Report of On-Site Evaluation
ACEJMC
Undergraduate program
2017–2018

Name of Institution: Auburn University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Steven Leath, President

Name of Unit: School of Communication and Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: Dr. Jennifer Adams, Director

Date of 2017-2018 Accrediting Visit: January 28-31, 2018

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2012 (Revisit in 2014)

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation (On revisit)

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

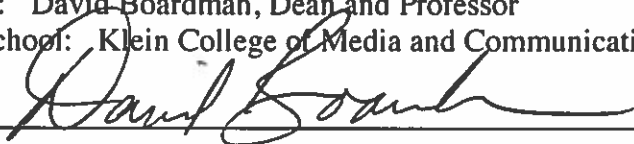**Recommendation by 2017-2018 Visiting Team:** Provisional re-accreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair
Name and Title: David Boardman, Dean and Professor
Organization/School: Klein College of Media and Communication, Temple University
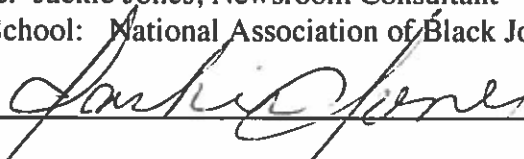
Signature _____

Team Members
Name and Title: Jackie Jones, Newsroom Consultant
Organization/School: National Association of Black Journalists

Signature _____

Name and Title: Dr. Michel Haigh, Professor and Graduate Advisor
Organization/School: School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Texas State University
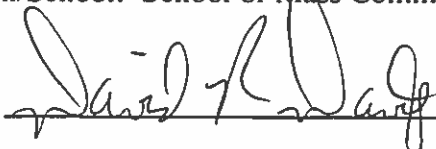
Signature _____

Name and Title: Dr. Dave Davies, Director
Organization/School: School of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Southern Mississippi

Signature _____

<p style="text-align: center;">**PART I: General information**</p>

Name of Institution: Auburn University.

Name of Unit: School of Communication and Journalism.

Year of Visit: 2017-2018.

1. Regional association by which the institution now is accredited.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

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

Public.

3. Provide assurance that the institution has legal authorization to provide education beyond the secondary level in your state. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.

Auburn University is a public corporation and instrumentality of the State of Alabama, created and existing by virtue of Section 266, Constitution of Alabama of 1901, and Section 16-48-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975. Auburn University is the land-grant university of the State of Alabama.

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

Yes.

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: 2011-2012.

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

Provisional status was granted in 1994 with full accreditation granted in 1995.

6. Provide the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

<p style="text-align: center;">Mission Statement</p>

Approved by the faculty on May 30, 2014
The School of Communication and Journalism is committed to sustaining an engaged and challenging educational environment that fosters steady growth and advancement through intellectual, creative and professional proficiencies in a wide range of communication systems and methods, with oral, print and digital among the prevalent modes. Our mission is both academic and professional. It embraces and encourages: 1) steadfast productivity within scholarly research agendas and creative pursuits, 2) professional affiliations and activities, 3) commitment to excellence in classroom instruction and teaching, 4) dedicated service at all levels of the university environment, and 5) design and implementation of meaningful civic engagement and outreach projects in the community. Our identity

and foundation are framed by core values that include integrity, innovation, diversity, merit and accountability.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Fall and Spring Semesters of 15 weeks. Summer sessions range from 5-week terms to 10-week terms.

8. List the programs offered in journalism/mass communications:

Bachelor's degree.

9. List the specific undergraduate degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. *Indicate online degrees.

Undergraduate Degrees
- Journalism (JRNL)
- Public Relations (PRCM)

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

120 semester hours.

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

3 semester hours.

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

CMJN Associate Directors
- Journalism: Dr. John Carvalho
- Public Relations: Professor Terri Knight

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

Auburn's 2017-2018 enrollment of 29,776 students includes 23,964 undergraduates and 5,812 graduate and professional students.

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):

CMJN Undergraduate Programs	# of Majors
Pre-majors	286
Journalism	73
Public Relations	135
Total	494

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. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

Course		Title	Sec	Fall 2017	Spring 2018*
CMJN	3110	Sports Media Relations	1	19	15
CMJN	3210	News and Sports Announcing	1	18	N/A
CMJN	3410	Introduction to Sports Video Production	1	18	18
CMJN	3410	Introduction to Sports Video Production	2	14	N/A
CMJN	4410	Advanced Sports Video Production	1	N/A	14
CMJN	4970	Control Room Operations	1	14	12
CMJN	4970	Sports Story Telling and Video Profiles	2	16	9
CMJN	4970	Live Sports Production	3	N/A	18
JRNL	2210	Newswriting	2	19	18
JRNL	2210	Newswriting	3	20	14
JRNL	2210	Newswriting	4	14	14
JRNL	2210	Newswriting	5	13	13
JRNL	2310	Reporting	1	17	14
JRNL	2310	Reporting	2	15	19
JRNL	2310	Reporting	4	20	N/A
JRNL	3010	Digital News Production	1	12	14
JRNL	3010	Digital News Production	3	9	8
JRNL	3020	Digital News Reporting	1	9	8
JRNL	3220	Magazine and Feature Writing	1	22	19
JRNL	3220	Magazine and Feature Writing	2	20	18
JRNL	3410	Photojournalism	1	19	18
JRNL	3470	Editing and Design	1	N/A	18
JRNL	3510	Multimedia Journalism	1	N/A	13
JRNL	3530	Sports Reporting	1	18	10
JRNL	4230	Advanced Reporting	1	18	N/A
JRNL	4470	Advanced Magazine and Feature Writing	1	N/A	18
JRNL	4970	Food, Culture & Entertainment	1	20	N/A
JRNL	4970	Advanced Sports Reporting	2	N/A	11
PRCM	2500	Public Relations Case Studies	1	20	19
PRCM	2500	Public Relations Case Studies	2	19	15
PRCM	2500	Public Relations Case Studies	3	15	17
PRCM	3000	Multimedia Writing for Public Relations	1	20	N/A
PRCM	3000	Multimedia Writing for Public Relations	2	17	20

PRCM	3000	Multimedia Writing for Public Relations	3	11	12
PRCM	3280	Social Media and Public Relations	1	19	20
PRCM	4020	Digital Style & Design in Public Relations Messages	1	20	20
PRCM	4020	Digital Style & Design in Public Relations Messages	2	19	19
PRCM	4020	Digital Style & Design in Public Relations Messages	3	20	N/A
PRCM	4400	Public Relations Research	1	20	18
PRCM	4400	Public Relations Research	2	15	15
PRCM	4400	Public Relations Research	3	20	13
PRCM	4500	Public Relations Campaigns	1	18	13
PRCM	4500	Public Relations Campaigns	1	N/A	17
PRCM	4500	Public Relations Campaigns	1	N/A	18
PRCM	4500	Public Relations Campaigns	1	N/A	20

Note: N/A indicates the course or section of the course was not offered that particular semester.
* Spring 2018 enrollment accurate as of Dec. 12, 2017.

