journalism, and media management). The specializations allow students to make strategic decisions when planning their elective courses. The unit is increasing the number of specializations available (e.g., sports communications and promotion).

#### Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications (BSIMC)

The BSIMC has 964 undergraduate majors, about 68 percent of the school's majors. The BSIMC has a 33-hour core requirement. The degree program has two emphases and three specializations.

The core classes for all BSIMC students include: Intro to Mass Communication; Intro to Integrated Marketing Communication; Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications; Creative Visual Thinking; Account Planning; Internet Marketing; Communications Law; Advanced Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications; Public Relations; Integrated Marketing Communications Research; Integrated Marketing Communications Campaigns. All are three credit hours.

The BSIMC students also are required to do a business administration minor by completing another eight courses. Students are encouraged but not required to pursue one of the three specializations available to the BAJ students. The unit is increasing the number of specializations available (e.g., sports communications and promotion).

During the student and faculty interviews, it was apparent the school is aware of the importance of having the same type of learning experience for students enrolled in different sections. Faculty in the IMC area are grappling with making sure every student learns the same foundations in Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications so the students are not at varying levels of ability when they take Advanced Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications. The students interviewed noted their peers may be at different levels when they reach the upper-level writing course. The faculty are exploring the content covered in both courses to see how to address unevenness in student preparedness.

Because of the rapid growth in the IMC program, the unit is relying on a growing number of adjuncts as well as full-time faculty who teach in the BAJ area. The IMC faculty are working together to develop learning objectives and guides to course content to ensure students are exposed to the same information regardless of section number. Some of the issues discussed during faculty and student interviews were apparent when reviewing the syllabi. For example, an experimental class taught for honors students in spring 2016 was cross-listed as Intro to Multimedia Writing and Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications. The cross-listed course content, grading scale, and assignments were quite different from the other non-cross listed sections of Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications.

**c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.**

The unit includes four multimedia courses in the required curriculum for BAJ students including: Intro to Multimedia Writing (3 credit hours); News Reporting (3 credit hours); Photojournalism (3 credit hours); and Journalism Innovation (3 credit hours).

The BSIMC program contains required courses that teach students current digital technologies (e.g., Qualtrics, Google Analytics, Hootsuite) including: Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications (3 credit hours); Creative Visual Thinking (3 credit hours); Internet Marketing (3 credit hours); Advanced Writing for Integrated Marketing Communications (3 credit hours); Public Relations (3 credit hours); Research (3 credit hours); Campaigns (3 credit hours).

A number of students discussed taking part in a new Digital Media Studies Minor. The minor is a multidisciplinary minor that combines computer science, journalism, digital arts, professional writing, digital marketing, and digital humanities. The minor consists of 18 credits. Meek School students must designate one of the three emphases: computing, digital arts, or a generalist emphasis.

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (BAJ)

Journalism students said the curriculum is current and rigorous. Labs and equipment are well maintained with the latest software and technology. Issues of law, ethics, and diversity are woven into the curriculum. Students said faculty in the school are accessible and make themselves available outside of class.

Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications (BSIMC)

BSIMC students said the curricula were rigorous, particularly in the professional skills courses. The students have access to Adobe Creative Suite and are also required to purchase a monthly license. Students reported feeling very competent and competitive with their technology skills and writing skills. Diversity is emphasized in many courses. Students said faculty in the unit were accessible during scheduled office hours as well as other times when needed.

**d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1. (Campaigns classes are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

Skills courses ranged from eight to 20 students in spring 2016 and again during the fall 2016 semester.

**(e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit.**

Students may take up to three credits at an appropriate professional organization supervised by an industry professional.

Internship credit can be sought under multiple course headings. The school's internship coordinator makes sure that students are notified regularly of internship opportunities through the school's Facebook page and email. Students interviewed said they receive emails and follow the Facebook page for internship opportunities.

The internship coordinator reviews requests for interns. To be approved for credit, an internship must provide the student with meaningful opportunities to do professional-level journalism or IMC-related work. Students produce a four- to six-page report about their internship experience, and provide samples or descriptions of work completed to the internship coordinator. The internship supervisor also submits an evaluation form. All of these things are used to determine if the student earns credit.

#### Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (BAJ)

The students interviewed discussed the internship opportunities available to them. Most of the students interviewed had at least one internship; and most students interviewed had several internships prior to their senior year. They felt prepared for the internship experience. They also acknowledged the professional networks of the faculty and dean have provided a plethora of opportunities.

#### Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications (BSIMC)

The students interviewed discussed having a variety of internship experiences available to them. One of the only weaknesses was a perceived lack of connections to agencies or other groups in New York City, Washington, D.C., or other geographic locations.

**SUMMARY:** The Meek School has a strong core curriculum with a balance of conceptual and skills courses. Courses are in a logical sequence, and the curriculum meets professional expectations for multimedia competencies. They are working to increase the analytics skills in the IMC area. The new minor will also provide computer programming and visualization skills.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

*The unit has an inclusive program that values domestic and global diversity, and serves and reflects society.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit has a written diversity plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit's definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.**

The Meek School adopted a diversity plan in 2009. In the unit, diversity includes differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, national origin, socio-economic class, marital status, religion, and political thought. There are six main focus areas of the plan -- climate, student recruitment and retention, faculty recruitment, curriculum, research and scholarship, outreach and service.

**b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit's curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

Syllabi included the Meek School's Cultural Diversity Statement: *The Meek School of Journalism and New Media is committed to diversity in the classroom, in its publications and in its various organizations and components. Faculty and staff recognize that the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of their colleagues and students are best served through respect toward gender, sexual orientation disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and other personal characteristics. In addition, the school is committed to taking a leadership position that calls for promoting a commitment to diversity in and out of the classroom and in the practice of journalism.*

The syllabi also included the policy of accommodations for students with disabilities.

In 2011, there was a Diversity Rocks event, a week-long event of celebrating minorities—racial, ethnic origins, sexual preference and orientation, and disability. It included speeches, videos and films, panel discussions, festivals. There are plans to repeat it in spring 2017.

African American faculty said funds provided by the school allow them to bring in “incredible” minority speakers. Faculty and students from the Meek School traveled to Ethiopia and other African countries and to Belize to prepare magazine-format publications featuring articles and photos by students, videos and television packages, and documentaries. They were assisted in the planning by the university's Office of Global Engagement.

An International Journalism course centers on the practice of journalism in various countries—ethics, media systems, philosophies. Countries studied are China, Brazil, Russia, India, and countries in the Middle East and Africa. A Digital Diversity course advances the understanding of race, sexuality, gender, disability, ethnicity and class through the exploration of media content. Students are required to take this course or a diversity course outside the school or participate in a study-abroad program.

**c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.**

There are five African American faculty members (all female) and one Asian American male out of 29 faculty (or 21 percent people of color). The gender breakdown is 15-14 male-female.

In faculty searches for five openings in 2013-2014, there were 35 minorities in a hiring pool of 94. Offers were made to two minority applicants and both accepted. In 2014-2015, for two openings, there were nine minorities in the applicant pool of 31. Offers were made to two; none accepted. In 2015-2016, for three openings, there were 14 minorities in the applicant pool of 53. One offer was made and accepted.

**d) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education in the region or population it serves, with special attention to recruiting under-represented groups.**

African Americans are the largest minority race group in the state, 37.5 percent of the population. The school in 2015-2016 was at 9.4 percent African American and the university at 13.5 percent. That number reflects a slight decline from the previous year's 10.8 percent and 14.4 percent respectively.

Percentages of other minority races were at 3 percent or lower in 2015-2016 and 2014-2015. There were about 4 percent international students in both years.

Forty percent of the student body is from out-of-state, but most African Americans from out of Mississippi are from nearby Memphis, Tenn. An assistant professor says she travels all over the U.S. to recruit minority students. An instructor does what he calls "defacto recruiting" as he works with high school and other colleges (like Jackson State, with a high percentage of black students) in developing newspapers, planning workshops, and competitions. Students get to meet Meek School faculty who participate in workshops and students develop a familiar bond and seek admission. There are scholarships available for promising students.

A strong appeal to minorities is the relatively low out-of-state tuition rate. A negative point for recruiting students is parents of potential students recall the university's violent civil rights history in the 1960s. However, observations have shown that black middle-class parents have begun to recognize that the Ole Miss of the past is not the Ole Miss of today. For example, the university was in the news nationally for eliminating the song "Dixie" from football games. This is a place of contradictions for some: a statue of a Confederate soldier is only a short distance on campus from the statue commemorating James Meredith.

