Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2021–2022

Name of Institution: Central Michigan University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Robert O. Davies

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: William O. Dailey, Interim Chair

Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit: November 28-December 1, 2021

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2014

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: Provisional re-accreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

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

Signature [Handwritten]

Team Member
Name and Title: Thor Wasbotten, Professor
Organization/School: School of Media and Journalism, Kent State University

Signature [Handwritten]

Team Chair
Name and Title: Dr. Ann M. Brill, Dean and Professor
Organization/School: William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Kansas

Signature [Handwritten]

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

On site: Boardman and Wasbotten

Virtually: Brill
PART I: General information

Name of Institution: Central Michigan University

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism

Year of Visit: 2021

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

    ___ Higher Learning Commission
    ___ Middle States Commission on Higher Education
    ___ New England Commission on Higher Education
    ___ Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
    ___ Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges
    ___ 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.

   Article VIII Section 4 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 reads as follows:

   “The legislature shall appropriate moneys to maintain the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, Eastern Michigan University, Michigan College of Science and Technology, Central Michigan University, Northern Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Ferris Institute, Grand Valley State College, by whatever names such institutions may hereafter be known, and other institutions of higher education established by law. The legislature shall be given an annual accounting of all income and expenditures by each of these educational institutions. Formal sessions of governing boards of such institutions shall be open to the public.”

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:

October 5-8, 2014.

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1996
6. Provide the unit’s mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Journalism is to foster in its students the skills, values, and practices associated with professional journalism and strategic communication; to further their understanding of how those attributes intersect with local, national and global citizenship; to demand critical thinking; to challenge them to be the creators and leaders in a constantly changing communication environment, and to fully engage with diverse audiences.

Vision Statement

Within 10 years, the Department of Journalism will be a national leader in challenging students to be entrepreneurial, to understand and use all the tools available to them to tell Michigan’s and our nation’s stories in new and exciting ways, to develop and implement creative and ethical strategic campaigns, and to be equipped not only as communicators but lifelong learners who embrace change and thrive on challenge.

Values:

1) The highest loyalty is to the creation and support of an informed and engaged citizenry.
2) Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
3) Understanding and implementing ethical practices is essential to all communication.
4) Journalism exists to monitor and challenge power.
5) Communication is a forum.
6) Independent judgment is essential to the practice of communication.
7) Fairness in mind and heart forms the foundation of communication.
8) Technology is a tool and an opportunity, not an end.
9) Advocacy and independent journalism both exist to serve the public interest.
10) Trust, honesty and integrity in both practice and message are essential.

The Mission and Vision statements and Values were revised in spring 2013 and approved by the faculty August 21, 2013.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 16 weeks
Quarters of ____ weeks
Summer sessions of 12 weeks (most classes are either 3 or 6 weeks)
Intersessions of ____ weeks

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

The department tried unsuccessfully in 1975 to become accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. Faculty members voted to again seek accreditation in 1989. The department received initial accreditation in 1996-1997. The department now promotes itself as accredited by ACEJMC, “a distinction held by only one other Michigan university” (the other being Michigan State University).

In 1993, a proposal by the administration to merge the departments of journalism and broadcast as a
cost-saving measure was successfully resisted primarily on grounds that a merger would be fatal to accreditation attempts. The effort heightened both awareness of the support and resources for the department. Subsequent attempts since to merge the units have only produced discussion of the difficulties of a merger. The units collaborate to ensure students have the opportunity to major and/or minor in both. The now School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts is not a part of the ACEJMC-accredited program. The journalism department, in the meantime, was successfully reaccredited in 2002-2003 after its initial accreditation. In 2008-2009, it received provisional reaccreditation and obtained full reaccreditation in 2010. In 2014-2015, the department received full reaccreditation.

_X_ 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.

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Science
Bachelor of Applied Arts

Current Majors:
Journalism
Photojournalism
Journalism: Public Relations Concentration
Advertising

Discontinued Majors:
Journalism: Photojournalism Concentration
Journalism: Online Journalism Concentration
Journalism: News/Editorial Journalism

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

As of 2018-2019:
120 semester credit hours

Before 2018-2019:
124 semester credit hours

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

Three (3) semester credit hours can be counted toward the major. A few students earn more, but these only count toward a general university elective.
12. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered and give the name of the person in charge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sequence or Specialty</th>
<th>Person in Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>Jiafei Yin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td>Kent Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism: Public Relations Concentration</td>
<td>Elina Erzikova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Jinhee Lee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

In fall 2020, undergraduate and graduate enrollment was 17,344 students (3,375 off-campus and 13,969 on-campus students). The total is down from 27,886 in fall 2011, a drop in enrollment of 38%.