16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2017 – 2018 academic year: $3,137,519.

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:
15.11% increase.

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:
$1,765,350.

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.

2017-2018 CMJN Faculty	Rank	Program
Justin Blakenship	Assistant Professor	JRNL
Brigitta Brunner	Professor	PRCM
John Carvalho	Professor	JRNL
Myoung-Gi Chon	Assistant Professor	PRCM
Eun Ji (Angie) Chung	Assistant Professor	PRCM
Nan Fairley	Associate Professor	JRNL
Terri Knight	Lecturer	PRCM
Phillip Rawls	Lecturer	JRNL
Diana Sisson	Assistant Professor	PRCM
Jennifer Wood Adams	Associate Professor	JRNL
Michail Vafeiadis	Assistant Professor	PRCM

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2017. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2018. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2018, please provide the spring 2018 adjunct list in the updated information.)

Fall 2017 Adjuncts	Spring 2018 Adjuncts
Cassie Arner	Weston Carter
Weston Carter	Kara Edgerson
Michael Sullivan	Julie Bennett
Jeff Hanel	Jeff Hanel
Marianne McCarley	Marianne McCarley
Matt Jaques	Matt Jaques
Deloris Washington	Deloris Washington
Alec Harvey	Alec Harvey
Paul McCormick	Paul McCormick
Jeff Shearer	Jeff Shearer
Sarah Phillips	Andrew Young
Mike Clardy	Catherine Jackson
Michael Tullier	Robert French
Catherine Jackson	Lindsey McCormick
Robert French	Sarah Phillips
Tod Meisner	Michael Sullivan

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 with 72+ hrs outside major	Percent
2015-2016	244	244	100%
2016-2017	230	230	100%

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.

<u>Unit performance with regard to indicators:</u>

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 School of Communication and Journalism is one of 13 units in the College of Liberal Arts, the only unit designated as a School rather than a Department. This designation was granted by the Board of Trustees in June 2013, and Dr. Jennifer Adams was appointed as the first director of the School in August of that year. The School offers four undergraduate degrees – in Communication, Journalism, Media Studies and Public Relations – and one graduate degree, in Communication. Only the Journalism and Public Relations sequences are seeking re-accreditation from ACEJMC.

The School has a mission statement that was approved by the faculty in May 2014. The University, College of Liberal Arts and School of Communication and Journalism all have strategic plans that are updated every year. The School's plan has three stated priorities: Global and cultural awareness and respect for diversity; emphasize innovation and excellence in instruction and curriculum; retain and attract distinguished faculty and high-quality students.

Auburn welcomed a new president in June 2017, when the previous president, who had been in place for a decade, retired. The provost is also new, ascending from the position of dean of the College of Business in January 2018. Administrators and faculty of the School expect that the new University leadership may make adjustments in Auburn's strategic priorities.

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

The School's policies and procedures for faculty governance are those typically found in accredited programs. There is an Executive Council composed of all tenured faculty and one non-tenured faculty representative and presided over by the director. A School curriculum committee oversees all curricular changes, which then move to approval by College and University curriculum committees.

The other standing faculty committees are: Executive Council, which approves the School's budget; Tenure and Promotion Committee; Graduate Committee; Assessment, Accreditation and Program Review Committee; Faculty Evaluation Committee; Peer Evaluation Committee; Diversity Committee; Basic Course Committee, and Research and Creative Development Committee. There are also temporary ad-hoc committees and search committees.

The faculty appeared satisfied with the collaborative nature of the School's operation, and highly enthusiastic about the leadership of the director, Dr. Jennifer Adams.

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 greatest strength of this unit may be its leadership. Dr. Adams is greatly respected across the School and the campus, as well as by those in the local journalism and public-relations industries. She demonstrates effective, creative and collaborative leadership in many regards, and is clear-headed about the areas in which the School needs to improve.

The School has clearly made progress in several areas under her guidance. That progress would likely be more pronounced had she been in place for the entire four years since her appointment; however, she was away on a research leave in 2016-17.

Dr. Adams has a broad portfolio, serving as the top academic and administrative officer, overseeing instruction, faculty affairs, student affairs, external communication, budget and resource management and office management. She reports directly to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts. She is supported by two associate directors and two administrative assistants.

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

The director is elected by the School's full-time faculty (with approval of the dean) to a five-year term, which may be followed by a second five-year term. Any member of the School's full-time faculty may call a meeting and make a motion for a vote of "no confidence." If two-thirds of the faculty vote in favor of the action, the results are sent to the dean for action.

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

Processes for concerns and complaints are laid out clearly in policy manuals, and we heard nothing to suggest these are not followed.

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. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.

The School reports that 100 percent of its students in the last two years of its self-study graduated with at least 72 hours outside of the major. All 244 students who graduated in 2015-2016 and all 230 students who graduated in 2016-2017 met this standard.

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.

Students in the School's two accredited sequences – Journalism and Public Relations – are required to take 120 hours to graduate. This includes 41 hours toward the University core, 8 hours toward the College of Liberal Arts core, 48 hours in the sequence and 23 hours in non-sequence electives. A minor is not required in either sequence, though Public Relations students are required to take at least 12 hours in the College of Business. (These numbers reflect the curriculum in use through 2016-17. Effective in 2017-18, the current school year, the college core increased by two hours, thus trimming students' non-sequence electives from 23 to 21.)

The curriculum reflects the required balance of conceptual and skills courses in both sequences. As for the ACEJMC competencies, it is clear that these are covered in the Journalism sequence, for which the School provided a detailed chart showing which competencies are taught in each of the sequence's required courses. In Public Relations, by contrast, it is difficult to demonstrate how all of the ACEJMC competencies are taught in the curriculum. The School's self-study reports that the PR sequence "aggressively applies ACEJMC's professional values and competencies," but the School's course-by-course chart matching courses to competencies in content, thinking, and communication do not mirror the ACEJMC competencies. (Specifically, the School's measured PR competencies are "conceptual and historical foundations," "ethical decision making," "measurement and evaluation techniques," "illustrate strategic thinking," "appropriate writing forms and styles," "speaking in public forums," "and "strategic and tactical materials.")

The Journalism sequence requires students to complete a core of skills and conceptual courses plus two additional skills courses, two additional production courses, one advanced course, and 15-18 hours of electives chosen from concentrations within the School – Communication/Journalism (CMJN), Communication (COMM), Journalism (JRNL), Media Studies (MDIA) and Public Relations (PRCM). The Public Relations sequence outlines 24-27 of required courses, plus two writing courses, and nine to 12 hours of sequence electives within the School.

The course curriculum in each sequence is as follows:

All Journalism and Public Relations students must complete one CMJN core course.