**e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and all forms of discrimination, in keeping with the acceptable cultural practices of the population it serves, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.**

The unit climate is not totally free of discrimination. One minority person described it as "both fascinating and challenging, but I'm not discouraged." Another expressed frustration with the slow pace of inclusion on campus in general. The problems seem to stem from individuals and not in the unit's overall stated plans or activities. All minority faculty and staff spoke positively of the dean.

**SUMMARY:** The school has a strong commitment to diversity in its instruction and works hard to increase the students and faculty of color. Bringing more African Americans into the school is a priority.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

Table 6: Faculty Populations\*

Academic year: 2015 – 2016 Full-time faculty

<u>Group</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>% of total faculty</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>% of total faculty</u>
Black/African American	3	11%		
White	11	4%	12	3%

UPDATED CURRENT NUMBERS as of fall 2016:

29 faculty

14 white males, 9 white females

5 African American females, 1 Asian male

20.6 percent of color

Academic year: 2015 – 2016 Part-time/adjunct faculty\*\*

<u>Group</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>% of total faculty</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>% of total faculty</u>
Black/African American			1	25%
White	8	8%	3	4%

\* Other headings omitted; all 0.

\*\* Data provided by UM Institutional Research and Effectiveness Planning and does not include all 29 individuals who taught during Fall/Spring academic terms. The numbers for Spring 2016 were 13 white female; 10 white male; 2 African-American male; 0 African-American female; and one international female.

## PART II — Standard 4: Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

*The unit hires, supports and evaluates a capable faculty with a balance of academic and professional credentials appropriate for the unit's mission.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.**

National searches are conducted for all full-time faculty members. Search committee members screen the applicants. Final candidates are invited to campus “for a day that includes (1) meeting with the committee, (2) a meal with the committee, (3) teaching a class, (4) meeting with the faculty, (5) meeting with the dean(s) and (6) where appropriate, a research presentation.”

Search committee members forward their comments/observations to the dean. The dean recommends to the provost to whom the provost should make a formal offer. These procedures follow the university's search committee guidelines.

Searches are not conducted for per-course adjunct instructors. Professionals in the community, recent graduates, or graduate students are usually identified by program leaders.

**b) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service.**

Tenure and tenure-track faculty teach a 3/2 workload. Faculty can also teach summer sessions and intersessions, study trips abroad and in the United States for additional pay. Course reductions are arranged for faculty with additional duties or for heavy research demands. Instructors have a 4/4 workload with reductions for special projects.

Growth of the IMC program has caused the percentage of core and required courses taught by full-time faculty to fall from 81.1 percent in 2013-2014 to 79.4 in 2014-2015 to 64.3 in 2015-2016.

**c) Credentials of the unit's faculty represent a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise kept current through faculty development opportunities, relationships with professional and scholarly associations, and appropriate supplementation of part-time and visiting faculty.**

Most recent hires have been professionals with digital skills to keep students on par with the rapidly changing profession. Many have master's degrees. Some are more traditional with the doctorate and research backgrounds. As noted in Standard 1, recent hires more focused on bringing talented, multimedia-focused professionals onto the faculty have in some cases rankled tenured, research-based faculty. The need for more senior faculty in the IMC area, given the major's meteoric growth, is recognized by the school's leadership.

Faculty breakdown by degree:

9 Ph.D.s, 1 Ed.D, 1 JD, 1 MFA, 1 MBA, 14 MA, 2 BA.

By rank:

6 professors, 5 associate professors, 10 assistant professors, 8 lecturer/instructors.

**d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, whether onsite or online, using multiple measures that include student input.**

Each full-time faculty member regardless of rank annually completes a university activity report of research and service but with particular focus on teaching and other student interaction. The university's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning meets with the faculty members, observes classes and follows up with comments.

Students, at the end of each course, complete online questionnaires evaluating instruction. The students' response is typically above 80 percent. Faculty seeking tenure and/or promotion are required to include these in portfolios.

Tenured faculty sit in on classes of tenure-track faculty and write evaluations, and discuss findings with the faculty member. Sometimes, a teaching specialist from the university's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will do these evaluations.

Instructors of all ranks are evaluated by course leaders or external reviewers.

