

## Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC  
Undergraduate program  
2018-2019

Name of Institution: **Savannah State University**

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Dr. Cheryl D. Dozier**

Name of Unit: **Department of Journalism and Mass Communications**

Name and Title of Administrator: **Dr. Juliana Maria Trammel, interim chair**

Date of 2018-2019 Accrediting Visit: **Feb. 3-6, 2019**

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **Feb. 3-6, 2013**

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

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

Recommendation by 2018-2019 Visiting Team: **Reaccreditation**

*Prepared and submitted by:*

### Team Chair

Name and Title: **Caesar Andrews, Leonard Distinguished Chair in Media Ethics and Writing**  
Organization/School: **Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada, Reno**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Team Members

Name and Title: **Dr. Jannette Dates, Former Dean, School of Communications**  
Organization/School: **Howard University (retired)**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: **Samuel L. Waltz Jr., APR, Fellow PRSA, Founding Publisher**  
Organization/School: **Delaware Business Times; 1999 National President, PRSA**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I: General Information**

Name of Institution: **Savannah State University**

Name of Unit: **Department of Journalism and Mass Communications**

Year of Visit: **2018-2019 academic year**

**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. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.**

Savannah State University was established November 26, 1890, when the Georgia General Assembly, as a result of mandates from the Second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890, created Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youths as the first publicly supported black land-grant college in Georgia's history. The Georgia Board of Regents changed the name to Georgia State College in 1932, to Savannah State College in 1950, and to Savannah State University in 1996.

**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:** 2013

**5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC?** 2007

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

**Mission Statement**  
**Department of Journalism and Mass Communications**  
*(Adopted 2005-2006, Revised 2011-2012 and 2018-2019)*

The Department's mission is to develop students in journalism and mass communications in a student-centered environment that fosters understanding of African American and other diverse cultures in the world, prepared to integrate multiple skill sets suitable for further academic advancement or for local, national, and global professional employment in an ever-changing media landscape.

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

Semesters of 15 weeks

Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Summer sessions of 6 and 4 weeks

Intersessions of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

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

A four-year program leading to a bachelor of arts degree in mass communications.

Sequences: (1) journalism, (2) public relations and strategic communication, and (3) multimedia and digital communications

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

122 semester credit hours (for journalism and mass communications)

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

Savannah State University has one professional media internship course with 3 semester hours of credit – COMM 4902: professional media internship. In this course, students may earn a maximum of 3 semester hours of internship credit based on at least 80 completed work hours per course credit hour.

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

Name of Sequence	Coordinators
Journalism	Jessica Sparks
Public Relations and Strategic Communication	Juliana Trammel
Multimedia and Digital Communications	Reginald Franklin

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

Enrollment	Fall Census Year
4,077	2018
4,429	2017
4,955	2016

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):

**JMC MAJOR COUNT, SPRING 2018**

Sequence	Count
Journalism	38
Public Relations and Strategic Communication	55
Multimedia and Digital Communications	236
Undeclared Sequence	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>

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.)

Semester	Course Prefix	Course Number	Section	Course Title	Enrollment
<b>SPRING 2019</b>					
SPRING 2019	COMM	2101	1	Writing for Multimedia	19
SPRING 2019	COMM	2101	2	Writing for Multimedia	6
SPRING 2019	COMM	2101	3	Writing for Multimedia	18
SPRING 2019	COMM	3110	1	Multimedia Design & Production	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	3201	1	Feature Reporting and Writing	4
SPRING 2019	COMM	3301	1	Intro to Multimedia Production	20

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<b>Semester</b>	<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
SPRING 2019	COMM	3301	2	Intro to Multimedia Production	18
SPRING 2019	COMM	3301	3	Intro to Multimedia Production	14
SPRING 2019	COMM	3302	1	Speech for Multimedia	19
SPRING 2019	COMM	3303	1	Scriptwriting for Multimedia	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	3303	3	Scriptwriting for Multimedia	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4101	1	Strategic Comm. Writing	11
SPRING 2019	COMM	4106	1	Comm. Practicum PR/Journalism	19
SPRING 2019	COMM	4106	2	Comm. Practicum Multimedia	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4107	1	Adv. Video & Post Production	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4107	2	Adv. Video & Post Production	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4110	1	Audio Production Sound Design	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4110	2	Audio Production Sound Design	20
SPRING 2019	COMM	4170	1	Ind. Std.: Magazine Writ & Report	4
SPRING 2019	COMM	4201	1	Copy Editing	6
SPRING 2019	COMM	4902	1	Professional Media Internship	16
SPRING 2019	COMM	3303	4	Scriptwriting for Multimedia	5
SPRING 2019	COMM	4815	1	The Documentary	10
SPRING 2019	COMM	4815	2	The Documentary	10
SPRING 2019	COMM	3401	1	Intro to PR & Strategic Comm.	8
SPRING 2019	COMM	4406	1	Strategic Campaign Production	10
<b>FALL 2018</b>					
FALL 2018	COMM	2101	2	Writing for Multimedia	19
FALL 2018	COMM	2101	3	Writing for Multimedia	17
FALL 2018	COMM	2101	4	Writing for Multimedia	12
FALL 2018	COMM	2101	7	Writing for Multimedia	17
FALL 2018	COMM	3102	1	Photography for Multimedia	17
FALL 2018	COMM	3105	2	News Writing & Reporting	12
FALL 2018	COMM	3110	1	Multimedia Design & Production	9
FALL 2018	COMM	3110	2	Multimedia Design & Production	
FALL 2018	COMM	3201	1	Feature Reporting and Writing	6
FALL 2018	COMM	3301	1	Intro to Multimedia Production	23
FALL 2018	COMM	3301	2	Intro to Multimedia Production	19
FALL 2018	COMM	3301	3	Intro to Multimedia Production	19
FALL 2018	COMM	3302	1	Speech for Multi-Media	19
FALL 2018	COMM	3303	1	Scriptwriting for Multimedia	25
FALL 2018	COMM	3306	1	Introduction Audio Production	21
FALL 2018	COMM	3306	2	Introduction Audio Production	6
FALL 2018	COMM	3401	1	Intro to PR & Strategic Comm.	16
FALL 2018	COMM	4101	1	Strategic Comm. Writing	9
FALL 2018	COMM	4106	1	Comm. Practicum PRA/JOUR	25
FALL 2018	COMM	4106	2	Comm. Practicum AVP	25
FALL 2018	COMM	4107	1	Adv. Video & Post Production	21
FALL 2018	COMM	4107	2	Adv. Video & Post Production	18
FALL 2018	COMM	4110	1	Advanced Audio Production	20
FALL 2018	COMM	4110	2	Advanced Audio Production	12
FALL 2018	COMM	4406	1	Strategic Campaign Production	13
<b>Semester</b>	<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>