CMJN Core Courses (required of all majors)	Credit Hours
CMJN 2100 – Concepts in Communication and Journalism	3

JOURNALISM

Required Courses	Credit Hours
JRNL 1AA0 – Journalism Fundamentals Exam	0
OR JRNL 1100 – Journalism Fundamentals	3
JRNL 2210 – Newswriting	3
JRNL 2310 – Reporting	3
CMJN 4000 – Mass Media Law and Regulation	3
JRNL 4920 – Journalism Internship	3

Group 1: Specialized Reporting (choose 2 courses)	Credit Hours
JRNL 3020 – Digital News Reporting	3
JRNL 3220 – Magazine and Feature Writing	3
JRNL 3510 – Multimedia Journalism	3
JRNL 3530 – Sports Reporting	3

Group 2: Production Courses (choose 2 courses)	Credit Hours
CMJN 3410 – Intro to Sports Video Production	3
CMJN 4410 – Advanced Sports Video Production	3
JRNL 3010 – Digital News Production	3
JRNL 3110 – Intro to Applied Journalism	3
JRNL 3410 – Photojournalism	3
JRNL 3470 – Editing and Design	3

Group 3: Electives (5-6* courses)	Credit Hours
Choose from a list of CMJN, COMM, JRNL, MDIA, PRCM courses	15-18

*-- Students who pass the JRNL 1AA0 examination take six (6) courses; students who take JRNL 1100 take five (5) courses.

Group 4: Advanced Courses (choose 1 course)	Credit Hours
JRNL 4230 – Advanced Reporting	3
JRNL 4470 – Advanced Magazine and Feature Writing	3

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Required Courses	Credit Hours
PRCM 2400 – Foundations of Public Relations	3
PRCM 2500 – Public Relations Case Studies	3
PRCM 3000 – Multimedia Writing for Public Relations	3
PRCM 3260 – Strategic Communication in Public Relations	3
PRCM 4020 – Digital Style and Design in Public Relations Messages	3
PRCM 4400 – Public Relations Research	3
PRCM 4500 – Public Relations Campaigns	3
PRCM 4920 – Internship	3
JRNL 1AA0 – Journalism Fundamentals Exam	0
OR JRNL 1100 – Journalism Fundamentals	3

Group 1: Writing (choose 2 courses)	Credit Hours
JRNL 2210 – Newswriting	3
JRNL 2310 – Reporting	3
JRNL 3220 – Magazine and Feature Writing	3
MDIA 3350 – Writing for Television & Film	3

Electives (3-4* courses)	Credit Hours
Choose from a list of CMJN, COMM, JRNL, MDIA, PRCM courses	9-12

*-- Students who pass the JRNL 1AA0 examination take four (4) courses; students who take JRNL 1100 take three (3) courses.

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.

In Journalism, the curriculum has made significant strides since the last accreditation visit in ensuring that the School's students master current technologies. Significantly, in 2013 the School partnered with Raycom Media, whose in-kind $350,000 gift provided a combination television studio and 15-computer classroom to the School and its students. Students have access to the lab and hear frequently from Raycom reporters who offer guest lectures in their classes. In addition, the School's partnership with the SEC Network through the Auburn video services division, War Eagle Productions, offers students myriad opportunities for practical experience assisting with video productions. The School has expanded its range of video production courses, specifically in sports production, as a result. Teaching evaluations for journalism courses were very positive, and Journalism students who met with the site team were uniformly enthusiastic about the quality, helpfulness and currency of the sequence's full-time professors and adjuncts.

In Public Relations, students complained about several issues that the School needs to address. Both in

the student meeting with the site team and in a few teaching evaluations, students complained about two specific courses and adjunct instructors that they said were problematic. In the student meeting, students also lamented that some classes were difficult to get into and that course sequencing prevented them from taking some important classes (specifically PRCM4020, Digital Style & Design) until their senior year, limiting their ability to land internships that require certain skills. They also complained that the quality of teaching was uneven, and that some content in courses excessively overlapped. However, teaching evaluations from the self-study years were overwhelmingly positive, giving the vast majority of both adjuncts and full-time professors high praise for accessibility, helpfulness and quality of instruction. Still, the near-unanimity of the approximately 40 PR students in the group meeting gave the team pause.

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.)

Faculty-to-student ratios within the School are well within the guidelines overall. In the current academic year, only one skills course (JRNL 3220, Magazine and Feature Writing,) was over the 20-student maximum.

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.

The School has a robust internship program directed by Ric Smith, a longtime faculty member at the School. All students in both the Public Relations and Journalism majors are required to complete one internship, and opportunities are available in and around the Auburn area, in Alabama, in the Southeast and nationally. Students must work a minimum of 200 hours to receive internship credit. Students report that Smith does an excellent job in supplying them with internship opportunities. While students can undertake only one internship for three hours' credit, many students report completing more than one.

Students submit a mid-term report and final report/portfolio. On-the-job supervisors submit an online evaluation. Supervisors are also asked to conduct a performance evaluation with the intern. Reports and evaluations are reviewed by faculty and the internship supervisor. Students write their own reviews of their internships, which are then posted on a closed internet site available only to Auburn students.

Intern evaluations completed by internship providers show wide satisfaction with the interns and their work, both in Journalism and in Public Relations. But in the site team's meeting with local industry professions, several expressed concerns with the skill levels of recent PR interns.

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 School does have a written diversity plan that was revised in 2009, 2015 and 2017. The earlier versions were more statements of principle than plans, with few concrete actions or metrics. The latest version, however, is a strong document that could lead to meaningful results. Notably, however, it was not adopted until November of 2017, late in this review cycle.

*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.***

The self-study describes efforts to foster understanding of diversity issues in its curriculum and identified specific courses that reportedly included a heavy concentration of diversity and inclusion issues. However, individual course syllabi did not reflect this. Further, our discussions with students strongly suggested that meaningful discussion of issues of diversity had not been a priority in many of their classes. In fact, in a group discussion, one white female student indicated that she saw discussion of diversity as a distraction from learning. The only African-American student in the group of about 40 had an expression of surprise, but no students said anything.

The School's recent record of bringing in speakers of color and others to address issues of diversity and inclusion in communication and media is laudable. And the University-wide "Critical Conversation Speakers Series" has brought such prominent and provocative figures as Cornel West, Howard Ross, Frank Bruni and Derald Wing Sue to campus.

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.***

The School and its director appear to embrace this goal and can document serious efforts to recruit domestic minority faculty. However, these efforts have not been at all "effective," as stated in the indicator. Rather, over many years, the School has employed largely the same recruitment techniques to the same result: failure.

The full-time, permanent faculty is 82 percent white and 18 percent international minority. Since 2014, the School has hired 15 faculty members. Of those 15 searches, three resulted in offers to domestic minorities; one of those, an African-American public-relations instructor, was hired in 2014 but has since departed.

