

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2021-2022

Name of Institution: Arkansas State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Kelly Damphousse, chancellor

Name of Unit: School of Media & Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: Brad Rawlins, director

Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 28-Dec. 1, 2021

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Jan. 20-23, 2015

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

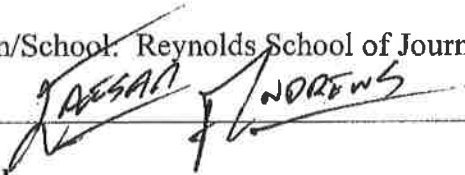
Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Caesar Andrews, Professor/Leonard Distinguished Chair in Media Ethics and Writing

Organization/School: Reynolds School of Journalism/University of Nevada, Reno

Signature

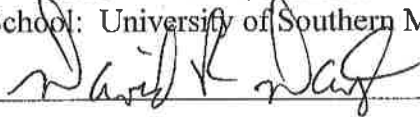


Team Member

Name and Title: David R. Davies, Professor of Journalism

Organization/School: University of Southern Mississippi

Signature

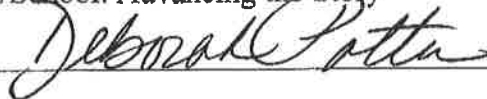


Team Member

Name and Title: Deborah Potter

Organization/School: Advancing the Story

Signature



Please indicate if team members participated on site or virtually only:

On site: All three on site.

Virtually: None

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: Arkansas State University

Name of Unit: School of Media & Journalism

Year of Visit: 2021 (originally scheduled for 2020 but postponed due to COVID-19)

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 (Higher Learning Commission)
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:

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.

Arkansas State University “was founded in Jonesboro in 1909 by the Arkansas Legislature as a regional agricultural training school. It began offering a two-year college program in 1918, then became "First District Agricultural and Mechanical College" in 1925. A four-year degree program was begun in 1930, and A & M College became "Arkansas State College" in 1933. The Arkansas Legislature elevated the college to university status and changed the name to Arkansas State University in 1967.”

—2019-2020 Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 19.

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: January 20-23, 2015

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

1978

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

Mission

The School of Media & Journalism provides students with an education that enables them to gather, organize, synthesize and communicate information professionally in a democratic, multicultural society. By stressing critical and creative thinking and providing access to multiple platforms of communication, we prepare students with the professional standards required to perform today's jobs and the versatility to assume leadership in meeting tomorrow's challenges.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 16 weeks
Online course session of 7 weeks
Summer sessions of 5 weeks
Intersessions of 2 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.

Bachelor of Science in Multimedia Journalism

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:
(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)**

120 credit semester-hours for Bachelor of Science

**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.

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Multimedia Journalism	Lillie Fears (Program Coordinator)

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

12,863 Total Headcount 8474.8 FTE (Fall, 2021)

17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit in fall 2021. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.

Name	School	Emphasis	Rank
Armstard, Terrance	Media & Journalism	Multimedia Journalism	Instructor, Adviser to Delta Digital News Service
Combs, Sandra	Media & Journalism	Multimedia Journalism	Associate Professor, Adviser to The Herald
Fears, Lillie	Media & Journalism	Multimedia Journalism	Professor, Program Coordinator
Rawlins, Brad	Media & Journalism	Strategic Comm	Professor, Director
Roberts, Larz	Media & Journalism	Multimedia Journalism	Instructor
Sitton, Ron	Media & Journalism	Multimedia Journalism	Assistant Professor

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2021. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2021. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2021, please provide the spring 2021 adjunct list in the updated information.)

N/A

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.

72 or more semester hours
outside of journalism and mass communications

Year	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percent
2020-2021 academic year	<u> 6 </u>	<u> 6 </u>	100
2019-2020 academic year	<u> 5 </u>	<u> 5 </u>	100

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

OVERVIEW: The University traces its origins to a training school for agriculture starting in 1909. It evolved in scale, scope and name, issuing four-year degrees as Arkansas State College by 1933. The Legislature granted University status in 1967. As of 2021, A-State remains an influential institution for the aspirations of northeast Arkansas. It enrolled 12,863 students during the fall term, down 2.1% from the total reported during the 2015 site visit.

Around the time the Legislature designated Arkansas State a college in the 1930s, courses in news were emerging within the English Department. Journalism degrees were first issued in 1941. An independent division was in place by 1967, and the College of Communication was formed by 1973, subsequently including departments for Journalism, Printing and Radio-Television. The College earned ACEJMC accreditation for the first time in 1978, successfully renewing in the six accrediting cycles since then.

Histories on the College of Communication trumpet accomplishments across several decades. More than a few people contacted by the current site team were quick to recall an era when the University routinely produced journalism graduates who were among the most prepared in the state. That legacy remains part of the unit's identity. Though a clear-eyed self-study and candid conversations on campus with administrators, faculty and others acknowledge losses in the program's muscle mass.

ACEJMC last reaccredited the College of Communication in 2015, when it housed a Media Department with programs in Multimedia Journalism and Creative Media Production, and a Communications Department with programs in Strategic Communications and unaccredited Communication Studies. Student enrollment in the three accredited areas totaled 266, including 83 for Multimedia Journalism.