FALL 2018	COMM	4815	2	The Documentary	19
FALL 2018	COMM	4902	1	Professional Media Internship	17
FALL 2018	COMM	4902	2	Professional Media Internship	10

**ONLINE SKILLS COURSES, SPRING 2018 - SPRING 2019**

Semester	Course Prefix	Course Number	Section	Course Title	Enrollment
SPRING 2018	COMM	3951	2	Special Topic: Memoir & Family	16

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2018–2019 academic year. Give percentage increase or decrease in three years. Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:**

Fiscal Year	Total Budget Expenditures	Percentage Increase in Three Years	Full-Time Faculty Salaries
2019	\$1,081,103.00	+16.8%	\$588,259.00

**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.**

**FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS, 2013 - 2018 (N=15)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Term</b>
Dr. Serajul Bhuiyan	Full Professor	2017 - Present
Dr. Bernard Bongang	Full Professor   Joint Appointment with Political Science	2018 - Present
Dr. Juliana Trammel	Associate Professor, Interim Department Chair	2007 - Present
Reginald Franklin	Associate Professor	1998 - Present
Wanda Lloyd	Associate Professor	2013 - 2016 (retired)
Jessica Sparks	Assistant Professor	2013 - Present
Kai Walker	Assistant Professor	2003 - Present
Dr. Theo Plothe	Assistant Professor	2018 - Present
Sandra Earley	Assistant Professor	2012 - 2018 (retired)
Phelps Hawkins	Assistant Professor	2011 - 2018 (retired)
Angela Wilson	Assistant Professor	2012 - 2018
Dr. Weranuj Ariyasriwantana	Visiting Assistant Professor	2018 - Present
Tracy Haynes	Full-Time Temporary Instructor	2014 - Present
Jason Miccolo Johnson	Full-Time Temporary Instructor	2015 - Present
Lester Sloan	Visiting Instructor	2013 - 2015

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2018. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2018. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2019, please provide the spring 2019 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

**PART-TIME FACULTY, SPRING 2018 - SPRING 2019  
(N=10)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Semester(s) Taught</b>
Dr. Lisa Yount	Associate Professor (Philosophy/Gender Studies)	Spring 2019
Novella Cross-Holmes	Part-Time Instructor	Spring 2018
Marius Davis	Part-Time Instructor	Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
Dr. John Ledingham	Part-Time Instructor	Fall 2018
William Martin	Part-Time Instructor	Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
Dr. Dustin Michael	Associate Professor (English)	Fall 2018
Stephanie Roberts	Part-Time Instructor	Fall 2018
Melanie Smith	Part-Time Instructor	Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
Margaret Williams	Part-Time Instructor	Spring 2018
Joyce White	Part-Time Instructor	Fall 2018

**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.

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of Graduates</b>	<b>Percentage Earning 72 or more semester hours outside JMC</b>
2017-2018	70	100%
2016-2017	83	100%

**20. Schools on the quarter system:**

N/A (SSU on the semester system)



## **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.*

**OVERVIEW:** In the six years since Savannah State University's Department of Journalism and Mass Communications last earned reaccreditation, the program has experienced successes that demonstrate continued vitality and promise. Assessment strategies and practices evolved significantly, strengthening the visibility of ACEJMC's 12 values and competencies throughout curriculum. Teaching quality remained a core objective. The unit launched a film festival and a high school media camp. Its Southern Press Regional Institute, a collegiate training conference mainstay, was preparing for its 68th annual conference this year. It added splendid broadcast studios, in the wake of a fire that accelerated Departmental relocation to a new home.

While the Department enjoyed periods of significant momentum during this cycle, it also struggled through periodic instability in its leadership ranks. The position of Department chair was occupied by two new hires and several interim appointees during this phase, including the leader in place at the time of the reaccreditation site visit, Feb. 3-6, 2019. Additionally, the University's upper administration experienced its own frequent rounds of personnel changes, further complicating operations across the campus, including Journalism and Mass Communications.

The August 2015 fire inside the John F. Kennedy Fine Arts Building, a facility shared by the Department and other units reporting to the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, damaged the broadcast studio, along with substantial other areas, forcing classroom and office relocation to trailers and other temporary venues across the campus. In January 2018, the unit fully landed with a renewed sense of purpose at Whiting Hall, a building shared with the College of Education. Many in the Department consider Whiting a net gain over their previous home.

The self-study more than once cites resilience as a defining characteristic of this unit. The same can be said of the University. Its origins trace back to Georgia State Industrial College of Colored Youths, created in 1890 as the first public land-grant college for blacks in Georgia. That African American legacy looms large as a point of pride today. Even as the Department and University expand their approach to diversity by recruiting more faculty, staff and students beyond just its historic African American base, cultural awareness remains a cornerstone of the Department.

The Department was initially accredited by ACEJMC in 2007 as the first and still only HCBU in Georgia with that status. It was reaccredited in 2013. Enrollment surges witnessed by the Department and by the University in the immediate years that followed were reversed in recent semesters.

During the current period of budget reductions at the University, as at other public institutions in Georgia, enrollment losses have intensified Savannah State's struggle for financial stability. Among the main sources of this dilemma, as explained by the provost, are changes in the University's enrollment management strategies and stricter state-mandated policies on how long students with unpaid tuition bills can remain enrolled. The provost noted the disproportionate impact of this state policy on students from lower-income households.

Accreditation apparently offers some limited protections for some if not all resources in the Department

of Journalism and Mass Communications, one of few accredited units at Savannah State University. For example, and significantly, the provost and dean both confirmed that the unit will fill two currently open faculty lines. They both also talked about urgency in addressing the Department's leadership uncertainty, starting with a fresh search for a new chair.

In the team's estimation, stabilizing the role of Department chair will position the unit to build upon momentum already apparent during the site visit. Aside from the lack of continuity compromising Standard 1, the program shows evidence of solid performances that range between solid and occasionally outstanding.

#### **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 Department has a mission statement and a strategic plan, both updated in 2018. Mission statement revisions were implemented, according to the self-study, "to better capture the current direction of the Department's commitments."