Additionally, an African-American student adviser was hired in 2017. Additionally, an African-American female was brought on as a visiting professor for the 2017-18 academic year to create and teach courses on issues of religion, advocacy journalism, inclusion, media ethics and the impact on vulnerable communities. The School has had some success recruiting international faculty, adding two (with another on the way) to a previously all-white faculty.

The University at large does somewhat better than the School in domestic diversity among faculty, with 74.5 percent of the faculty identifying as white, 9.5 percent as Asian (not differentiating international or domestic) and 4 percent as African-American.

The director and faculty members of the School of Communication and Journalism offer many explanations for the lack of success in recruiting people of color to the faculty, including perceptions of Auburn University and Alabama as being unfriendly to minorities, and a relatively high cost of living for the South. The biggest obstacle, however, seems to be a requirement for tenure-track openings that applicants hold a Ph.D., and the lack of a "professor of practice" track that has been used successfully by many other universities to recruit professionals of color into the academy. Where professionals can be hired as full-time faculty at Auburn, with an "instructor" designation, they begin at a salary of $35,000. Additionally, there is no system to ensure that people of color get particular consideration as adjunct faculty.

In a state where race relations has and continues to be a central element in its culture, its politics, its economy and certainly in its media environment, the failure of Auburn to address this issue is a serious one.

   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.***

Again, this appears to be a matter of good intentions and abysmal results. In this case, however, this is as much or more a University-wide problem than one confined to the School of Communication and Journalism. It is especially striking as it pertains to the largest minority group in the state of Alabama, African-Americans. They comprise 27 percent of the state's population, but only 6 percent of Auburn's student body and 7 percent of the School of Communication and Journalism's.

As with faculty, there have certainly been efforts by the School to recruit more students of color. But as with faculty recruitment, those efforts have been largely ineffective. The site team witnessed the result of this failure in a poignant way, in a meeting of about 40 Public Relations students, all but one of them white. When we asked the students about the role of diversity in their education in the school, the single African-American student in the group, a female senior, raised her hand. "I am the only black student in the room, as I often am in my classes," she said. "I'll speak up here, though I am usually reluctant to speak up in my classes." She went on to describe specific instances where she thought she had an important perspective to add to a class discussion but felt intimidated to do so as the only African-American among a room full of white students.

Again, the School offers logical explanations for its shortcomings, chief among them the cost of attendance at Auburn versus its competitors especially when financial aid is figured in. The University of Alabama, Auburn's chief competitor, has a much more robust scholarship program targeting students of color. The director related an anecdote about an African-American student she had personally recruited

through a program focused on rural schools; he was offered a full scholarship by the University of Alabama and chose to matriculate there.

It is the site team's perception that tackling this issue has not been a high enough priority of previous University administrations. After meeting with the dean, provost and president, we are encouraged that new, more aggressive and potentially more effective strategies may be in the offing. The University has recently hired a new Chief Diversity Officer and has dedicated $1 million in new funds to her office.

Most significantly, perhaps, Auburn University has no need-based financial aid. The president indicated he expects that to change soon.

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.

Beyond the situation cited above, where sheer numbers can lead to subtle intimidation, we saw no evidence of harassment or discrimination. However, a member of the student Diversity Interest Group told us: "There are instances of microaggressions that students of color face very day. Those who cannot 'handle it,' keep up with the pressures of classes, and cost of attendance usually leave."

Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE

Table 4. Area Population 2016

Group	% of Population
White	65.8
Black/ African-American	26.8
Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	4.2
Two or more races	1.6
Asian	1.4
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	.70
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	.10
Female	51.6

Source: U.S. Census for State of Alabama – 2016

Table 5. Undergraduate Student Populations – 2016-2017

Group	Males	Females	% total in unit	% total in institution
White	72	304	80.2	80.8
Black/ African-American	11	23	7.2	6.6
Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	4	14	3.8	3.3
Asian	2	6	1.7	2.5
Two or more races	2	6	1.7	1.2
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1	3	.9	.5
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	.03
International students (any race)	1	0	.2	4.5

Source: Auburn University Office of Institutional Research Fall 2016

Table 6. Faculty Populations – 2016-2017 Full-time CMJN Faculty (n = 11)

Group	Female	% of total	Male	% of total
White	6	55%	3	27%
Asian	0	0	0	0
International	1	9%	1	9%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0
Black/ African-American	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more races	0	0	0	0

Faculty Populations – 2016-2017 Part-time/adjunct CMJN Faculty (14)

Group	Female	% of total	Male	% of total
White	4	28.6%	6	42.9%
Black/ African-American	2	14.3%	0	0
Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	1	7%	0	0
Two or more races	1	7%	0	0
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
International	0	0	0	0

Table 7. Full-time faculty recruitment

Academic Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Openings	4	3	2
Total Applicants in hiring pool	64	51	57
Females in hiring pool	26	15	30
Female finalists considered	8	3	3
Offers made to females	6	3	1
Offers accepted by females	3	1	0
Minorities in hiring pool	22	11	29
Minority finalists considered	2	1	3
Offers made to minorities	2	1	2
Offers accepted by minorities	1	0	1
International faculty in hiring pool*	N/A	N/A	N/A
International faculty considered	3	1	3
Offers made to international faculty	3	1	3
Offers accepted by international faculty	2	0	2

*The university does not track citizenship status of job candidates in the pool.
Note: Information is from EEO data forms that were requested from each applicant and must be returned by said applicant for inclusion in recruitment information. Therefore, the reported numbers may not accurately reflect the actual number of applicants and gender/minority status in the hiring.

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.

The School has a detailed plan on conducting searches for new faculty members. It details the make-up of who is eligible to serve on the search committee. Position announcements are placed in venues such as the Chronicle of Higher Education, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, National Communication Association, and Broadcast Education Association. The search committee Skypes with candidates before selecting three finalists for campus interviews. The search committee presents a recommendation to the faculty who then vote. The vote is advisory. The director makes the hiring offer after receiving approval from the dean and the provost.

Adjuncts are hired when needed. The associate directors work with the School director to identify potential adjuncts. Associate directors maintain a list of adjuncts who have been hired and vetted in previous semesters. If adjuncts receive strong evaluations, they remain in the pool and are typically the first to be rehired for the next semester.

Students interviewed were positive about the adjuncts teaching courses. They value the insight working professionals bring to the classroom.

All faculty members are reviewed annually in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Faculty Annual Reviews (FAR), as per university policy, have no bearing on tenure and promotion decisions. The director will rate each faculty member on each area of responsibility as exemplary, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, marginal or unacceptable.

All tenure-track faculty are reviewed by the Tenure and Promotion Committee each year. The full review process is outlined in the School faculty manual, and it reflects what is indicative of a third-year review. This process is designed to reflect the third-year review process with the goal of tenure-track faculty for their third-year review.