Six years later, Arkansas State University's 2021 reaccreditation request is substantially different, reflecting multiple rounds of academic restructuring. The School of Media & Journalism in 2018-19 replaced the dismantled College of Communication, which had been among the smallest on campus. The School retains two degreed programs. Just one, Multimedia Journalism with a fall enrollment of 31 students, is seeking reaccreditation. Faculty in the School's academic second program, Creative Media Production, decided to forgo accreditation.

The director leading the School of Media & Journalism, which resides under the College of Liberal Arts and Communication, said he was confident that initiatives in the works will fortify Multimedia Journalism. The College dean meeting with the site team endorsed the director's position. He cited as one source of his support a favorable strategic recommendation for the School by a Viability Committee completing the first phase of analyses on campus programs.

Site team members found a program functioning at a profoundly reduced scale during an accrediting cycle overloaded with disruption, yet still delivering value to students, campus and community. Administrators' statements about the School's strategic viability added useful context for the challenges ahead.

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 unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).

The School of Media & Journalism has a written mission statement that pledges to students an education that allows them to “gather, organize, synthesize and communicate information professionally in a democratic multicultural society.” The mission further commits to “prepare students with the professional standards required to perform today’s jobs and the versatility to assume leadership in meeting tomorrow’s challenges.”

The unit’s long-range planning is embedded within the 2017-22 strategic plan of the College of Liberal Arts and Communication. The School says it applies the College’s strategic document as its own, adapting details to fit program needs, most recently during a May 2021 review by Multimedia Journalism faculty. Updated strategic plans are anchored in a sound 10-point outline of objectives and actions. A few brief labels might benefit from more details on expectations. In most instances by far, the intent of each goal or tactic is clear.

Recruiting quality students is the top priority. This reflects an urgent sense of purpose in response to low enrollment patterns. This unit goal is supported by reestablishment of a Recruiting Committee, increased funding, and other activities intended to increase enrollment. Maximizing use of advisory boards to increase practical student experiences and bolster program assessment efforts is another strategic target, as is interdisciplinary collaboration.

The self-study acknowledges diversion of time and energy away from strategic planning as pandemic demands dominated the work life of faculty and staff.

A link provided in self-study led to detailed data on enrollment, degrees awarded, success rates of students returning or graduating, and graduation rates from 2016 to 2020. The information is accessible to the public.

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

Multimedia Journalism adheres to policies and procedures established in the University’s 149-page *Faculty Handbook*. The self-study describes ample faculty engagement in governance within the unit and involvement by faculty at all campus levels – School, College and University. The 2006 iteration of handbook was substantially revised in 2018, with additional changes in 2020. The revised sections:

- Mission, core values, priorities, goals.
- Faculty personal policies.
- Academics.
- Promotion, retention, tenure; post-tenure; dismissals.
- Grievances.

The self-study states that the School overall and its Multimedia Journalism program both conduct regular faculty meetings, an indicator that faculty governance is routinely addressed. Six meetings are listed for the School during the 2020-21 academic year; eight meetings are listed for Multimedia Journalism, supplemented by a May 2021 planning retreat, and another pre-site visit retreat in October.

Multimedia Journalism's voice on educational policy includes representation on the School's Curriculum Committee. School committee recommendations follow a predictable path of consideration for approvals: Proposals flow from committee to School director, to College Curriculum Committee, to College Dean, and ultimately to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

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 unit's top administrator holds the title of director, School of Media & Journalism. He is a resourceful, respected nine-year leader of media programs and campus projects and was dean of the College of Media and Communication during successful reaccreditation in 2014-15.

During multiple rounds of academic restructuring on campus since 2015, the accredited unit's name and the position label for its leader have undergone a series of revisions and adjustments. The current director served an interim appointment in 2019 and was named to the current position after an external search in 2020. As noted in self-study, this accrediting period is characterized by frequent disruptions. Even so, Multimedia Journalism faculty members uniformly described the director as civil and reasoned.

The School's two academic units fractured their shared ACEJMC status – Multimedia Journalism is seeking renewal; Creative Media Production is not. Mending divisions within the School remains a challenge for the director.

Some representatives from other academic units on campus cited the divisions as a blow to the School. Some identified the loss of College status as a breaking point. Yet nearly all representatives singled out the director as a consummate campus citizen who managed to sustain the value of programs despite the unit's diminished footprint. The dean praised the director's willingness to step in and lead, under the circumstances.

Consensus among people who talked with site team members is that the director is a thoughtful and principled leader with an entrepreneurial streak.

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

The Faculty Handbook spells out steps for filling vacant administrative posts. Upper

administrators determine whether a search is deemed internal or external. For the position of director, the College dean forms a Search Committee intended to be broadly representative. The committee screens applicants and consults with administrators on candidates to interview, with attention to racial, ethnic and gender diversity. Faculty opportunities for involvement are specified: Meeting candidates, evaluating credentials, voicing impressions and preferences. The committee's recommendations are forwarded up through the administrative chain, to the dean, and on to the chancellor responsible for academic appointments, with ultimate oversight by the president and Board of Trustees. Internal searches are modified, with provisions for candidates to interview with some administrators.

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

The self-study reports no formal student grievances or faculty grievances during the past three years. But standard policies and procedures for addressing complaints are in place. In 2017, students accused of cheating in one course filed complaints against their professor. Documentation of any actions involved at the University level were not available.