The most recent statement: "*The Department's mission is to develop students in journalism and mass communications in a student-centered environment that fosters understanding of African American and other diverse cultures in the world, prepared to integrate multiple skills sets suitable for further academic advancement or for local, national, and global professional employment in an ever-changing media landscape.*"

The Department's strategic plan is aligned with the University's, with both covering the same six-year period, 2014-20. Five broad-based priorities anchor the Department's document, each enumerated upon with a list of specific objectives, such as expanding student media centers, accelerating when students start preparation for senior portfolios, and targeting skills necessary to drive job placement of program graduates in growing local business sectors. Each objective is in turn supported by a list of action-steps for achieving each objective. In the written document, the unit adds a checkmark next to goals as they are achieved. At the time of site visit, more than half of what the unit labels "enabling strategies" were completed. Other goals were preceding at various stages of completion.

The vice president and provost, on the job for 13 months and holding a faculty appointment in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications based on his multiple years as a broadcast professional and media education administrator elsewhere, expressed support for the unit and its role in the University's strategic future. The dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences likewise recognized the strategic value of the Department. As evidence of commitment, he pointed to two unfilled faculty lines now targeted for searches, one PR, the other news. In addition, he said the University is on the verge of launching a search for Department chair.

Both the provost and dean acknowledged the role of accreditation in their outlook on the Department. During a time of budget, faculty and staff reductions for much of the campus, both said Journalism and Mass Communications is less likely to face similar severe cuts.

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

The Savannah State University Faculty Handbook and other documents provided to the site team thoroughly outline faculty engagement in governance at three levels – University, College and Department. As is customary for all units, the Department selects its representative for the Faculty Senate, the legislative body that establishes and oversees faculty policies and academic programs across the campus. Within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the Department’s interim chair serves on that dean’s leadership Council. Within the Department, a collection of permanent and ad-hoc committees are the primary vehicles for faculty’s engagement in unit policy-making and ongoing operations. Self-study narrative, meeting minutes and conversations with faculty support the notion that shared governance is a reality.

**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 Department experienced periods of momentum and instability in its leadership during the past six years. The instability resembles concerns cited in the previous site team’s report, in 2013. At the same time, the snapshot scenario during the site team’s campus visit was characterized by signs of energy, focus and renewal.

An interim chair was directing the unit at the time of site visit. She is a tenured professor, on the faculty 12 years, and notable for, among other things, award-winning research and scholarship. She was named interim chair in 2018 by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. She succeeded a chair who was hired from outside the unit in 2017, and who remained a tenured member of the faculty upon forced departure from the chair’s position in August 2018. The self-study noted that the search for a permanent chair is anticipated by fall 2019.

In the six years under review in the current accreditation cycle, more than half were under the leadership of a former top editor for several news organizations known for her vast managerial and administrative experience. According to the self-study, she “oversaw a period of growth and transition for the Department before her retirement.”

During that period, a fire inside the building the Department shared with other Liberal Arts units destroyed a significant volume of equipment, offices, classrooms and files. By most accounts, the unit worked through disruptions with resolve, managing to get through classes temporarily set up in trailers, while navigating ad hoc office arrangements for faculty and staff.

When the former editor decided to retire as chair, one of the longest-serving associate professors became interim leader of the program until the search for a successor ended in 2017. During this period, the Department moved into Whiting Hall. The unit cheered the new home’s TV studios and the added space for a student media center and work areas envisioned for a student strategic communications agency.

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

The dean of the College directs the search process for the Department chair, working through a Search Committee that assesses candidates, conducts interviews and offers ranked recommendations. The dean appoints the chair, subject to approval of the University's provost and president.

In the case of the current interim chair appointment, the dean, in consultation with the provost, made the selection.

The dean conducts annual evaluations for Department chairs in the College. Evaluation of chairs follows procedures established by the University for senior administrators. Guidelines target six performance areas:

1. Leadership qualities.
2. Management style.
3. Planning.
4. Communication.
5. Diversity efforts and results.
6. Achievement of objectives.

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

The Department adheres to the University's guidelines on grievances and appeals. Policies are detailed in the faculty handbook.

**SUMMARY:** The past six years are characterized by multiple changes in Department leadership. A fire in 2015 not only ruined portions of the Department's building, it also redirected significant energies of the leadership, faculty and staff toward just surviving disruptions. The unit still managed to score notable gains in assessment, curriculum and advising, among other areas. Despite enrollment decreases for the University and most academic units, including the journalism program, and in the face of budgetary challenges and instability among some top administrative positions, the Department continued to fulfill its primary mission – educating students, many often categorized as at-risk. But too many disruptive changes in leadership prevent the unit from maximizing its fullest potential.

**Overall evaluation compliance/noncompliance:**

**NON-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:**

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communications (JMC) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication in three concentrations:

- Journalism.
- Multimedia and Digital Communications.
- Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

Working with JMC's Advisory Board, the Department updated its curriculum in 2018 and revised sequence titles to match a broader array of skill-sets for industries increasingly focused on multimedia and social media.

The unit's faculty adopted ACEJMC's 12 core values and competencies.

Students in the Department are required to complete a professional internship prior to graduation and the unit has an internship coordinator.

Students have been hired as interns at a variety of established media outlets and firms.

Savannah State University has a vibrant core curriculum that ensures a strong liberal arts educational foundation for JMC majors.

**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.**

Review of student records indicates that this requirement is achieved.

**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.**

Based on the Department's review of its curriculum in the six-year accreditation review period, classes are balanced. The dean and provost said the course offerings are viewed as a creative opportunity to increase enrollments and enhance the reputational halo of the University, as well as the Department.

**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.**

Student feedback was positive, with no negative comments on instructions expressed by more than two dozen students meeting with the team in three separate meetings. Students said a good offering of coursework is available, and that digital and multimedia instruction is offered with excellent technology support. Students spoke enthusiastically with regard to their multimedia activities, and several voiced career interests in areas that had been encouraged in their classroom experiences and through other interactions with faculty and staff.

**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.)**

The Department said it has gone out of its way most semesters to make certain that classroom ratios do not exceed ACEJMC's 20-1 standard, although that has not always been the case. In spring 2019, classes were fully in compliance.

**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.**

Internship- and externship-type opportunities are a strong suit of the Department, which requires such experience for graduation. Given that the University is based in a mid-sized city, with a blend of public sector, private sector and other (e.g., not-for-profit) employers, opportunities for such work are abundant, and the Department seems to go out of its way to cultivate more.

**SUMMARY:** Progress in managing curriculum seemed to proceed even as the program confronted major disruptions.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:**

**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 unit has a written diversity plan that focuses on diversity defined as a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the unique beliefs, values, skills, attributes and characteristics of all individuals in an environment that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement. Within the plan, the Department has five diversity priorities: a diverse curriculum, cultural understanding and sensitivity, a diverse faculty, a diverse student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning, free of harassment and discrimination.