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

During the period under review, full-time faculty taught a majority of the courses. They taught 81 percent of the courses in the Fall of 2014. This number dropped to as low as 64 percent during the Spring of 2017. However, by Fall 2017, only 53 percent of the course sections (36 of 19) were taught by full-time faculty. It is important to note the numbers reflected from Fall 2014 until spring 2017 include the Media Studies (formerly known as RTVF) major that is no longer seeking accreditation.

Tenured/tenure-track faculty teach a 3:2 or 2:3 depending on the individual's preference. The typical teaching load for full-time lecturers and instructors is eight courses per academic year (4:4).

The self-study noted tenure-track faculty's assignment is broken into instruction (50 percent), research and creative work (45 percent) and service (5 percent). The assignment can also include outreach scholarship and administration when necessary. The percent assigned for research and creative activity can vary.

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.

During the 2016-2017 year, there were 11 faculty. Eight faculty (73%) held a doctoral degree, and three faculty had master's degrees (27%). There were two full professors, two associate professors, five assistant professors and two lecturers. A majority of the faculty have professional experience. They held 15 searches over the period being evaluated. The openings were a result of retirements, new positions, better offers or unsatisfactory progress toward tenure and promotion. All part-time faculty are currently still working or have retired from long media careers.

The faculty have access to the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. It offers Breeden Endowment Grants in support of teaching and learning projects. This resource is available to all full-time and part-time faculty.

One thing to note, the part-time faculty indicated they could have used more training prior to starting their courses. They did not feel prepared when entering the classroom their first semester. Also, several students noted their adjunct didn't have access to the course management system until well after the semester started, so it impacted them having a copy of the syllabus and access to course materials.

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

Students evaluate teachers every semester. The evaluation form is standard across the University. The director also rates each faculty member's teaching as: exemplary, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, marginal or unacceptable. Faculty also conduct peer reviews.

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

Representatives from around the University expressed regard for the School of Communication and Journalism. A number of them noted that student interns from the School are well-prepared for positions in their units. The director is proactive in seeking out partnerships to offer on-campus opportunities for students. The university representatives also indicated the director is setting goals so the School starts gaining national recognition.

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.

<u>Unit performance with regard to indicators:</u>

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

The School employs several methods to encourage and enhance the faculty research/creative experience. Graduate assistants are regularly assigned to faculty for semester-long support of their research or creative activity. Tenure-track faculty receive a course reduction their first year of service (2:2 rather than 3:2).

Travel funding is available for faculty to attend professional meetings and present research. All full-time faculty receive $3,000 in travel funding. Faculty may ask for more money if they run out. Tenure-track faculty indicated they felt like they had more than enough money to conduct research and travel to conferences.

The School's Jenny and Sarah Bronczek Fund for Excellence allows faculty, staff and students to apply for funding to summer research, travel to professional meetings, specialized research publications and other things. Multiple Bronczek awards ranging from $1,000 to $2,500, are made each fall and spring semester. Ten Bronczek awards were given out during the period under review.

The College offers competitive summer research grants for tenured faculty to support scholarly activity and professional growth. The funding of $10,000 can be used in summer salary or to support research-related travel expenses and/or travel. The College also approves one semester of paid leave at full salary for tenured faculty. The College awards faculty members $1,000 to use toward research-related expenses and/or travel. It also offers Competitive Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research and Humanities Grants for untenured or tenured faculty members. Four faculty in the School were recognized with the College's summer research grant or professional improvement leave during the period under review.

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

The University handbook states a candidate for tenure must demonstrate, "quality in the areas of (1) teaching, (2) research/creative work, (3) outreach, and (4) service, as described above under Promotion Criteria Considerations (Section 3.6.1) and, where applicable, in approved departmental guidelines…"

The School's promotion and tenure document states, "The candidate should demonstrate achievements in the areas of research or creative work, teaching, service and outreach if applicable. Although faculty members are not required to perform outreach, it may count toward tenure and promotion to associate professor. The candidate is also expected to work in a collegial manner with other faculty to advance the research, creative work, teaching, and service missions of the School. Because the School is home to a wide-range of disciplines, the candidate must provide a description of the appropriate context in which

her or his research or creative work is to be evaluated." The tenure-track faculty interviewed said it is clear and transparent what they need to do to earn tenure and promotion.

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 guidelines are very clear. They state "the candidate should have published a minimum number of refereed articles in her or his field of research as indicated in this manual…If the candidate's area of is qualitative in nature, she or he should either have published a minimum of five to seven journal articles…If the candidate's area is quantitative in nature, she or he should either have published a minimum of 10 to 12 peer-reviewed articles… The acceptance rate for the journals should not exceed 20%. In the case of a higher acceptance rate, it is incumbent on the candidate to justify its inclusion."

The guidelines also indicate faculty can count books and "other externally reviewed scholarly published or presented works… such as book chapters in edited volumes, edited volumes or books, book reviews, essays, encyclopedia entries, presentations of research papers at scholarly conferences, and/or invited lectures…"

The School also has clear guidelines for creative activity cases of promotion and tenure that state, "Invited exhibitions are a mark of distinction and should be weighted as such. The expected number of exhibitions will vary greatly depending on the candidate's medium, the scale and complexity of her or his work or design…an artist might be expected to have exhibited four to five works in juried, respected, national or international venues; a designer might be expected to exhibit eight to 10 projects in juried, respected, national or international venues…" Additional evidence to support tenure and promotion in the creative area includes: "awards, grants, commissions, reviews, catalogue reproductions, and articles and books addressing the candidate's work."

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.

The School has a productive faculty whose scholarly and creative work is disseminated across a variety of publications and venues. Faculty members have produced more than 200 conference papers, books, book chapters, scholarly articles and creative works.

Among the books published by the faculty are *The Moral Compass of Public Relations*, *Creating Citizens: Liberal Arts and Community & Civic Engagement in the Land-grant Tradition* and *Baseball's Third Commissioner*.

Faculty members have published 54 articles in scholarly journals such as *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, *Journalism Practice*, *Public Relations Review*, *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *Health Marketing Quarterly* and *Journal of Communication Management*.

Faculty members also presented 79 refereed conference papers at national conventions of the major academic organizations in the field, including the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, International Communication Association and the Broadcast Education Association.

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

Faculty members appreciate different points of view, and the various approaches each brings to the creation and dissemination of scholarship and creative activity.

Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				
		Full (2)	**Associate (5)**	**Assistant (10)**	**Other (2)**	**Totals (19)**
Awards and Honors	41	19	8	14	0	41
Grants Received Internal	18	1	2	15	0	18
Grants Received External	7	4	0	3	0	7
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	3	1	2	0	0	3
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books Edited	4	4	0	0	0	4
Books Chapters	10	3	3	4	0	10
Monographs	3	0	3	0	0	3
Articles in Refereed Journals	54	6	17	31	0	54
Refereed Conference Papers	79	10	22	47	0	79
Invited Academic Papers	6	1	2	3	0	6
Encyclopedia Entries	8	2	3	3	0	8
Book Reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juried Creative Works	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-juried Creative Works	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (refereed & invited conference panel presentations)	39	15	22	2	0	39

*Co-authored work should be 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

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.***

There are multiple portals that ensure students get academic and career advising and stay on course for graduation, beginning with the School website where students can view course listings and download curriculum sheets.

Incoming freshmen, transfer students and parents meet with advisors at the University's Camp War Eagle orientation session. Students also are required to meet with a College adviser during their first term, again as the completion of 60 hours and again at 90 hours for a graduation check before they are allowed to register.

School advisers teach breakout sessions of LBAR 2010, a careers preparation class, to explain what career options are available and help students settle on a sequence. Students also are directed to appropriate faculty for career- or pertinent course-related questions.

A Student Services Survey gives solid ratings to advisers. In meetings with students, nearly all reported they were on track to graduate within four years, although the unit's data shows that through 2013 – the latest year that data was available – graduation rates for the School lagged behind the University. The School and the University share retention and graduation data on its website. (http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cmjn/about/retention-and-graduation/).

In the student meeting, students overall said they were pleased with their advising experience within the School. A number of students, though, expressed frustration with the advising they received from the College of Liberal Arts, which employs special advisers who work with School students when they are pre-majors. In their dealings with CLA advisers, students reported, they had sometimes received bad or insufficient advice. These complaints about CLA advisors echo complaints from the 2012 accreditation report.

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

Faculty are required to hold a minimum of three office hours a week. Hours must be posted on office doors, included on syllabi and on faculty webpages. Student surveys generally find faculty accessible and helpful. In the site team's meetings with students, overall and by sequence, students said faculty made themselves available outside scheduled office hours and generally responded by telephone or email within 24 hours.

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

E-mail is the official method of contact with students and important announcements are also posted on the School's Facebook and Twitter accounts. For the internship course, the internship director uses the online software Canvas to send out assignments and reminders on deadlines and course-related requirements.

Students were especially effusive about the internship director and faculty assistance in landing internships, fellowships, networking opportunities and jobs.

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.***

Students avail themselves of a number of student media and student-run organizations and student professional organizations.

Student media include the Auburn Plainsman, a weekly student newspaper; The Chattahoochee Heritage Project, a web-based news and information service that focuses on the Chattahoochee River Valley; The Auburn Circle literary magazine; WEGL-FM student radio, and Eagle Eye News, a student television news organization. The student-media facilities are modern, well-equipped and impressive.

There also are chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists, Public Relations Student Society of America, the Public Relations Council of Alabama and Lambda Pi Eta honor society.

Additionally, the school hosts an annual Journalism Day, which brings in professionals to provide mentoring and advice to students, as well as an annual Career Day, which allows employers to meet students for internships and jobs.

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.***

The College and the School maintain their own records for each sequence as well as for the School overall. Retention rates for first-year students have fluctuated and lagged behind the University overall since 2012. For example, in 2012, 62.1 percent of freshmen in the School returned for their second year, compared with 90.9 percent for the University. In 2013, 60.6 percent of freshmen returned for their second year, compared to 93.9 percent for the University. In 2016, the latest year in the School's report, 74.7 percent of freshmen returned, compared to 97.8 percent for the University.

The School notes that a number of the students who are lost transfer to its Communication program, which is not accredited. The School also has launched a Finish in Four advising effort to help students stay on track to complete their degree within four years. Incoming students may opt to declare themselves Exploratory Majors while they determine which sequence best suits them.

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 School's 2016-2017 budget was $3.55 million, a 29 percent increase over 2014-2015. Most of the 2016-2017 budget – $1.95 million – is dedicated to salaries. The School has benefited from a new university-wide budgeting process – the Strategic Budgeting Initiative – which replaced the previous model of historical budgeting in which each year's budget was based on the previous year's funding. The strategic model has resulted in increased funds for both the College of Liberal Arts and the School.

The School's Executive Council, composed of the School's director, all tenured faculty and one member of the untenured faculty, review and approve the School's budget and the allocation of resources, building on its long-term Strategic Plan adopted in 2014. A faculty development committee oversees a $18,000 endowment fund used to support faculty and graduate students. Funds are dispersed yearly.

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.

Current resources are adequate to meet the needs of the School, faculty and students. The School's budget covers salaries and daily operations, and additional revenue from summer tuition, fundraising and other initiatives provide additional resources for faculty and student travel, scholarships, supplies, faculty development and additional technology.

Faculty members report that they have the resources they need. New faculty members receive a startup fund, and all faculty members receive $3,000 a year for travel, plus the assurance of additional funding should the need arise.

The Strategic Budgeting Initiative funding model resulted in a $12 million budget surplus at the end of 2016-2017 in the College of Liberal Arts, which was divided among schools and departments in the unit. The School of Communication and Journalism – the only school in the College that includes 12 other departments – reports that its funding compares favorably with other units in the College.

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

The School occupies the first and second floors of Tichenor Hall, a building centrally located on campus and within easy walking distance of the University's administrative offices. Additional classrooms are nearby in Haley Center and Biggin Hall. Tichenor has 42,000 square feet and was remodeled in 2009. Each tenured and tenure-track faculty member has his/her own office, and lecturers and full-time instructors share offices. Classrooms and computer labs in the building are all equipped with a modern instructor workstation with document camera, projection screen and the like.

Students and faculty alike report considerable satisfaction with the facilities.

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.

All faculty are provided computers, and students have access to several computer labs in Tichenor Hall. Each of the three labs has recently updated Mac computers with 18 to 20 seats per room, all with access to the Adobe Creative Suite. A partnership with Raycom Media provides student access to a television studio in one of the computer labs, and the School's collaboration with War Eagle Productions, the university's video services unit, allows students opportunities for hands-on work with productions for the SEC Network. Student media facilities are modern and up to date.

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

Students and faculty have easy access to nearby Ralph Brown Draughon Library, and digital resources are readily available.

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.

<u>Unit performance with regard to indicators:</u>

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.

Journalism alumni are particularly engaged with the School, frequently returning to participate at Journalism Day, Career Day and the annual Journalism Awards luncheon. The alumni serve as mentors and class visitors and students have benefited from the networking opportunity to land internships and jobs.

Journalism Day brings alumni and media professionals to campus for panels. Past speakers included: Will Lochamy, commentator for the SEC Network; Michael Doudna, political reporter for Raycom Media, and Kay Acton, former editor-in-chief of Coastal Living. Alumni are regular speakers for the PRSSA/PRCA chapters. They have included professionals and alumni in resume workshops, and panel Q&A.