Students with concerns may first try resolving matters in conversation with their instructor or director. Subsequent options include a hearing with the dean and ultimately with a College committee that makes a recommendation and refers cases back to deans for final decisions.

Faculty complaints may first be addressed by the School director or the College dean before formal grievances are filed. The steps for hearing unresolved matters include a School ad hoc committee, the College dean, and a College committee. Tenure and promotion cases that are not resolved in consultation with the vice chancellor of academic affairs and research can ultimately reach a 21-member University Academic Hearing Committee. For staff grievances, policy encourages employees to discuss concerns with immediate supervisors. If employees are not satisfied, matters may be forwarded to the Human Relations Department.

The Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook outline details of options available for complaints. They appear sufficient.

SUMMARY:

The experienced, respected unit director worked closely with core faculty and staff to sustain a program battered by the loss of college status. Neither major reductions in enrollment nor overwhelming demands of the pandemic prevented sound outcomes for Multimedia Journalism. Internal strife between the School's two academic programs require resolution. On the whole, the program proved to be resilient in response to steady streams of administrative challenges.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

Discussions of indicators b, c and e must describe and evaluate the individual academic sequences in the unit.

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 underwent a substantial curriculum change in fall 2019. Until then, the School's Multimedia Journalism program included separate sequences in Broadcast Journalism, News-Editorial, and Photojournalism. Beginning in 2019, the School combined those sequences into one. The major required 48 hours and a minor outside of the communication field of 18 to 24 hours. These hours are supplemented with core courses and electives to reach the 120 total hours required for graduation. All graduation applications are reviewed by the School's full-time academic adviser, who ensures that students' programs of study are complying with the 72-hour rule. In fact, all students who graduated in the six years covered by the self-study 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 major take a 40-hour core comprised of the following courses. (All are 3-hour courses except for the news practicum courses – #4, 9 and 15 from the list below – which total four hours.)

- 1) MDIA 1003 Mass Communication in Modern Society
- 2) MDIA 1013 Principles of Journalism
- 3) MDIA 2043 Basic Digital Photography
- 4) MDIA 2201 News Practicum I
- 5) MDIA 2313 Digital Media Production
- 6) MDIA 2323 Reporting Words
- 7) MDIA 3013 Multimedia Reporting
- 8) MDIA 3063 Editing for Publications and the Web
- 9) MDIA 3201 News Practicum II
- 10) MDIA 3363 Modern Media Inquiries
- 11) MDIA 4003 Media Law and Ethics
- 12) MDIA 4053 Civic Reporting
- 13) MDIA 4202 News Practicum III
- 14) MDIA 4323 Diversity and Media
- 15) MDIA 4603 Internship

In addition, students choose nine hours from the courses listed below:

- 1) GCOM 1813, Introduction to Digital Publishing
- 2) GCOM 3673, Desktop Publishing and Publication Design
- 3) MDIA 1001, Media Grammar and Style
- 4) MDIA 2053, Introduction to Visual Communications
- 5) MDIA 2223, Video Production I
- 6) MDIA 3003, Feature Writing and Freelancing
- 7) MDIA 3053, Sports Reporting
- 8) MDIA 3083, History of the Mass Media
- 9) MDIA 3093, Photo Storytelling I
- 10) MDIA 3203, Audio Storytelling
- 11) MDIA 3383, News in Social Media
- 12) MDIA 3603, Television Reporting
- 13) MDIA 4013, Photo Storytelling II
- 14) MDIA 4023, Public Opinion, Propaganda and the Mass Media
- 15) MDIA 4103, Data Journalism
- 16) MDIA 4113, Specialized Reporting
- 17) MDIA 4123, Media Management and Entrepreneurship
- 18) MDIA 4340, News Production and Performance Laboratory
- 19) MDIA 4343, News Production and Performance
- 20) MDIA 4552, Photojournalism Practicum and Professional Development

The curriculum is designed to introduce all students to the basics of journalism in all its forms and to ground them in the theories and major concepts of the mass media. Through the electives, students are able to specialize in a particular area of journalism – television, photography, writing or other skills. In the three news practicum courses, students receive credit for working for one of the School’s media outlets – the student newspaper, the campus radio station, or ASU-TV news, a local cable channel operated by students.

From the self-study and from talking with students about the curriculum, it’s clear that the curriculum gives students solid grounding in the 12 values and competencies. The School organizes the ACEJMC competencies under three foundation outcomes, Think, Communicate, and Be Professional, and the self-study details how the curriculum covers all of these foundational outcomes as well as the 12 values and competencies. The curriculum, while ambitious, clearly offers a balance between conceptual and skills 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.

Instruction is demanding and current and reflects trends in modern media practice. As indicated

earlier, the unit substantially revised its curriculum in 2019 to reflect media convergence and to give students the broadest range of necessary skills. The curriculum was slightly tweaked again in fall 2021, and plans are underway for an additional tweaking to take effect in fall 2022. It's clear the faculty and its leadership are interested in fine-tuning the curriculum both to serve students and to improve efficiencies within the School. The faculty also is consistently engaged in faculty development activities to keep abreast of the latest technologies and techniques used in the professions.

The self-study lists an impressive array of awards, citations, grants and other achievements by the faculty in teaching, demonstrating the importance that the unit places on teaching.

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.)