**b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of 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.**

A majority of courses in the Department not only introduce the concept of domestic and global diversity but also assess the related learning outcomes. While acknowledging its role as a mass communications unit at an HBCU, the Department also focuses on its commitment to diversity and inclusiveness beyond race. Thus, although the Department's main goal is to prepare African Americans /Blacks for jobs in the U.S. professional media where they, and other minorities, are vastly underrepresented, the Department's mission also includes the recruitment of Caucasian and Latino students. The unit's stated goal of inclusiveness is designed to also bring together a more diverse student population that reflects the citizens in the surrounding community and the professional world students aspire to join, upon graduation.

Working with the assistant director of admissions for recruitment, and its minority recruiter, the Department accesses University-led programs designed to reach prospective Latino students. It makes use of the University's admissions office to access recruitment materials to reach prospective Caucasian and Latino students. The Department also uses its newsletter (hard copy and online on the Department's website), student newspaper *Tiger's Roar* (online and on the University's website), and its alumni to reach potential minority (non-black) students.

The Department's faculty members have diverse backgrounds and experiences that often play a role in their classes. Three faculty members have work and research experiences in Brazil, Cameroon and Thailand, respectively, frequently share their international perspectives in class. For example, one faculty member applies her cross-national Brazil-U.S. research and her fluency in three of the four languages spoken in Latin America to her teaching of public relations campaigns, while another who was an executive in radio and TV in the Cameroon, shares his intercultural perspectives on news and

news production, and a third, who worked with international advertising firms in Bangkok, enlightens students with an Asian perspective.

**c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and provides an environment that supports their retention, progress and success.**

The recruitment record for faculty members reflects a pattern of strong recruitment activity, which showed that the unit reached out to recruit potential faculty members from diverse groups. Currently, 39 percent of the faculty are not African Americans or Black. The unit's goal is to maintain at least 30 percent faculty diversity in the demographic of race, as it strives for gender parity.

The self-study describes the Department's successful recruitment of faculty members (full-time and part-time) who are diverse. During AY 2018-19, the full-time faculty consisted of four African Americans, one female and three males; one Jewish female, one Asian male, one mixed race male, one Hispanic female, one international female and one African male.

One tenured Asian American male faculty member was hired in 2016-17 as chair of the Department. In 2017-18, a job offer was made (and then declined) to an international candidate for a tenure-track position. An offer also was made (and accepted) to an international applicant for a visiting assistant professorship in 2018-19. The Department expects to advertise for two tenure-track faculty positions.

The Department attempts to recruit women and minority faculty by ensuring that qualified and diverse candidates are finalists during the interviewing process. Relative to the recruitment of staff members since 2012, positions have been offered to two women.

The office of the president offers teaching and learning grants to all faculty, to improve student learning and pedagogy using online technologies and other educational tools. The grants are intended to improve the teaching and learning environment and are a means to encourage all faculty to participate in conference/workshop presentation, publication, and/or to compete for external funding to expand a project.

In spring 2018, a female associate professor in the Department, who is Afro-Brazilian, attended a national conference at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and presented a paper. The president of Savannah State University awarded her the faculty excellence award, which financially supported her trip to Brazil to present another paper in September 2018. Currently, of the five full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty in the Department, three are women who are in positions of leadership: one the appointed interim chair; another, the chair of the Curriculum Committee who also advises the *Tiger's Roar* news staff; and a third is the director of the campus honors program.

***d) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting 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.***

In 2017, Savannah State University had a 21 percent population of non-African American students. In the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, the non-African American population was 11 percent. JMC's goal is for the departmental student enrollment to include at least 20 percent non-African Americans by 2020.

Caucasians are 42 percent of the high school population, followed by Black or African Americans at 37 percent, and Hispanic or Latinos at 14 percent. Eighty-two percent of Savannah State University's



students are African American or Black. Of the non-African American or non-Black students, Hispanics/Latinos constitute the second largest population (3.5 percent), followed by Caucasians (2.2 percent). In the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, Blacks or African Americans constitute 89 percent of majors; Hispanics/Latinos constitute 6.5 percent.

Despite strong efforts, even when recruited and enrolled, historically Caucasian students have not graduated in appreciable numbers from the three HBCUs in the University System of Georgia, including Savannah State — and including the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. The Department recognizes that more effort is needed for non-African American retention to increase. The unit's diversity plan includes an objective directly related to the retention of non-African American or non-Black students and a strategy to pair adviser mentors with first-year non-African American/non-Black students.

**e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and 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.**

To accomplish its goal, the Department sponsors study abroad programs and encourages faculty to continue to pursue cross-national research, among other activities.

The unit states that exposing students to diverse cultures and diversity in a global society is at the heart of JMC's curriculum efforts. Most faculty members weave diverse cultures and global perspectives into their classes. While the greater emphasis is placed on domestic diversity issues, the Department addresses global diversity in courses, as well as the significance/impact of mass communications in a global society. According to the Department's curriculum matrix, global diversity is included in 22 of the program's 28 course offerings.

**SUMMARY:** The unit is in compliance with the requirements of this standard. It has a written diversity plan, focuses on domestic and global diversity issues, has recruited a diverse faculty, has designed a plan to assist in the retention of non-African American students, and sponsors study abroad programs for students.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Standard 3: Tables 6A and 6 B**

**TABLE 6A: FULL-TIME FACULTY POPULATION, 2018 - 2019**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Black or African Americans	1	3
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0
Asian	0	1
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Jewish	1	0
Two or More Races	0	1
Hispanic/Latino (Any Race)	1	0
Caucasian	0	0
International Faculty (Any Race)	1	0
African	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

**TABLE 6B: PART-TIME FACULTY POPULATION, 2018 - 2019**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Black or African Americans	2	2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0
Asian	0	0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Other Race	0	0
Two or More Races	0	0
Hispanic/Latino (Any Race)	0	0
Caucasian	2	2
International Faculty (Any Race)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## **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 unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all instructional staff — full-time and part-time. Candidates for all faculty and administrative positions are recruited through a University-mandated search procedure as defined in procedures document: the “Recruitment Procedures, Administrators, Faculty and Staff Manual.”

The University requires that faculty performance be evaluated in four areas:

- 1) teaching effectiveness,
- 2) academic achievement,
- 3) professional growth and development, and
- 4) institutional service.