The Journalism Advisory Council, which represents professionals across media disciplines, advises the School on curriculum and development. Auburn's student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists invites alumni and other professionals to speak at scheduled meetings and alumni who happen to be visiting campus will often let professors know they are available to speak to classes, if so desired.

Alumni working in public relations are regular speakers for the PRSSA/PRCA chapters. They have included professionals and alumni in resume workshops, and panel Q&A. There was a PR Day in 2014 where Duncan Wardle, vice president for innovation and creativity at Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, was the keynote speaker. Alumni are regularly guest speakers in the classroom.

The School's main form of communication with alumni is online through its Facebook and Twitter accounts. There is also a LinkedIn group for internships and job postings. The self-study states both sequences e-mail alumni on a regular basis. Alumni also receive the College's alumni magazine once a year.

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.

Faculty participate in a wide range of professional and public-service activities, especially lecturing, presenting papers and serving as reviewers for articles, journals and promotion dossiers and extensive committee work. Faculty also participate in partnerships and collaborative efforts with media professions, notably Raycom, the SEC Network and the Alabama Press Association.

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.

Full-time faculty receive $3,000 in travel funding each year to conduct research and attend professional meetings. Additional travel funding may be requested from the School's Executive Council if it exceeds the $3,000 allotment.

Faculty, staff and students also may apply for $1,000-$2,500 in funding from the Jenny and Sarah Bronczek Fund for Excellence to support a variety of endeavors, including summer research, travel to professional meetings, specialized research and student scholarships.

The School also provides leaves to tenured faculty to encourage scholarly research activity and professional work experiences.

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.

There is limited evidence of the unit's involvement with the community or region beyond the University. A number of the School's events are open to the public to provide exposure to speakers who address issues of public interest and/or consequence. Public lectures have included local journalists who covered the civil rights movement, nationally known journalists, including former New York Times executive editor and Pulitzer Prize winner Howell Raines, TV journalist Lisa Ling, as well as faculty who have participated in public symposiums sponsored by the Caroline Marchall Draughton Center for the Arts and Humanities and the Auburn University Center for Cross-Cultural Understanding.

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

The Journalism program has hosted fall regional meetings of the Alabama Scholastic Press Association for high school journalists. Faculty serve as workshop leaders.

The School's director also has worked extensively on projects that provide journalistic assistance and guidance to rural schools, particularly the Program for the Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools, in which elementary, middle and high school students were taught to conduct interviews, record video and audio and how to use editing software. She also travels to rural schools once or twice a year to instruct and mentor students and give teachers lecture materials, assignments and projects.

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 the Council.***

• *Who is in charge of the assessment program (e.g., administrator, sequence coordinator or faculty committee)?*

The director works with the journalism assessment director and the public relations assessment director.

• *How has the unit verified that core and required courses cover all 12 of ACEJMC's professional values and competencies?*

The Journalism sequence has a curriculum map that indicates which course meets each of the 12 competencies. The faculty have indicated if the course introduces concepts tied to the competencies, reinforces material tied to the competencies or provides content for students to master the concept. The Journalism sequence has developed an exit survey that asks students if they agree or disagree with 12 statements – one statement for each competency – on a 5-point scale. They have used this measure from 2013-2017. Means indicate students strongly agree that they have been exposed to and learned the material tied to the 12 ACEJMC competencies.

The Public Relations sequence is not measuring the 12 competencies when examining the curriculum map. Faculty interviews indicated the University's assessment officer told them measuring the 12 competencies was too complicated. The PR faculty decided to merge competencies. However, when reviewing the merged categories shown in the curriculum map, it is quite unclear how some of the categories evaluated are tied to the 12 competencies. In addition, the PR sequence's exit survey is not tied to the 12 competencies. The measure seemed to change from year to year as the assessment person changed. The University did not do any type of formal assessment in 2014-15 because the University's assessment office was under new leadership and decided to update the assessment instruments.

ACEJMC clearly states that all students, regardless of major, need to be assessed on the 12 competencies. The PR sequence is currently not doing that. For example, the PR faculty decided the PR students could take a law class in business rather than mass communication. It is strongly suggested they use the assessment survey developed by the Journalism sequence. It would also be beneficial if they did not reword the questions to make them PR-specific so it is easier to see the tie to the ACEJMC language.

• *How has the unit ensured that the syllabi for these courses state learning outcomes that address the values and competencies appropriate for each course?*

When evaluating the syllabi, there are learning objectives. The Journalism syllabi include course objectives. Some Journalism syllabi also include a list of the ACEJMC competencies. However, when reviewing the syllabi, there are some inconsistencies when looking at the learning objectives for courses with multiple sections (e.g., JRNL2210 Newswriting, JRNL 3010 Digital News Production and JRNL 3220 Magazine and Feature Writing). One course not only had different learning objectives but also a

different course title. The syllabi for the PR sequence do not include the ACEJMC competencies, which is fine, but they are much better at making sure the learning objectives are the same across multiple course sections.

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

• *What direct measures of assessment does the unit use, where in the curriculum and when?*

The self-study lists a number of direct assessments employed by the Journalism sequence. They use test scores for JRNL 1AA0/1100 Journalism Fundamentals to prepare students for the major. They use internship evaluations later in the program, and finally a graduation exit survey tied to the 12 ACEJMC competencies is used during the final semester of the program. Samples of these assessments and data were provided to the site team.

The PR sequence uses the same direct assessments employed by the Journalism sequence. However, the exit surveys are not easily tied to the 12 ACEJMC competencies. There are some weak ties, but the wording of the questions do not precisely reflect the competencies. Samples of these assessments and data were provided to the site team, which is how it was determined the PR sequence needed to update their assessment instruments.

• *What indirect measures does it use, where and when?*

The self-study lists a number of indirect assessment measures including: an alumni survey, faculty evaluations, student retention and graduation rates, and feedback from industry professionals. The School sends an alumni survey every other year to undergraduate alumni. Faculty evaluations are employed every semester, but this might not be the best measure of program assessment. The student retention and graduation rates are tracked by major and provided by the University. The Journalism faculty recruit industry professionals to review student work. However, the PR sequence does not do this. Both sequences rely heavily on internship evaluations as the main form of industry feedback.

• *Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC's professional values and competencies?*

No. Both sequences are lacking in professional input to close the loop in the curriculum. Internship scores are one way to gather professional input, but there is a lack of industry professional evaluation of coursework. They are currently working to reestablish their advisory boards. Once the advisory boards are up and running, it is strongly suggested both sequences rely on these professionals to evaluate coursework tied to the competencies in order to make sure the School's curriculum is meeting the ACEJMC standards. The alumni survey, faculty evaluations and student retention and graduation rates are not easily tied to the 12 ACEJMC professional values and competencies.