Class sizes are consistently small, and all classes fall well within the required 20-1 ratio. Of the 15 skills courses offered in calendar year 2021, for example, most courses had seven students or fewer, and only five courses had 12 or more students. The journalism faculty is currently discussing steps to increase efficiency in course offerings – including a regular course rotation – to maximize enrollments in the future.

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.

Prior to the 2019 school year, internships were encouraged but not required, but the curriculum revision that took effect in 2019 required all students to complete an internship. Since the requirement is so new, relatively few journalism students have reached a point in their curriculum to undertake the required internship. A faculty member serves as internship coordinator to help students locate internships in their specialty. For each internship, the student completes an application to begin the process to receive academic credit, and at the end of the internship the student's work supervisor completes an evaluation form that helps determine the student's grade.

A significant initiative by the unit to offer students opportunities for experience in and outside the classroom comes in the form of the Delta Digital News Service. Founded in August 2016 and supervised by a faculty member, DDNS provides a working lab for undergraduate students that feeds content to news organizations of all types, primarily in northeast Arkansas. Students gain real-world experience by having the opportunity to pitch story ideas, research issues, interview subjects and compose projects in a variety of formats. The lab is an outlet for the multimedia reporting class, a civic reporting class and for its capstone practicum course, and regional outlets can use any work distributed by DDNS with proper attribution. The news service is supported by grant funding and has been recognized with several awards, including by the Arkansas professional chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

SUMMARY:

The Multimedia Journalism program has an ambitious curriculum that balances skills and conceptual courses and has been updated to reflect the demands of modern media jobs. Students have opportunities through DDNS and through internships to practice their skills in a real-world environment. The School consistently follows ACEJMC guidelines regarding class sizes and the 72-hour rule.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

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 of Media & Journalism has a written diversity plan that was updated in 2020. The School has adopted the University’s definition of diversity as making sure “everyone feels they are valued and that they belong despite differences in race, ethnicity, color, gender, religion, sexual identity, or socio-economic status.” The School identifies females, Black/African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and those of international origin as underrepresented groups, and considers sexual orientation as well.

(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 school’s diversity plan requires that diversity be taught in every course. Since the last accreditation visit, the School has revamped an elective course (Race, Gender and the Media) into a required course for all majors (Diversity and Media). The self-study provided examples of how diverse content has been incorporated in eight of the 15 required courses and four of the 20 electives. The unit says that guest speakers are diverse; however, of 26 guest speakers over the past three years, only seven were female and six were Black.

Students told the accrediting team that diversity is a frequent topic in their classes and that they are taught to include diverse voices in their work. Recent alumni said the program prepared them well to work in a diverse newsroom and to reflect the diversity of their communities in their news coverage.

One area of concern is the apparent lack of emphasis in coursework on international cultures and international communication. The self-study says the diversity of “global and multicultural society” is addressed in one course taught by the unit (CMAC 1003, Mass Communication in a Modern Society) and by inviting international students to comment in class.

The previous site team report raised concern about “the lack of consistency in including a disability statement in the course syllabi.” A spot check of syllabi in 2021 reflected those same inconsistencies.

(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 unit's hiring policy states that in any search, qualified female and minority applicants will be identified and at least one will be invited to interview. In the past three years, the unit has filled only one faculty opening, for which two women and one minority male were finalists. In the end, a Black man was hired at the rank of instructor, replacing a Black man who had been an assistant professor. Since the last self-study, a Black woman on the faculty was tenured and promoted. The director of the School's advising center is a Black woman who was hired to replace another Black woman.

The School of Media & Journalism's diversity goal is for half the faculty to be female or minority. The unit has exceeded this goal. One third of the unit's full-time faculty (2) are female and two-thirds (4) are Black, making it one of the most diverse on campus. The unit has no part-time or adjunct faculty.

The dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Communication specifically credited two of the unit's faculty members with helping the College as a whole hire more diverse faculty and staff.

(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.

The School's target is for 28% of its majors to be minority students, comparable to the state's minority population. Of students in the MMJ program, almost 40% are minority. The unit's student population is also more diverse than the University student body as a whole (about 25% minority).

The unit recruits under-represented students through Black alumni events and scholarship support. According to the University's vice chancellor for diversity, the School is the only one at Arkansas State to have a scholarship set aside for diversity. The unit also has a program of outreach to high schools with high minority enrollment. One faculty member has financial support from a fellowship to mentor underserved high school students during the summer months.

The School of Media & Journalism reports a four-year average retention rate for minority students of just under 79%, above the University's 72%. The graduation rate for minorities stands at 36%, on par with the University's. The School is attempting to improve its record through mandatory advising and tracking of majors. The unit also encourages students to join the National Association of Black Journalists campus chapter and provides scholarship and travel support to attend minority journalism conferences.

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

The unit's faculty have attended sexual harassment and Title IX training, and most have taken "Safe Zone" training on how to create a supportive environment for LGBT students. To accommodate students with mobility issues, the unit purchased a ramp for its production unit.

The faculty gives itself high marks for collegiality and inclusiveness. In a recent exercise, they ranked themselves 10 out of 10 on both measures. Faculty members said they consult with each other regularly and feel free to bounce ideas off each other. Students noted that the faculty get along well with each other and compared the unit to “a big family.”