A faculty member's performance must be notable in two of the four areas. Teaching effectiveness must be one of the two notable areas. To be eligible for promotion or tenure, a faculty member must demonstrate that notable performance in at least two areas of evaluation has been sustained for a length of time that is specified by University policy.

A fifth criterion, length of service, is considered, but does not guarantee promotion. A requirement is that faculty members remain current in the content, expertise and techniques of their disciplines.

Faculty workload at Savannah State University is organized around each faculty member fulfilling a four-four teaching load. This is in line with many other universities in the USG system. However, the Department has found ways to make the advising process more efficient for students being advised by JMC faculty — allowing faculty more manageable advising loads. For example, the University's Center for Academic Success (CAS), now advises all freshman and sophomore majors for their initial 60 matriculation hours. The unit's CAS representative is included as a member of the JMC advising team, his name appears on advising materials, he attends JMC meetings and he is part of the JMC Advisers' listserv.

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

Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research, creative activities and service — stimulating scholarly productivity is an important part of JMC's strategic plan.

The University created a mentorship program for junior faculty, and one of the Department's newest hires was recruited to that program. In addition, two JMC senior faculty members are mentors in the program.

Full-time members of the Department have taught the majority of courses in the unit over the last three academic years. All full-time faculty members have professional experience ranging from four to 40 years. Their academic degrees show that the Department is well-balanced in curricular and professional expertise, and is diverse in gender, race and age.

**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.**

Scholarly activity and commitment to a professional field are the responsibilities of each faculty member. The University encourages scholarship activities for all faculty members and states that notable scholarship may be demonstrated in different ways throughout the University, broadly defined and not limited to publications. Scholarship may be demonstrated in ways such as presenting papers at professional meetings; practicing one's discipline through performance or consulting; engaging in creative activities in the fine arts; staying current in one's field through reading, research and attendance at conferences; holding leadership positions in professional organizations; and/or actively engaging in the programs and meetings of professional organizations.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communications achieves the University's mission regarding scholarship by encouraging faculty members to be involved in the citation of films, audio and video productions, print media, radio or TV broadcasts, photography, graphic or video exhibits, online video or print products, and other mass communications media. Faculty participate in conferences, present papers at conferences, and publish in refereed journals, encyclopedias, and academic and edited books. Research conducted by JMC faculty is often related to their creative work as a corollary to their scholarship. This expectation represents one of the unit's four criteria for promotion and tenure and annual faculty evaluations, which serve as a motivator for faculty productivity.

In academic year 2018-19, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications consisted of 10 full-time faculty members: two full professors, two associate professors, three assistant professors, two instructors, and one visiting professor. One of the full professors had a joint appointment split between JMC and political science (0.5 FTE each). There were eight part-time faculty. The Department is represented by eight ethnicities and has gender balance, with 56 percent male and 44 percent female faculty members.

The Department attracts professionals with varied media experiences.

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

Effective teaching is valued in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications and across the University. Demonstrated effectiveness in teaching, as shown in student evaluations and classroom observations by peers, is required for promotion and tenure for those on the tenure-track or seeking promotion to professor, and for promotion and retention of lecturers. The scholarship of teaching and learning is assessed as scholarly productivity for promotion and tenure decisions. Savannah State University/Department of Journalism and Mass Communications offers multiple mechanisms for the enhancement of teaching, including faculty retreats, faculty assemblies and institutes, workshops and travel funds for teaching conferences.

The self-study reports that the primary purpose of the evaluation of faculty performance is to improve the overall effectiveness of the faculty. The secondary purposes are to determine merit pay and to make promotion and tenure decisions. All faculty members are evaluated annually by the Department chair or a peer. This evaluation includes at least one classroom observation. Evaluations consist of a Department chair evaluation, a student evaluation, and a peer evaluation.

Scholarship expectations for faculty have increased since prior site visits by ACEJMC and are more evidently a part of annual faculty evaluations. The Department also strategically recruits and hires faculty members who have a proven record of scholarship and research productivity. The acting chair recently implemented measures of accountability, requiring all full-time faculty to submit personal goals at the beginning of the fall semester, with a report on progress due in April, along with a faculty portfolio.

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

Faculty members in the Department are respected across the campus; they serve on numerous University committees and participate in multiple aspects of University life.

**SUMMARY:** The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all instructional staff; has devised ways to increase the efficiency of the advising process; has full-time faculty take on primary responsibility for teaching, research, creative activities and service; requires that scholarly activity (as defined by University) and commitment to a professional field be the responsibilities of each faculty member; attracts professionals with varied experiences to serve on the faculty; and values and systematically evaluates effective teaching.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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.**

The University strongly encourages faculty members to focus primarily on teaching. It requires research for tenure and promotion, however, and it encourages and expects scholarship activities by all faculty members. It has established and recognizes that notable scholarship may be demonstrated in different ways.

JMC faculty's work time is spent balancing teaching, scholarly endeavors, seeking awards and grants, and creative work. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communications provides most of the travel funds for faculty conference travel. Three JMC faculty received the University's presidential mini-grant in the past six years to support their scholarship endeavors.

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

In the ACEJMC site visit in 2013, the unit was assessed as having low scholarship expectations of its faculty. Since then, the Department has increased its scholarship expectations for faculty, making them more evidently a part of annual faculty evaluations. Most significantly, the Department has begun strategically recruiting and hiring faculty members who have a proven record of scholarship and research productivity.

In addition, the acting chair is implementing measures of accountability by requiring all full-time faculty to submit personal goals at the beginning of the fall semester, with the report on progress due in April, along with a faculty portfolio. The University created a mentorship program for junior faculty that is useful for the JMC faculty.

Stimulating scholarly productivity is also part of the JMC Strategic Plan. The enabling strategies of the plan include:

- 1) Coordinate faculty collaboration for a panel at a regional or national conference (one scheduled for February 2019)
- 2) Set expectations for faculty scholarly productivity tied to their annual performance reviews.
- 3) Submit annual scholarly goals and objectives by each faculty member.
- 4) Establish a faculty scholarship series, whereby all faculty members share scholarly works-in-progress in informal settings with peers.
- 5) Reinstitute the requirement of faculty portfolio submissions by the end of the school year, beginning in spring 2019.

#### **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 University broadly defines scholarship so that it is not limited to publications. Thus, in addition to research publications, it allows for demonstration of scholarship to include:

- 1) presenting papers at professional meetings.
- 2) practicing the discipline through performance or consulting.
- 3) engaging in creative activities in the fine arts.
- 4) staying current in the field through reading, research, and attendance at conferences.
- 5) holding leadership positions in professional organizations.
- 6) actively engaging in the programs and meetings of professional organizations.