**e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.**

Representatives of several schools, departments, and offices of the university spoke highly of the school's students and its dean. There are several joint projects with other units and Meek majors with minors in other subjects. As mentioned in Standard 3, the Office of Global Engagement worked with Meek staff to arrange student study trips to Belize and Ethiopia.

**SUMMARY:** Growth of the school has resulted in growth of the faculty, qualitatively and quantitatively, according to the leadership of the school. The teaching faculty draws much praise from students.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**



## **PART II — Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity**

*With unit support, faculty members contribute to the advancement of scholarly and professional knowledge and engage in scholarship (research, creative and professional activity) that contributes to their development.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

### **a) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity.**

Ole Miss was classified as a R-1 by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in spring 2016.

The school has emphasized the importance of research as part of its strategic plan, under, “*Increase visibility and amount of scholarly and creative work produced by both students and faculty.*” The objective includes five tactics and four metrics.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty generally teach a 3/2 course load in order to give them time to pursue research. Tenured faculty members are eligible for a sabbatical every six years at full pay for one semester or half pay for two semesters. The school granted sabbaticals to five faculty members during the past six years.

The school provides travel funding to faculty to present their research and give invited presentations. During the period under review, the school spent an average of \$66,246 a year to support research travel, conference travel, and other types of professional development. Faculty can also apply for \$500 travel grants from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

### **b) The unit specifies expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity in criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure.**

The faculty adopted new guidelines for promotion and tenure during the spring of 2015. Faculty members in the school are evaluated based on the university’s mission of teaching, research, and service. The school spells out the expectations for research and creative activity in its Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure. The granting of tenure and the awarding of promotion to Associate Professor requires “professional and academic research that is of high quality, and both count toward a successful promotion and tenure application.” They also note faculty coming from the profession “must be willing to broaden horizons accordingly and incorporate academically-oriented work that benefits and enhances journalism and communications when and as best they can.”

Faculty interviews indicated some tenure-track professors are well mentored and understand the types of research and creative activity needed to for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. However, there were several other junior faculty who were not as clear about the expectations.

**c) Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition account for and acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members' professional as well as scholarly specializations.**

The school's tenure and promotion policy requires faculty to have "*high quality writing/creative achievement that has an impact on the professions that the School serves. Candidates for tenure and/or promotion should provide evidence of research and/or creative achievement at the state, regional, national or international level.*" The definition includes the wide range of traditional academic scholarship and professional creative activity found in the school.

The school has hired a number of faculty having non-terminal master's degrees as tenure-track faculty. The faculty interviews indicate a number of these faculty feel prepared and confident about the promotion and tenure standards, while others do not. Updated promotion and tenure guidelines approved in 2015 provide guidance on what counts as creative activity or research.

**d) Faculty members communicate the results of research, creative and/or professional activity to other scholars, educators and practitioners through presentations, productions, exhibitions, workshops and publications appropriate to the activity and to the mission of the unit and institution.**

During the six-year period, faculty members received three external grants, published 14 books and 22 book chapters, gave 60 refereed and invited presentations, and published 43 refereed journal articles. The largest category of scholarship and creative/and or professional activity was articles in non-refereed publications at 182.

**e) The unit fosters a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, critical analysis and the expression of differing points of view.**

The school has a climate that supports intellectual curiosity. Faculty appreciate the different points of view they each may hold and the various approaches each brings to the creation and dissemination of scholarship and creative activity.

**SUMMARY:** The school requires faculty to engage in scholarly research or creative activity, and it supports the faculty through travel funding and sabbaticals. Faculty members are publishing their work, as well as presenting it at academic and professional meetings. The school fosters a climate that supports intellectual curiosity and respect for differing points of view.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (XX)
		Full Professo rs (3-5)**	Associat e Professo rs (7-5)**	Assistant Professo rs (7-12)**	Other Faculty* ** (9-6)	
Awards and Honors	7	3	2	2		
Grants Received Internal	8	1	1	6		
Grants Received External	3	3				
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co- authored	6	3	1	2		
Textbooks, Sole- or Co- authored	8	4	2	2		
Books Edited						
Book Chapters	22	12	3	7		
Monographs	3		2		1	
Articles in Refereed Journals	43	11	16	12	4	
Refereed Conference Papers	60	15	30	16		61
Invited Academic Papers						
Encyclopedia Entries	3	2	1			
Book Reviews	3	2	1			
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	182	108	12	55	8	183
Juried Creative Works						
Non-juried Creative Works	28	9	8	12	2	31
Other (specified)	106	20	25	51	10	106

\* Co-authored work is counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors.