SUMMARY:

The unit has one of the most diverse faculties at the University and it has surpassed its diversity goal for the student population. The percentage of minorities among its majors is greater than that of the University as a whole and exceeds the percentage in the state. Faculty and students alike describe the environment as collegial and supportive.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time and Part-time

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty. (Report international faculty the same way the university reports them.)

Academic year: 2020 – 2021 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	2	33.3%	2	33.3%
White	0	0	2	33.3%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0	0
Asian	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
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	0	0	0	0

Academic year: 2020 – 2021 Part-time/adjunct faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	0	0	0	0
White	0	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0	0
Asian	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
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	0	0	0	0

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

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.

Search processes for unit faculty mirror those set out in the Arkansas State University Faculty Handbook. Once an opening occurs, a search committee is chosen from faculty in the respective program and then develops qualifications, conducts the search and makes a hiring recommendation to the School director. Ultimate hiring authority rests with the dean. Tenure-track appointments typically require a doctorate, though considerable professional experience may count in place of a terminal degree. Since the last accrediting visit, the School conducted only one search for a position in Multimedia Journalism. This was a successful search was for a 12-month instructor to advise the Delta Digital News Service.

Faculty are evaluated yearly by the School director, who takes into account each faculty member's syllabi, student evaluations, and productivity reports. The productivity reports, assembled through an online tool called Faculty 180, summarizes achievements in teaching, research, service and creative and professional activities. The director uses a merit rating form, which awards points for various categories of productivity and which helps to determine merit increases. The director meets individually with each faculty member to discuss each year's evaluation as well as the faculty member's strengths and areas for improvement.

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

Tenure-track faculty are expected to teach a 4/4 teaching load, and instructors are expected to teach a 5/5 load, though four of the School's six faculty receive course reductions to offset administrative duties as coordinator for the major, for the School director, and for student media advisers. The workload for a tenure-track faculty member is 70% teaching, 20% research, and 10% service, though these percentages can be adjusted according to other assignments.

Since 2018, the School has employed no part-time faculty. Therefore 100% of the School's core and required courses have been taught by full-time faculty from 2018-19 to the present.

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.

The unit employs six faculty, including the School director. Of these, two are tenured full professors, one is a tenured associate professor, one is a tenure-track assistant professor, and two are instructors. Half have two to four years of professional experience, and half have six years or

more. Students reported to the site team that they appreciated the real-world experience that their faculty brought to the classroom.

The self-study documents a wide range of professional development activities undertaken by faculty, including attendance at on-campus teaching workshops and at state, regional, and national academic and media associations. The School reports that it strongly encourages faculty to undertake professional development activities, which contribute to faculty members' annual merit evaluations.

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

Instruction is regularly evaluated through student evaluations and through the director's evaluation of class syllabi. Student evaluations are a significant factor in faculty members' annual evaluations.

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

Campus colleagues reported that the School has long had a reputation on- and off-campus for offering high-quality instruction. School faculty are highly visible on campus and active in a wide range of University initiatives. The School director, for example, is co-chair of the campus Council of Chairs. The College dean praised several unit faculty members by name for their University citizenship.

SUMMARY:

The School has a close-knit faculty of six members with an appropriate range of professional experience and academic qualifications. Students praise faculty for the quality of their instruction and for their effectiveness and for their approachability inside and outside the classroom. The School has a strong reputation across campus.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

All faculty members are expected to maintain a record of scholarly, creative and/or professional activities. The University's faculty handbook emphasizes an institutional priority to "continue to promote the transformation of A-State into a research intensive institution."

Faculty members can apply for a one-course reduction each semester to pursue a research project. One tenure-track faculty member in the unit has been granted a course reduction for each semester of the period covered by the self-study; no tenured faculty member has had a research reassignment since 2015.

The University grants "compensated leave," or sabbatical time, for research, writing or retraining. During the period covered by the self-study, one faculty member in the unit received one semester of compensated leave, during which he published a second edition of a book, edited a journal article and got training on digital/social media.

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

The School of Media & Journalism has written criteria for promotion and tenure that spell out expectations for scholarship and professional/creative activities. An annual performance evaluation rubric notes that three or more research activities, such as a book or an article in a top-tier journal, would count as exceptional scholarship. Three or more award-winning creative or professional activities count as exceptional.

Requirements for promotion include excellence in teaching and the "promise of excellence in scholarship, creative and/or professional activities."

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

Four of the six faculty members in the unit are tenured or tenure-track. The other two are instructors who are not eligible for tenure. Both advise student media (TV, radio and digital) in addition to their teaching duties. Tenure-track positions normally require a doctorate but "in exceptional cases" the University counts significant professional experience as the equivalent. The unit has one tenured associate professor who does not have a terminal degree.

(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.

All faculty above the rank of instructor have records of scholarship, including articles in refereed journals, conference and academic papers, encyclopedia entries and presentations to research and professional conferences. The four tenure-track faculty averaged 10 presentations each per year during the period under review. The dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Communication, of which the unit is a part, expressed concern that the faculty's publications are typically in smaller or regional journals that are less academically rigorous than national journals.

The non-tenure-track faculty's record of creative activity is comparatively thin. While they are not required by contract to produce creative works, the school encourages and rewards such activity in merit raises. During the period covered by the self-study, the two instructors produced no juried creative works and five non-juried creative works

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

Members of the unit's external advisory board said that after some initial resistance, the faculty responded well to a harsh critique of its assessment form for student work and made revisions that addressed the board's concerns.