**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.**

Faculty members were engaged in communications of their research, creative and professional activities in the following ways: two faculty members were sole or co-authors of scholarly books; six were sole or co-authors of chapters in scholarly books; six were invited speakers or presenters of scholarly material; six were recipients of awards or honors related to their research; 28 participated in presentations of refereed conference papers — and more.

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

In addition to the above-noted scholarly work expected and achieved by faculty members in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, the unit achieves the University's mission regarding scholarship by encouraging faculty members to be involved in the citation of films, audio and video productions, print media, radio or TV broadcasts, photography, graphic or video exhibits, online video or print products, and other mass communications media.

Faculty members also participate in conferences, often present papers at conferences, publish in refereed journals, encyclopedias, academic and edited books. Research by JMC faculty is often related to their creative work as a corollary to their scholarship. This expectation represents one of the unit's four criteria for promotion and tenure and annual faculty evaluation.

**SUMMARY:** The University requires that faculty members focus primarily on teaching. For tenure and promotion, however, it also requires research as it encourages, expects and rewards scholarship activities by faculty members. The University has established that notable scholarship can be demonstrated in different ways.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Standard 5: Chart on Research**

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit	INDIVIDUALS				Totals (10)
		Full Professors (2)	Associate Professors (3)	Assistant Professors (3)	Other Faculty (2)	
Awards and Honors			4	2		6
Grants Received Internal		1	6	5		12
Grants Received External						
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored		1	1			2
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored						
Books Edited						
Book Chapters		1	3	2		6
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals			1			
Refereed Conference Papers		7	8	5		28
Invited Academic Papers						
Encyclopedia Entries			7			7
Book Reviews						
Articles in Non-refereed Publications			6			6
Juried Creative Works					6	
Non-juried Creative Works			16		10	32
Other (please specify)		3 -Interview -Guest speaking -Invited presentation		1	2 -Invited lecturer -Invited presentation	6
<b>Totals</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>98</b>



## 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.**

Students upon first enrolling at Savannah State receive course guidance from the University's centralized staff in the Academic Advising and Mentoring Program. A professional adviser coordinates course plans for students who express interest in Journalism and Mass Communications. Once they accumulate 60 hours of credits, Department faculty members become their primary advisers. Majors are assigned to particular faculty advisers based on alphabetical order of last names.

University job placement specialists offer career guidance to all University students. Additionally, according to students, it is not uncommon for students to work closely with their instructors for advice about internships, jobs and other opportunities.

The unit's evidence of frequent communication about graduation requirements included an FAQ handout on advising, grids specifying required and elective courses, and other materials. In order to nudge more students toward taking courses in their prospective majors during their beginning semesters on campus, the University's Office of Academic Affairs created and promotes a "momentum year" initiative.

Survey results cited in the self-study reported students' satisfaction with access to advisers and with the quality of their services. Students meeting with the team echoed the survey results and praised their faculty advisers. The group, made up mostly of seniors who had transferred from other academic majors or from other institutions, compared the guidance of Journalism and Mass Communication faculty members favorably. "They're on top of advising," said one effusive student.

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

The Faculty Handbook suggests that instructors schedule at least 10 office hours each week for consultation with students. Students said faculty advisers are generous with their time and often proactive in checking with them to encourage consultation.

Faculty members said that the advising part of their job was more manageable, now that professional staff handles general guidance until students earn 60 credit hours. While some dissatisfaction was evident in previous surveys on advising, faculty advisers and students both said use of the software Setmore to sign up for office visits has reduced wasted time and frustrations. Students use the app to schedule time with instructors beyond just their set office hours.

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

Email, social media, a listserv, website postings, bulletin boards, posters, town hall forums and manuals are among the tools used to communicate Department activities, requirements and policies to students.

**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 appear to enjoy ample opportunities for practical experiences in media fields of interest outside of formal classroom structure. The unit listed several organizations and activities that provide extra-curricular options.

- *Tiger's Roar*, the online daily and print monthly. (During site visit, the campus publication received word that six entries in the region's annual news competition won recognition.)
- Tiger's Roar TV, for student projects and productions.
- NABJ-affiliated Mass Communication Students Association.
- Public Relations Student Society of American chapter.
- Society for Collegiate Journalists chapter.
- Work on campus radio stations not controlled by the unit, but still offering valuable exposure and experience to students.

The Department's new home in Whiting Hall allows creation of additional possibilities for students to engage in media trade craft. A Student Media Center is starting to serve as a gathering place for young journalists interested in campus media and other projects, and apparently as just a spot to relax. Two adjacent offices are envisioned as workplaces for a strategic communications agency staffed by students.

**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 unit routinely compiles statistical details on enrollment, retention and graduations. Enrollment reductions in recent semesters track with those experienced across the campus. Most semesters, the Department's performance on retention and graduation exceeds that of the University.

Graduation and retention rates for the unit are posted on its website, updated for results through the year 2018.

**SUMMARY:** Academic advising, a source of at least some discontent according to the 2013 site team report, improved within the past six years. The faculty's advising workload was relieved when students with fewer than 60 credits began consulting with professional University advisers. Students said they are well-served by advising system currently in place. They praised both human and digital assistance – their advisers and the office-schedule app Setmore.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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:**

Facilities at JMC appear to meet students' needs and prepare them for work in media.

Part of the current success of these facilities is a "lemons to lemonade" story of an October 2015 fire that devastated the Department's former home at Kennedy Hall, pushing it for almost two years into an array of trailers and cobbled-together spaces. Whiting Hall, current home to JMC, was repurposed to house JMC classrooms, offices and other facilities as of January 2018. (JMC shares Whiting Hall with the College of Education.)

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

At Savannah State University, state policy on unpaid tuition bills has contributed to a plummet in enrollment, from about 5,000 students to about 3,500, in just about two years.

The impact University-wide has been severe. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communications has managed to avoid draconian cuts – largely because of its status of one of a few accredited units on campus.

Cuts included about \$1,500 in travel.

Overall, the unit's annual budget is seen by some within the Department as adequate, especially in comparison to the financial straits some other academic units on campus face.