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

• *How does the unit collect and analyze the findings and identify unsatisfactory learning of specific values and competencies?*

The Journalism sequence's exit survey does a good job measuring student learning on specific values and competencies. There is one question tied to each competency placed on a five-point Likert scale. The PR sequences' exit survey is not as easily tied to the specific values and competencies. The faculty look at the mean scores on the exit survey, and then they discuss how to improve the curriculum to make students feel more confident in meeting that competency.

• *What specific values and competencies had graduating classes not mastered satisfactorily?*

The Journalism sequence appears to be mastering the competencies when reviewing the assessment data. When looking at the 2013-17 exit survey data for Journalism, students indicate they have mastered most ACEJMC competencies. Using the 5-point scale where 1 equals strongly agree to 5 indicates strong disagreement, the means for the competencies ranged from 1.44-1.85 for the freedom of speech and press; 1.50-2.22 for the history and role of the profession; 1.10-1.92 for the understanding of gender/race/ethnicity/sexual orientation; 1.20-2.08 for applying theory; 1.25-2.00 for ethical principles; 1.33-2.06 for critical thinking; 1.25-2.15 for evaluating information; 1.17-2.00 for writing correctly and clearly in multiple forms; 1.08-2.08 for evaluating their own work and others for accuracy and fairness; 1.78-3.23 for the ability to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; and 1.11-1.94 for the ability to use current tools and technologies. Students in the Journalism sequence seem to feel confident about their abilities related to the 12 ACEJMC competencies.

However, this type of data is not as clear for the PR sequence. When examining the 2015-16 PR assessment report, they have 10 outcomes tied to content, critical thinking and communication. There are some loose ties to the 12 ACEJMC competencies. At the end of the report it states "No results are reportable at this time based on the proposed outcomes." When looking at the appendix called 2017 Public Relations Assessment, it states "no data for our direct measures were available at the time of this report." Only 11 students responded to the exit survey during the Spring of 2017. When reviewing the responses in this report, the questions are not the same at the questions used in the 2015-16 report that did not include any data. There is not enough data here to fully understand if the PR students are grasping the 12 competencies or not because the assessment instrument has been inconsistent and there is a lack of statistical data.

• *How does the unit decide how to address these areas of concern and what actions did it take to do so?*

The self-study states the Journalism sequence updated its curriculum to include more multimedia. They adapted a new course book for their newswriting course. They also updated the learning objectives for this course. The Journalism sequence also sent out the first and last of the assignments to industry professionals to improve the content in the reporting course in 2014. They also relied on the exit survey that indicated students did not obtain enough page design experience while in the editing and design course. The faculty teaching the course updated the content based on the exit survey data.

The PR sequence put more emphasis on students gaining public speaking skills based on the 2013 exit survey data. They incorporated more discussion opportunities in the PR curriculum.

• *How does the unit evaluate whether its actions overcame the weaknesses in student learning and what were the results?*

In the self-study under the header "Closing the Loop," it notes they internship evaluation scores are tabulated. They compare the scores to previous semesters to detect trends.

• *Was the program of data analysis and action effective for identifying and overcoming unsatisfactory student learning?*

The Journalism program data presented is effective for identifying and overcoming student learning issues. However, the PR program data is lacking. It is incomplete and hard to assess because the assessment instrument changes and is not easily tied to the 12 ACEJMC competencies.

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

Both sequences have had inactive alumni boards during the period under review. They are currently re-establishing them.

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

The Journalism faculty did include professionals in review of class project for reporting in 2014. There was no mention of this type of professional involvement when reviewing the PR sequence assessment information.

Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS:

- Strong, capable leadership of the unit in Director Dr. Jennifer Adams, who has the confidence of the faculty and her dean.
- Excellent, committed, responsive faculty members. The Journalism sequence faculty is especially admired by students.
- Excellent opportunities for students to work in both student media and with professional partners during the school year.
- A strong internship director who gathers and provides outstanding opportunities to students.
- Up-to-date equipment and good (though space-constrained) facilities both in the School and for student media.
- Efforts to keep the curriculum up to date and appealing to students.
- Outstanding student advising services within the School.

WEAKNESSES:

- A striking lack of diversity, especially domestic minorities, among full-time faculty, mitigated only modestly by adjuncts.
- An overwhelmingly white student body that does not begin to reflect the population of Alabama or the region.
- Absence of focused instruction and discussion on diversity and inclusion in course syllabi.
- Structural and instructional problems in the Public Relations curriculum, leading some students to be ill-prepared for internships and employment.
- Assessment instrument for the PR sequence is not tied to ACEJMC's 12 values and competencies.
- Lack of assessment data for the PR sequence for the period under review.
- Lack of input from professionals and alumni in the assessment process.
- Uneven student advising services in the College of Liberal Arts.
- Limited community involvement by faculty beyond the University, at least in what is reflected in the self-study.

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

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Standard 3: Lack of diversity of full-time faculty, especially of domestic minorities. Lack of diversity of the student body, nowhere near that of the region from which the School draws. An absence of focused instruction and discussion on diversity in the syllabi of many courses, reflected in some of what we heard in meetings with students.

Standard 9: Lack of programmatic assessment data for the Public Relations sequence. The 12 ACEJMC competencies are not clearly addressed by the PR sequence assessment. For both sequences, alumni and professionals are not included in a meaningful manner in the assessment process, beyond internship evaluations.

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

Standard 3: The School should develop new strategies for recruitment of faculty and students of color, particularly domestic minorities, that are more likely to have a successful result. On the faculty side, those could include consideration of a "professor of practice" designation, and far better use of adjunct positions to diversity faculty. On the student side, those could include new targeted scholarships, reinstatement of the high-school journalism workshop and other targeted outreach efforts by the School, the College and the University.

Standard 9: The School should revise their assessment instrument for the Public Relations sequence so it includes measures easily tied to the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies. Once the advisory boards are back in place, these individuals should be included in the program assessment to get a broader sense of student preparedness prior to them having internships and only relying on assessment supervisor reports.

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

NA

6) *If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.*

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

> The deficiencies were:

- The unit was counting practicum hours as general electives outside the major.
- Internships were granted more than three credits.
- Majors were unable to get the classes they needed to graduate on time.
- The criteria used to define skills classes vs. non-skills classes were too limited.

> Each of these were corrected. Practicum hours are no longer counted as electives. Internships are limited to three hours. Instructors were hired and sections were added. New, clearer, broader definitions for skills classes were created.

Standard 6: Student Services

> The deficiencies were:

- Insufficient resources for advising majors.
- Inadequate understanding of the unit's majors by the College of Liberal Arts advisers.

These appear to have been addressed, although students still complained about the lack of understanding of their major requirements by some CLA advisers. The School did add a second student adviser and has channeled more resources into student services.

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 was generally good, though there were some gaps in material and data that we normally would expect and had to seek out. That said, the director was responsive in getting us what we needed, and quickly.