SUMMARY:

The unit has clear expectations for faculty research or creative activity. Tenured or tenure-track faculty focus mainly on research, in keeping with the University's goal of transforming itself into a research intensive institution. Non-tenure-track faculty are encouraged to pursue creative activities; there is room for additional work in this area.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

Report of evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2021-2022 Visits

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (6)
		Full Professors (2)	Associate Professors (1)	Assistant Professors (2)	Other Faculty** (2)	
Awards and Honors	4	4	2		2	
Grants Received Internal	1			1		
Grants Received External	8	7		1		
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	0					
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	1	1				
Books Edited	0					
Book Chapters	1		1			
Monographs	0					
Articles in Refereed Journals	15	7	4	7		
Refereed Conference Papers	27	17	3	10		
Invited Academic Papers	16	10		6		
Encyclopedia Entries	9	2	1	6		
Book Reviews	3		1	2		
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	4	1	1	2		
Juried Creative Works	0					
Non-juried Creative Works	5				5	
Other (please specify)						

*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 authors. **Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. Many faculty in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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.

The School was one of the first units on campus to set up an Advising Center with a professional adviser. The professional adviser advises all incoming freshmen, all transfer students, and all students who change from a different major to journalism. The adviser also checks students' degree progress using one of its online degree audit platforms in each student's final few semesters before graduation. After their first semester, students are also assigned a faculty adviser, who can also help with course selection as well as offer career advice and mentoring.

b). Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Faculty hold regular office hours and are consistently available to students. Students reported that they were pleased both with the advising center and with their faculty advisers' availability and helpfulness.

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

The School regularly updates its Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/AState.Media> – to provide news to its students about its activities and initiatives, and the School regularly communicates with students via email messages.

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.

The School has an impressive range of extra-curricular activities that are available to students.

The Herald is an independent student newspaper that had just celebrated its 100th anniversary in the days before the site team's visit. It publishes a weekly print edition and online editions, including blogs and podcasts. Though it is not a lab paper, most of the students who work for it are majoring in Multimedia Journalism or other communication programs. In addition to their work at the paper, student staffers have opportunities for professional development at state, regional and national journalism organizations.

ASU-TV is a student-run cable television station that is carried on the Jonesboro cable network. The School of Media & Journalism provides an adviser and underwrites costs for student managerial staff. Students across the School participate in the station. Students help produce ESPN coverage of Arkansas State sporting events and also produce a newscast, though its schedule has been in flux in recent semesters because of the pandemic and course scheduling. Red Wolf Radio is a student-operated online radio station in operation since 2014. It includes

specialty and podcast-style programs on a wide variety of topics. It is open to any Arkansas State student and runs on automation when needed.

KASU-FM is the University's 100,000-watt public radio station offering NPR programs as well as local news and programming. The station is staffed by professionals but offers internships as well as part-time and work-study jobs to students.

The Delta Digital News Service, described in some detail in Standard 2, is a news lab in which students produce content in all media formats for distribution to professional news outlets in northeast Arkansas.

In addition to the outlets above, the School has active chapters of several professional organizations, including the National Association of Black Journalists and the Society of Professional Journalists. The student newspaper and the School underwrite student membership fees and costs to attend state and national meetings.

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 gathers and analyzes enrollment data, including information about current enrollment, retention and graduation rates. A link to this data was included in the self-study and was also found on the front page of the School website.

Enrollment in Multimedia Journalism is low, with 31 students in fall 2020, down from 83 students in fall 2016, a decline of 60%. Six students graduated from the program in the 2020 academic year. Enrollment trends have prompted the school to redouble its recruitment in recent years. This year, for example, a faculty member is doing outreach to 20 area high schools to seed interest in the MMJ program.

The School reports strong retention rates. The six-year graduation rate (from 2013 to 2019) of the first class admitted to the Multimedia Journalism program was 72.4%, compared to the University's graduation rate of 53% for the same class. Each year, students who do not register for classes the following semester are contacted by the Advising Center director or by the School director, who offer their assistance.

SUMMARY:

The School has an effective Advising Center that helps students with their schedules, and faculty advise students as well. The faculty prides itself on its availability to students. The unit communicates regularly with students to keep them up-to-date about School events, and students have ample opportunities to hone their journalism skills in an impressive array of media outlets. Retention rates are strong, and the director and faculty are intensifying recruiting efforts to reverse recent enrollment declines.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART II -- Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The University typically allocates budgets based on the previous year's amount. The School of Media & Journalism has additional revenue sources, including foundation grants, production fees and revenue from printing and campus mail services. These funds have enabled the School, which includes the accredited unit, to triple the funds allocated to the top priority in its strategic plan: recruiting quality and diverse students. The School also benefits from endowed scholarships that support minority students and a faculty fellowship used to support journalism at high schools with significant minority enrollment.

(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 self-study notes that operating budgets at Arkansas State have not increased for seven years. In the past two years, the budgets for supplies and travel were cut by 20% across the University. Course fees and library funding also shrank due to declining enrollment.

The University does not provide much fundraising support to the unit, a weakness pointed out by the previous accreditation team. A recently hired development officer for the College of Liberal Arts and Communication also works for the College of Education and Behavioral Science.