### **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 JMC program is characterized by:

- ✓ Ample, albeit not entirely sufficient, classroom space in Whiting Hall, upgraded via investment of some \$75,000 over the last three years. (Some non-PC lab courses are scheduled and held in an adjacent building.)
- ✓ Enough office space for the entire Department – not the case in previous accommodations.
- ✓ Studio space, including two modern TV production studios, with state-of-the-art equipment -- with more recent investments of about \$31,000 in facilities. Studio A is equipped with 3 HD cameras, and studio B has 2 HD cameras. Both studios have a dedicated state-of-the-art production switcher, dedicated lighting, and audio consoles. Studio A is also equipped with a multi-purpose mobile news anchor desk. The TV studio is updated with CNNSource and TriCaster software to enhance academic instruction.
- ✓ Access to equipment. Students can check out Canon digital SLRs to record stills and videos for class projects, six video kits that include a camera and Røde VideoMic, and a set of Azden SGM 990s for recording with SLRs and for narration. Light kits, boom mics and two Panasonic AGAC90APJ camcorders are available for students' class assignments.

- ✓ Student media space, available for the student newspaper, *Tiger's Roar*, and for strategic communication majors, including those in the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA).
- ✓ Ample computer work spaces: Two iMac labs; three iMac classrooms; a Windows PC classroom/hybrid lab.

Only one “needs improvement” area was noted by staff and students, in passing: Cameras. The number of students needing cameras modestly exceeds the inventory of cameras available to them from time-to-time.

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

Facilities meet the needs of students and faculty, with the technology side of the Department well supported by an attentive and highly capable staff.

**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.**

Most technology and equipment needs are met at the moment. Although, adding a few more cameras for students is desirable. JMC students enjoy access to CNN’s collections of more than 100,000 news items annually.

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

Library and related resources appear adequate. They were not cited as problematic by any faculty or staff member, or student.

**SUMMARY:** The unfortunate fire that ruined the previous home of the Department seems to have created the opportunity to “rebuild” the physical side of this program. The budget is slim, but somewhat generous by comparison with many other units on campus.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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:**

JMC has developed and sustained an active professional and community service agenda, both in the region and in the industry, with some national exposure as well.

Aside from contributions of individual faculty members, which will be noted, the centerpiece of the JMC program is its Southern Regional Press Institute (SRPI), a conference with 68 years of history. It is a two-day mass media conference for elementary, middle, high school and college students and their advisers. (In the last five years, it has been paired with a JMC Indie Film Fest program, which operates under its own brand.)

SRPI ordinarily is held on campus in late February, recently attracting about 300 attendees and dozens of speakers. It's widely recognized and seems to be valued in the community, and it is an occasion to bring to campus notable speakers in the industry, including alumni. It puts the JMC program "on the map" in a significant and notable way. Unit discussion regularly revisits how to expand and leverage the reputational halo to accelerate the brand enhancement for the University and JMC.

### **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.**

Given that so many SSU alumni are drawn from the region, and stay in the region, this Department tends to remain more involved with its alumni through Savannah-centric local and regional events, which really have emerged as one cornerstone of its programs. The unit also conducts periodic surveys to gauge alumni feedback.

### **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 Department directs Savannah State University's annual Southern Regional Press Institute. In addition, the Department's annual Media High scholastic journalism summer workshop prepares local and regional area high school students for college-level media study.

In addition to workshops in photography, writing for multiple platforms, news, magazine and feature writing, new media, copy editing, headline writing, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, and newspaper layout and design, all of which are instructed by media professionals from across the nation, the Institute also includes the following components:

- A publications contest for high school and college newspapers.
- A mini-documentary/video competition.
- Career preparation workshops for college juniors and seniors.
- Roundtable sessions for faculty advisers.
- A feature-writing contest/high school and college.
- A photography contest/high school and college.
- A web page design competition.

- A sports writing competition.

Founded in 1951, the SRPI is the third oldest scholastic journalism institute founded at a historically black college, after the establishment of press associations at Florida A&M University (1950) and Lincoln University, Missouri (1949). Prior to integration, it played a significant role in the training and professional development of many of the country's most renowned African American journalists. Recent speakers and participants have included:

- Susan Catron (2013, executive director, *Savannah Morning News*).
- Eunicia Baker (2016, public affairs officer, Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police).
- Topher Sanders (2017, investigative reporter, ProPublica).
- Courtney Cole, reporter (2018, WSAV-TV, NBC).

For as long as it has existed, the SRPI has changed lives, according to a former Department leader, citing his own experience as a youth. Dr. Charles Elmore, an emeritus professor who is a retired chair of JMC and now a member of the Department's Advisory Board, reports that as a local youth, his first contact with higher education was via SRPI. That led to a scholarship at the University of Michigan, graduate school, and a career "back at home" at Savannah State University.

The Department's Indie Film Fest continues to grow in prominence and importance, both in contributing to the community and as an image-leading activity for JMC.

**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 members maintain memberships in nationally recognized professional associations.

**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.**

Given JMC's focus on internships, the Department appears to have developed and cultivated successful relationships with many local news organizations, public relations agencies and others in the public and private sectors.

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

Media professionals take part in class visits, panel presentations and lunches with students. Faculty members are active volunteers in the community and contribute their professional skills to assist local organizations.

**SUMMARY:** Faculty members are involved in professional associations and attend various conferences, some co-sponsored by or in partnership with the Department. The annual Southern Regional Press Institute is representative of the unit's successful public service profile.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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.**

ACEJMC’s 12 values and competencies are firmly embedded throughout the unit’s Assessment Plan and robustly reflected in self-study material.

Goals for student learning are defined in substantial detail. One dense grid plots objectives not just for each of the ACEJMC 12, but it is also tailored for each of the three concentrations students may pursue within the major. The grid sets learning objectives that sometimes overlap but are also distinct for the three concentrations:

- public relations/advertising
- online journalism
- audio/video production.

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

A faculty committee directs assessment plans and practices. According to information provided to the site team, the committee meets regularly and works with Department leadership to engage the full faculty in making the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies consistent elements of coursework.

As evidence of course-by-course attention to professional values and competencies, the unit produced a grid detailing various elements of assessment. The grid included:

- Name of each course.
- Whether course material was intended to be introductory, reinforcement or mastery.
- Specific values and competencies addressed by each course.
- Specific assessment tools used to track outcomes in each course.

This statement from the self-study captures the unit’s approach to assessment: “The 12 ACEJMC values and competencies drive the Department’s teaching and learning goals.”

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

At least one faculty meeting is devoted to assessment topics each year. Consistent attention to syllabuses and other means of enforcing assessment goals are discussed. The self-study included an agenda for an Assessment Day retreat in 2017, with breakout sessions on writing student learning objectives, using analytics, and identifying program goals and outcomes. In 2018, a meeting agenda addressed assessment initiatives and outcomes.