\*\* First number is Fall 2010. Second number is Spring 2016.

\*\*\* Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments.

Many faculty members in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

*The unit provides students with the support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) Faculty and/or professional advising staff ensure that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising.**

Advising is a passion of the school and its performance has been improved by the hiring of the assistant dean for student services, who personally advises first-year and new students, currently more than 400. While that number is stunning, she is calm and organized about it, keeping students on track via group and individual advising sessions. Students are assigned faculty advisers after their first year, who guide them through the rest of their degree coursework. Students anecdotally express satisfaction with the system, although some IMC students said having journalism faculty advising them was not always as effective as they'd like. Surveys show high satisfaction with the system, generally in the 70-80 percent range.

The school has been allowed to keep its advising inside even as the university goes to a more centralized advising system, a tribute to its effectiveness and a boon to retention rates. The school's rate for fall 2015 to spring 2016 was 95.6 percent, third best in the university. Minority retention in that period was 100 percent.

**b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.**

The stated goal of the school is that faculty maintain ample office hours and interact on a consistent and regular basis with students. Faculty were regularly in conversation with students during the site-team visit.

Under the dean, there has been a commitment to international multi-platform depth-reporting trips led by faculty to places such as Belize and numerous places in Africa. (Three reports have received RFK awards for College Journalism.) There also are trips for project work in the U.S., including recent trips to New York, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans.

**c) The unit keeps students informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the unit.**

Students say they are well served by the various methods the school uses to communicate including the school website, Facebook page, and printed materials. The school is fanatical in its devotion, for example, to making sure students file their intents to graduate in a timely fashion.

**d) The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.**

Student media are a major strength of the school. Students have the opportunity to participate in the five-day-a-week student newspaper and website, *The Daily Missisippian*; five-night-a-week live *Newswatch*

TV show; 24-hour, 5,000-watt Rebel Radio and the yearbook. All are housed in a spacious multimedia newsroom (with broadcast studio attached) located in a building across campus from the school's home in Farley Hall. Student media is led by an experienced and able assistant dean, but the decision-making responsibilities for content are with students. Student media participants are paid, a substantial annual investment by the school.

There are active chapters of the American Marketing Association, Society of News Design, Public Relations Association of Mississippi, National Association of Black Journalists, and the Society of Professional Journalists. Each has a faculty adviser. Funding is made available for some students to attend regional and national conferences.

**e) The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its website.**

Information is readily available: <http://meek.olemiss.edu/about/school-facts/>

**SUMMARY:** Students report satisfaction with the quality of services provided them by the school. This is an area where there is some growth pain caused by recent enrollment surges. But the creation of the assistant dean for student services position (and the very capable and committed person holding the position) have kept this work on track.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment**

*The unit plans for, seeks and receives adequate resources to fulfill and sustain its mission.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.**

The University of Mississippi operates on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year. The budget officer of the Meek School prepares budget requests each March in consultation with the dean and associate dean. The budget requests are submitted to the provost, who reviews and adjusts as part of a comprehensive budget plan submitted to the Board of Trustees. The dean has final authority in terms of planning, requesting, and spending budget funds for the school.

The school also develops a foundation budget in consultation with directors and staff of the University of Mississippi Foundation based on revenue projections and calculated from a floating average return on endowment investments. The self-study stated, “Although sometimes expended for general operational expenses, the funds are purposed to printing, special projects, special programs and non-routine expenses.”

The school’s budget has grown 22.26 percent in the last three years (2013-2014 was roughly \$3.8 million and 2016-2017 was \$4.7 million). The budget provided in the self-study indicates continued growth in resources over the last three years as student enrollment has increased. The school has the lowest instructional cost per student credit hour at the university.

**b) The resources that the institution provides are adequate to achieve the unit’s mission. The resources are fair in relation to those provided other units.**

The school has been treated fairly during its rapid growth period. The provost has supported additional faculty positions (including part-time faculty) to meet the increased enrollment.

**c) The facilities of the unit enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.**

The Meek School is housed in Farley Hall. The building was remodeled and refurnished in 2008, including addition of the Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics.