Thanks to its additional revenue sources, however, the unit says its needs are met. "Compared to other departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Communication," the self-study states, "the school has a much more robust budget." The unit has been able to fully fund almost all faculty and student travel requests. Other units in the College of Liberal Arts and Communication limit funding to at most \$800 per year per faculty member; unit faculty have been granted at least twice as much on average over the past three years.

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

The unit's faculty offices, classrooms and labs are equipped with computers, projectors, screens and other essential technology. There are four multimedia classrooms and four labs with Adobe Creative Suite and other software, which students can also access on their own computers. Most desktop computer equipment has been replaced since the last reaccreditation visit.

Student representatives play a role in deciding what new equipment or technology should be acquired.

(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.

With an all-digital TV studio and control room, audio studios, and two mobile production units, the Multimedia Journalism program can provide students with real-world experience producing programs and live events. A new student media lab has been added since the last self-study. Field production equipment, including audio recorders, cameras, light kits and tripods, can be checked out for up to 72 hours at a time.

Students spoke highly of the hands-on experience they receive in skills classes. They reported no trouble getting the equipment they need for assignments and they are able to access facilities after hours, using coded key-cards.

Broadcast managers familiar with the program told the accreditation team that the unit's production facilities are comparable to or better than those of small-market TV stations.

One consequence of the split between journalism and creative production has been the termination of live student-run TV news programs, once a staple of the curriculum. Students now produce taped segments and lack an experience of real-world conditions that had been a strong point of the program.

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

The unit has a "virtual reading room" with magazines, reference books and space for students to work and meet. The room's computers were last updated seven years ago but are sufficient for web research.

SUMMARY:

The unit is rightfully proud of its facilities, which are large and well-equipped. Students and faculty have access to professional-level equipment and software, which are kept updated despite University budget limitations. The unit has shown enterprise in securing additional funding sources in order to keep its facilities and technology current, to meet the needs of its students.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The self-study describes ongoing activities and interactions between Multimedia Journalism and its alumni and other professionals. An advisory board serves multiple purposes for the unit. Members share ideas and insight. They meet twice a year to review students' capstone work, offer guidance on curriculum and meet with seniors about readiness for work. The self-study singled out portfolio reviews as a centerpiece of assessment activities and among the most impactful contributions of an actively engaged advisory board.

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 unit described four approaches in the service of public interests and outlined a range of activities as proof of outcomes. Its campus events, when not sidetracked by the pandemic in recent semesters, include a speakers series and participation in forums on various issues.

In fall 2021, the School hosted the 100th-anniversary recognition of the student newspaper, *The Herald*, honoring staff contributors over the decades and celebrating the First Amendment.

The School of Media & Journalism collaborated with the Arkansas Municipal League to produce FOIA training for more than 100 journalists and public officials.

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.

The self-study listed ample engagement by faculty in a wide range of industry organizations.

Faculty have held top leadership positions at the Association for Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, the Southwest Education Council for Journalism & Mass Communication and the Arkansas College Media Association. They have served on the boards of the College Media Association, the Society of Professional Journalists and a regional association of Black journalists. They have reviewed conference papers and judged journalism competitions and scholarship grant applications for AEJMC.

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.

In addition to FOIA training as cited elsewhere in this standard, the School reported numerous examples of civic engagement. Its spacious broadcast facilities were the venue for mayoral and other local debates. The School also helped in production of the Northeast Arkansas Regional Cerebral Palsy Telethon and the annual county Spelling Bee.

The unit describes a significant role on campus and in the broader community for its collection of media outlets: A School-operated public radio station; bi-weekly newscasts and other programming on ASU-TV, supported by students enrolled in two courses; a campus radio station with news and entertainment format; the 100-year-old campus newspaper, *The Herald*, independent of the unit but advised by a faculty member; and Delta Digital News Service, a news lab offering what the self-study describes as “real-world experience” producing content made available to local news organizations in the region. At least one local editor for a newsroom stretched thin raved about the value of receiving photos periodically from the news service.

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

One enduring example of the program’s engagement with scholastic journalism is Communications Day, a media competition for students in Arkansas and Missouri since 1937, though not for the past two years.

Faculty members attend annual conferences of the Arkansas Broadcast Association, Arkansas Press Association, Arkansas College Media Association and the Arkansas Scholastic Press Association. The latter two organizations selected A-State to host their annual conventions, which are now rescheduled for April 2022.

Faculty members support students setting up booths on campus for advocacy of First Amendment issues such as awareness of fake news media, all part of annual National News Engagement Day.

SUMMARY:

The self-study sets the stage for fulfillment of this standard: *“Public service activities are undertaken with four underlying purposes: to contribute to public and scholarly understanding of media and society; to provide communications instruction and services to public and media organizations; to enhance knowledge of the university and its resources; and to create learning opportunities for students in a service context.”* Evidence of success was apparent in these targeted areas.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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 School’s Assessment Committee provides oversight for Standard 9. A Multimedia Journalism faculty member on that committee leads the accredited program’s assessment activities.
- *How has the unit verified that core and required courses cover all 12 of ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies?* The self-study describes a modified approach to assessment architecture that reframes ACEJMC’s 12 professional values and competencies as eight outcomes. A crisply designed 2016-17 curriculum map shows how the eight objectives are embedded across courses. The map goes on to use three levels of engagement – awareness, understanding and application – to show the extent to which each targeted course reflects ACEJMC’s mandates.