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

The unit has a written plan notable for clarity of assessment's purpose and specificity of direct and indirect measures for outcomes.

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

All four direct measures deployed by the unit use COMM 4106 Communications Practicum as the course for gathering and assessing details. Data are collected for each measure in the fall and spring. At least one semester's results are analyzed each year.

**DIRECT MEASURES**

- Internship review (using 12 values and competencies).
- Senior portfolio
- Senior project
- Senior exit examination (knowledge).

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

The unit uses three indirect measures across various courses. Surveys are posted online. The unit reported extra efforts to encourage participation, including frequent reminders and the designation of "Survey Week" to increase visibility of survey assessment tools among students.

**INDIRECT MEASURES**

- Student opinion survey. Students from all three concentrations across various courses are asked to share their views on advising, instruction, technology, progress related to 12 values and competencies, and more.
- Senior exit survey. Conducted each semester, during final two weeks of term. This survey includes 51 questions gauging how students perceive the quality of their experience in the Department and how they self-assess skills and knowledge related to ACEJMC's 12 values and competencies.
- Alumni survey: Gathered annual feedback from graduates via a link made available to respondents. Topics include perceptions of how well the unit prepared students for professional workplace, with specific attention to the role of the 12 values and competencies.

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

The unit appears to have amassed an effective set of tools for assessing the program, reflecting a commitment to ACEJMC's values and competencies as core principles. Synchronizing various elements of the overall plan and perhaps even streamlining the volume of instruments used might merit consideration. But the specificity of the measures serves the Department's assessment goals.

**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 unit's approach to assessment yields a large collection of data that is analyzed by the Assessment Committee, often in consultation with others. The three committee members serving as of spring 2019 each discussed their engagement in the topic with a command of assessment concepts and goals. The current interim chair has served on previous committees and continues to be involved in shepherding analysis of results.



Depending on which measure is involved, aggregated statistics point to levels of satisfactory vs. unsatisfactory results. One example: Seniors complete a 50-question exam toward the end of their final semester on campus. Half the questions cover all three concentrations; the other 25 are designed based on responders' specific areas of concentration. An average 70 percent correct rate of response is expected. Any survey categories not reaching 70 percent is considered unsatisfactory, and the relevant topic can be targeted for additional review of program strategies and tactics. The 70 percent benchmark was set based on survey results during a previous accreditation cycle. It bears ongoing review for opportunities to re-adjust.

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

The self-study cited a few areas in need of improvement. In internship evaluations for 2015 and 2017, supervisors rated students' performances on media history and research below other values and competencies. Additionally, while writing in this assessment tool was not explicitly defined as a weakness, it was rated a bit below higher-scoring areas such as ethical thinking, understanding of accuracy, technology skills and critical thinking.

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

Low- or lesser-performing areas are targeted for discussion. One instructor responded by adding a new textbook addressing targeted topics more fully. Department metrics then are tracked for results.

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

The self-study described persistence in tracking strengths and weaknesses, and then acting on the latter with ideas and actions for improving the process. One example: A grid lists data for direct measures involving media history from across several semesters. Overall pattern shows thresholds being met.

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

The self-study presented several examples of effective identification of areas needing improvement, with rigorous steps taken by the unit in response. In the case of media history, tracking outcomes led to confirmation of successes.

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

The unit said alumni are involved in shaping assessment when they serve as jurors for senior project presentations, as members of advisory board, and as respondents in alumni surveys.

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

The Department points to extensive use of professionals with a hand in evaluating the work of students, and therefore contributing to the unit's aggregation of ideas for refining policies and practices. Professionals, including a subset of alumni, also serve on the Department's advisory board. A large complement of national and local professionals participates in the marquee Southern Regional Press Institute, a forum featuring workshops and other programming for students. Professionals who visit are routinely consulted for ideas and perspectives on media trends that bear reflecting upon in the Department's ongoing assessment journey

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Journalism presents an evolving and sophisticated set of approaches to assessment. Plans are specific. Student learning objectives are rooted in ACEJMC's values and

competencies. A culture of attention to details appears to have taken hold. The self-study touts direct and indirect measures with precisely defined means of gathering and analyzing data, sharing results, and then identifying next steps for continuous improvement.

**Overall evaluation compliance/ noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

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

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

##### **STRENGTHS**

- Maturing assessment strategies that render effective results.
- Southern Regional Press Institute, an enduring conference for training and inspiring future generations of media professionals.
- Facilities and equipment that accommodate program's vision for more multimedia emphasis.
- Expanded media experiences and opportunities, including launch of Department-coordinated film festival, international travel projects, and new or revived student organizations.
- Resilience by a determined faculty and staff in the face budget challenges, dramatic shifts in University enrollment strategies, leadership voids at the Department and University levels – plus a major fire that forced relocation.

##### **WEAKNESSES**

- Leadership instability during parts of the past six-year reaccreditation cycle.

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

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

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

While the program functions, sometimes in commendable ways, instability in the position of chair cuts into potential gains. Longer-term leadership is in order. The 2013 site team reached similar conclusions during its visit to Savannah State, finding the unit out of compliance on Standard 1, as well.

#### **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. 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.**

- 2013: *“Unknown Departmental leadership after June 30.”*

UPDATE: This remains a serious void in an otherwise promising unit.

- 2013: *“Heavy advising load for faculty, given their four-four load.”*

UPDATE: The unit switched from a system in which faculty members provided advising from the moment journalism and mass communications students enrolled at the University. Now, a centralized campus office provides guidance for all students until they earn 60 credit hours. Department faculty advisers step in at that point. They have experienced a substantial reduction in overall advising loads, providing more time for instruction and other matters. In addition, the University implemented software that allows for more efficient scheduling by students seeking appointments with faculty outside of their scheduled office hours. Students said that they frequently use this app.

- 2013: *“Low scholarship expectations.”*

UPDATE: Scholarship activities increased. Newer hires with research agenda add to opportunities for further progress.

- 2013: *“Non-systematic application and analysis of assessment instruments over the past six years.”*

UPDATE: The Department’s plan and performance evolved significantly. Assessment is attended to with care and sophistication. There is, of course, room for improvement, including even more consistency. But progress during this cycle is commendable.

**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 tam members’ judgment of the self-study.***

The self-study presented a clear-eyed and self-aware review of the Department, citing achievements with pride but also addressing shortcomings in need of improvement. Whenever more questions or concerns emerged regarding self-study details, the unit provided information that helped explain and clarify any matters at issue.