Including the Overby Center, the three-level building includes: two large auditoriums, one 45-seat classroom, one 36-student classroom, and five computer labs. The building has 18 single-faculty offices, three multi-faculty offices, and rooms for staff members who manage school equipment, and the network administrator.

The Overby suite includes a workroom, three offices, a multipurpose area that can seat as many as 80 for luncheon-type events and a 20-seat executive boardroom.

The building the school is housed in is bursting at the seams. It is not equipped to handle the influx of students and full-time faculty. Multi-faculty offices inconvenience students who are meeting with their advisers, or visiting with an instructor about a personal issue.

The 8,500-square-foot, S. Gale Denley Student Media Center is in Bishop Hall. The SMC is administratively under the Meek School but operates on a separate budget. The SMC is equipped with a high definition studio and portable cameras and peripherals, a high definition switcher, production computers, and other items that would be standard in industry.

The SMC includes:

- *The Daily Mississippian* – the student newspaper, printed five days a week, daily circulation 10,000
- NewsWatch – a daily 30-minute live student TV newscast, which airs on the university’s channel on Oxford’s cable provider, and is streamed live on-line
- The Ole Miss –the university yearbook
- WUMS-FM92.1, – a 5,000-watt commercially licensed FM radio station, with a broadcast signal that encompasses all the local county and beyond

**d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment or access to equipment to support its curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty.**

Student and faculty interviews indicated the technology was easily available and the supply meets the demand. The self-study notes there are 18 professional-grade broadcast cameras; 15 sets of microphones, lights, tripods, batteries and other equipment related to these cameras; and 12 Canon DSLR cameras with video capability (currently have four and eight ordered). Included with the Canon cameras are microphones, tripods, batteries and miscellaneous equipment required for video recording. All are available to students on a “check-out” basis.

The self-study states, “The 2015 inventory of Farley Hall furnishings and equipment values the computers, cameras, and peripherals along with all other movables at a depreciated value of \$808,000, not including the value of licensed software.”

The school requires journalism students to purchase a laptop and the appropriate software, prior to enrolling in news reporting. IMC students are required to purchase a laptop prior to enrolling in writing for integrated marketing communications. The students purchase software licenses at a discounted rate (e.g., Adobe Creative Suite is \$20/month and can be installed on two computers).

Students and faculty said they had the technology they need to complete class assignments and research/creative activity.

The self-study stated, “the SMC has technology and equipment valued at more than \$1.5 million, and it all is for student use. About \$30,000 of the SMC’s annual budget is dedicated to upgrading equipment, with more money available as needed. Computers are purchased on a yearly rotation that allows for all SMC computers to be replaced within a three-year cycle. Since the last ACEJMC accreditation in 2010,

the SMC has purchased and replaced 55 computers, including 46 desktops and nine notebooks and/or minis.”

The school has a technology committee that meets to discuss its needs. The committee provides a list of technology needs to the dean. Equipment (hardware and software in labs) is supported by a technology fee that students enrolled in the school’s courses pay.

**e) The institution and the unit provide sufficient library and information resources to support faculty and student research and professional development.**

The school has good support from the library. A review of the journals, articles, and books available to students and faculty is extensive. The library has the resources to support the research and professional development of faculty and students.

**SUMMARY:** The school offers a quality education to its students and support for its faculty through a combination of state funding and an endowment. The expenditures are in sync with the program’s strategic plan. The instructional equipment is up to date. The university has started the process of interviewing architects to expand Farley Hall. Faculty offices and classroom space will remain cramped until the expansion is funded.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**



## PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

*The unit and its faculty advance journalism and mass communication professions and fulfill obligations to its community, alumni and the greater public.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni and is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching, whether on-site or online, current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The Meek School has an alumni board of nine professionals with careers in newspapers, magazines, radio, social media, communications, integrated marketing, political communications and public relations. They range from recent grads to a 1971 grad with a wealth of experience. There is also a Board of Visitors made up of professionals, most of whom are alums, many living outside the state.