The unit uses three themes to help remind students of the assessment-based content throughout the curriculum: Think ... Communicate ... Be Professional – TCB.

- *How has the unit ensured that the syllabuses for these courses state learning outcomes that address the values and competencies appropriate for each course?* Syllabuses routinely emphasize outcomes.

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 School’s three direct measures of assessment are portfolio reviews, a pre/post exam administered on core issues, and evaluations of internships by supervisors. The self-study says portfolio reviews yield the most meaningful results, though all tools are considered helpful.
- *What indirect measures does it use, where and when?* The School conducts surveys of alumni and surveys of outgoing seniors.
- *Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies?* Faculty most involved with assessment indicated that the measures are largely successful. Pandemic realities cut into consistency in the past two years. In the case of the senior knowledge inventory, used as an indirect measure, the unit continues to tinker with new approaches.

Portfolio completion is required in students’ capstone class and portfolios are evaluated by external reviewers and faculty members. Graduating seniors complete digital portfolios housed on a home page with a resume and links to their best work. The portfolio reviews are considered successes, though the process is still a work in progress. Advisory board members are directly involved as reviewers, including development of their own rubric, as sanctioned by the School. Students get more direct feedback, sometimes in coaching sessions, from board members. And

the unit collects a meaningful set of critiques that provide more direct insight into patterns of strengths and weaknesses among students on the verge of graduating.

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?* A coordinator known for organizational skills and a knack for assessment takes the lead in collecting and analyzing data and singling out specific areas worth additional discussion or debate. Others on the faculty are involved as necessary.

• *What specific values and competencies had graduating classes not mastered satisfactorily?* Some faculty members pointed to students' weak grasp of fundamentals necessary to produce quality portfolios with impact. Insufficient exposure to numbers and statistics in storytelling is another area identified for improvement.

• *How does the unit decide how to address these areas of concern and what actions did it take to do so?* Some post-analysis actions are based on whether the unit achieved specified performance goals, such as 70% of students taking certain tests and achieving a minimum of 70% correct answers. Other observations come from portfolio reviews conducted by the advisory board and further reviewed by faculty members. Additional assessment conversations might be triggered by patterns of assignments submitted in core courses.

• *How does the unit evaluate whether its actions overcame the weaknesses in student learning and what were the results?* The assessment coordinator takes the lead in monitoring areas most in need of improvement, though others may also identify weaknesses and propose solutions.

• *Was the program of data analysis and action effective for identifying and overcoming unsatisfactory student learning?* The self-study points to some successes in elevating student learning. One example involved unsatisfactory outcomes in writing assignments for a required course. Faculty members determined that more emphasis on the fundamentals was necessary before students could excel in the course analyzed for assessment. So a new course was created, intended to address more basic elements of news and writing.

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

The unit describes ongoing interaction with alumni and solicitation of their perspectives on keeping the curriculum relevant. One major resource is the School's advisory board, dominated by alumni. Graduates of the program also serve as class discussion leaders. Guest speakers for various events engage in conversations on the development of curriculum and instruction.

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

Professionals serve on the School's advisory board, which conducts portfolio reviews, cited as the School's most effective direct measure of assessment. Board members also share their critiques and suggestions for improving the program. Professionals who hire student interns

complete performance reviews that address ACEJMC values and competencies through the School's reformulated list of outcomes.

SUMMARY: On a campus with extensive tools for tracking assessment and high demands on academic units, the School described itself as an achiever. Documentation showed mostly steady activities across the range of assessment indicators. Direct and indirect measures are identified. Curriculum maps and other instruments detail expectations, means, methods and who is responsible for carrying each plank in plans. Data is collected, analyzed and shared. Changes driven by evaluation of assessment outcomes are discussed and implemented. To the extent some efforts are inconsistent or certain goals are missed, the unit recognizes shortcomings and commits to improvements.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **COMPLIANCE**

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- Supportive and engaged alumni
- Well-equipped and spacious facilities
- Experienced and flexible leadership
- Collegial and caring faculty
- Wealth of opportunities in student media

Weaknesses

- Diminished enrollment
- Unsettled, frequently revised curriculum
- Fractured culture within the School of Media & Journalism

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

NONE

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

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

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

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.

Weaknesses cited in 2014-15 team report are listed, each followed by an update as of 2021 site visit:

1. An assessment program that is well-led and well-designed and that “closes the loop” but needs to function more consistently in gleaning information from student work.

There is evidence that the unit more thoroughly reviews direct and indirect measures of assessment. The current process is more consistent and rigorous.

2. The College does not have adequate support staff for its complex missions and responsibilities.

The restructuring of the College makes this concern moot. The School of Media & Journalism has one administrative assistant to the director, two engineers for the broadcast facilities and a computer technician in the building. Other support staff are assigned to the public radio station and printing services. The unit considers its support staff adequate.

3. Development staffer is shared with three other Colleges, not optimal for a College with aspirations to remodel space to improve teaching and production opportunities.

Development resources have not improved much. A newly hired development officer will be shared by the College of Liberal Arts and Communication and the College of Education and Behavioral Science. At one point during 2021, there were no development officers for the entire University.

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 thorough, well organized and clearly written, giving the site team the information it needed to prepare for the site visit. Supplemental materials were readily available through provided links.