Among the members of the boards: Ronnie Agnew, executive director, Mississippi Public Broadcasting; James Autry, a former Fortune 500 magazine executive; Harold Burson, founder of the PR agency Burson-Marsteller; Harold Crump, retired vice president of corporate affairs at Hubbard Broadcasting; Rose Jackson Flenorl, manager of FedEx Global Citizen Group; Eddie Fritts, former president/CEO of the National Association of Broadcasting; Mary Lynn Kotz, author, lecturer, journalist; Andrew Lack, former president and COO of NBC; Ed Meek, longtime journalist and publisher who endowed the creation of the Meek School; Charles Overby; namesake and chair of the Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics and former chair of the Freedom Forum; W.C. “Dun” Shoemaker, former civil rights reporter and publisher of the *Star Herald* in Mississippi; Richard Starman, crisis management consultant for McDonald’s; Blake Tartt, president of New Regional Planning; John B. Thomas, executive vice president of Horizon Pharma; Becky Jones West, president of West Rogers LLC, an advertising and public relations firm; Leslie Westbrook, owner of Westbrook & Associates in Maryland.

Many members of the boards take active interest in the activities of the Meek School. Some teach classes. Many hire interns and later, grads. Some are donors.

The school publishes an annual alumni magazine and eight monthly emailed newsletters. And, of course, alumni are welcomed back to football Saturday tailgates during football season.

**b) The unit provides leadership in the development of high standards of professional practice through such activities as offering continuing education, promoting professional ethics, evaluating professional performance, and addressing communication issues of public consequence and concern.**

The school is home to the Magazine Innovation Center, led by a former department chair considered one of the world’s leading authorities on magazines. The school also hosts a conference focused on national and international magazines that creates opportunities for students to interact with professionals.

The Mississippi Center for Freedom of Information is also based at the school.

Professionals from Raycom Media Inc. have mentored journalism majors each semester for the past two years. Fourteen TV news professionals from the Mississippi Association of Broadcasting mentored students. A professor was honored for her service at the Mississippi Associated Press.

Meek students won 22 awards in the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence competition, including 12 first place honors in 2016 and the national award for multimedia reporting. Students won 20 awards from the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasting Annual contest in 2015-2016. Students won 12 of 13 awards at the Public Relations Association of Mississippi. One Ole Miss student was named outstanding PR student by the same organization. A student-produced documentary won three awards at the Crossroads Film Festival. A broadcast journalism major was named College Journalist of the Year in a regional Southeast Journalism Conference contest, and newspaper and broadcast students have won national SPJ awards.

**c) The unit contributes to the improvement of journalism and mass communication as academic disciplines by supporting the faculty's involvement in academic associations and related activities.**

Faculty are members of AEJMC, ASJMC, NABJ, Mississippi Press Association, Society of News Design, American Journalism Historians Association, Public Relations Association of Mississippi and many others. They are members of editorial boards and reviewers for academic and professional publications. They participate in programs of the Overby Center. They are members and leaders of community advisory boards.

**d) The unit contributes to its communities through unit-based service projects and events, service learning of its students and civic engagement of its faculty.**

The Meek School's Strategic Plan and Promotion and Tenure Guidelines mention a desire for faculty to participate in national and local organizations. Service is encouraged in campus, regional, national organizations, both academic and professional. Vitae show that faculty comply.

**e) The unit supports scholastic journalism through such activities as faculty workshops, visiting lectures and critiques of student work.**

The school is home of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association, one of the largest and most active of such associations in the nation. MPSA holds three workshops a year at the school and around the state. A summer workshop helps prepare new and veteran high-school journalism teachers.

**SUMMARY:** The school has a rich tradition of public service and connection to its alumni and serves as home to multiple important journalistic organizations, such as the state scholastic journalism organization.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

*The unit regularly assesses student learning and applies results to improve curriculum and instruction.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

### **a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council.**

Goals in assessment are thoroughly defined and mirror ACEJMC’s competencies. There are different assessment mechanisms for journalism and IMC courses. Per university practice, assessment plans are reviewed and updated every two years.

For example, ethical decision-making is assessed using a pretest in the introductory multimedia reporting class and a post-test in the media ethics class. Rubrics are used for scoring. Other areas of journalism assessment include communication law concepts and diversity awareness. Student advising is also assessed. Portfolio review is part of the capstone Journalism Innovation course.

Assessment in IMC is not as well-developed as on the journalism side, understandable given the relative youth of the program. A rubric tests knowledge of IMC tenets. Students are surveyed to judge their knowledge of key concepts. Rubrics are also used to test promotional copywriting skills and research and decision-making abilities.

Data from assessment was instrumental in the school getting an assistant dean for student services, approved in 2015.

### **b) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning.**

The assessment plan isn’t so much a statement of philosophy as a set of defined expectations and procedures for executing the various aspects of the plan. When criteria are met, the bar is raised to require further improvement.

More detail on direct measures: A pretest in a core journalism class was administered in two cohorts between 2012 and 2016 and was then used to assess student learning in ethics and law classes in 2015 and 2016. Interestingly, some students scored lower on some questions in the upper-division courses than they did in the entry-level course, suggesting some teaching emphases adjustments for faculty.

Another direct measure compared final projects between entry-level and advanced journalism courses during a three-year period. Again, skill needs were revealed.

As mentioned, portfolio reviews by outside professionals are a standard part of the journalism capstone class. Intern performances are also evaluated by supervisors at the sites where students worked.

In IMC, advanced writing and campaigns course work was assessed. An indirect measure of student satisfaction with IMC is also done (and with very positive results).

**c) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

The School is doing a good job of “closing the loop.” Assessment led to more discussion of the application of ethics in social media and more use of ethics case studies across the curriculum. While testing showed good understanding of gender issues, the need was seen for more discussion of balancing needs of victims vs. the public’s right to know.

Media law instructors added more discussion about the relevance of press freedom and freedom of expression as they relate to our democracy as a result of assessment.

Portfolio evaluations showed the need for more hands-on training in multimedia technology.

**d) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to provide suggestions for improving curriculum and instruction.**

It does, through what is mentioned below in Indicator E, and through its Alumni Board, Board of Visitors, and campus visits.

**e) The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.**

Students submit portfolios of graded and ungraded work as part of the journalism capstone course, Journalism Innovation. In 2014-2015, for example, 30 professionals reviewed about 120 portfolios and used a scoring rubric to evaluate the work, with a specific emphasis on professional readiness. Overall, the portfolios were judged to meet professional standards. Again, gaps in the curriculum were found and addressed as a result of the review.

In addition, informal assessment by a large cadre of regular visiting professionals is part of the IMC culture.

**SUMMARY:** Assessment is a part of the fabric of the school, driven by the university’s own requirements for every two-year updates. The school performs well within the university system and that translates to effective assessment, particularly in the journalism program. More attention to assessment is needed in IMC.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

### **PART III: Summary by site visit team**

#### **1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.**

##### **STRENGTHS:**

- Outstanding leadership and vision that has led to astounding enrollment growth.
- Strong journalism and IMC curriculum that creates crossover opportunities for students that will serve them well in the professional world.
- A very strong faculty buttressed by big-name professionals and able new-media experts who combine to improve the student experience.
- A student body that draws increasingly from around the country; students are coming to Ole Miss for these programs.
- Comprehensive and well-led student media that are part of the school and provide strong training for future careers across disciplines.
- Good facilities, classrooms, and technology.
- The presence of the Overby Center, which brings contemporary issues and speakers before the students and creates opportunities for interaction and learning from journalism legends.

##### **WEAKNESSES:**

- Enrollment growth has stretched the facilities and increased the need for adjuncts.
- Student media is in a separate building a fair distance from the main school building. (Future building plans may resolve it.)
- IMC assessment needs to increase in its rigor to achieve the same impact as in the school's journalism side.
- African American enrollment is below that of the university.

#### **2) List the standards with which the unit is not in compliance.**

N/A

#### **3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that should be addressed before the next evaluation (i.e., related to non-compliance with standards).**

N/A

#### **4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that should be addressed before the provisional status can be removed.**

N/A

#### **5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to the recommendation.**

N/A

**6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them.**

An assessment plan had not been fully implemented. It has been during this last accrediting cycle, though not without some heavy lifting. One faculty member refused to provide assessment numbers and it resulted in an appeal through the university bureaucracy before participation was ordered.

**7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process. Often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the site visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.**

The self-study achieved the difficult goal of being thorough and efficient at the same time. As a result, the site team (operating a member short) was able to focus on its reporting and evaluating work with little distraction from tracking down loose ends.

A briefing book for the team prepared by the associate dean was a helpful innovation. In one folder he included the team's updated schedule, course times and rooms, bios of administrators and faculty, the update to Part I, and the previous site-team report.