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):

As of Fall 2021, the enrolled majors in each major sequence were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sequence or Specialty</th>
<th>Undergraduate majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism: Public Relations Concentration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Submit two semesters with the self-study, and update as needed when the site team arrives on site. 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.)

In fall 2021, 25 skills courses are scheduled, and none of these will enroll more than 20 students.

Over the last 5 academic years (10 semesters), 372 skills courses were delivered, and two of those enrolled more than 20 students (22 and 21 students). Over the last two semesters (spring 2021 and fall 2020), 24 and 30 skills courses were delivered, respectively, and none enrolled more than 20 students. Both of the over-enrolled classes were in spring 2020 and were allowed to go over the limit to assure the May graduation of students. Please see Appendix G-1 in the General Information folder in the Appendices for a detailed listing of semesters, individual courses, and enrollments.

No skills classes are offered online.
16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2021–2022 academic year; amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries. Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Global Campus</th>
<th>On Campus</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td>$31,968</td>
<td>$1,762,071</td>
<td>$1,794,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>$35,520</td>
<td>$2,093,756</td>
<td>$2,129,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>$45,751</td>
<td>$2,054,687</td>
<td>$2,100,438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2021-2022, the amount to be spent of full-time faculty salaries, retirement, benefits, etc., will be $1,201,764, which is 67% of total expenses.

From 2019-2020 to 2021-2022, expense will fall by 15%.

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.

Note: At CMU, there are two major designations for faculty. The first is “regular” faculty, who are the tenure/tenure track faculty. These are long-term employees who can expect to be serving about as long as the wish, barring unforeseen circumstances. They almost always have full teaching loads (usually three courses a semester, but that will vary depending on a host of other factors). The vast majority of these individuals have terminal degrees. There are nine regular faculty in the department.

The second designation is “fixed-term” faculty. These are individual with fixed length contracts of one to three years. These individuals are evaluated regularly by department chairs, and their contracts are renewed if their performance is satisfactory and if there is a need for their services. Almost all fixed-term are full-time, professional instructors. Teaching in the department is their only work. When there is enrollment, they have full teaching loads (four courses a semester). Most of the fixed-term faculty do not have terminal degrees. There is one with a J.D., which a terminal degree. In the department, there are seven full-time fixed-term faculty. There is one part-time fixed-term faculty.

In the self-study, we will consider regular faculty as "full-time" faculty. We will also consider fixed-term faculty as “full-time” faculty, if they have been teaching full loads for years. When a fixed-term faculty only regular teaches a course or two, we will consider them “part time/adjunct” faculty.

Regular (Tenure/Tenure Track) Faculty

- Sean Baker - Professor
- Lori Brost - Assoc. Professor
- Ren Chunbo - Assoc. Professor
- Elina Erzikova - Professor
- Jinhee Lee - Asst. Professor
- Kent Miller (on leave for fall 2021) - Professor
- Alice Tait (on leave for 2021-2022) - Professor
- Jiafei Yin - Professor
- Zulfia Zaher - Asst. Professor
- William Dailey (non-teaching interim chair) - Professor
Fixed-Term Full-time Faculty Fall 2021

Kathy Backus Lecturer 2
Carol McGinnis Lecturer 3
Steve Coon* Lecturer 2
Tim Fitzgerald Lecturer 2
Teresa Hernandez Lecturer 2
Mike Marn Lecturer 2
Jim Wojcik Lecturer 3

* Teaching a reduced (¾) load for fall 2021.

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 2022, also provide the spring 2022 adjunct list when the team arrives for the visit.)

Fixed-Term Part time/Adjunct Faculty Fall 2021

Jerry Coon Lecturer 1

Fixed-Term Part time/Adjunct Faculty Spring 2021

Jerry Coon Lecturer 1
Jeff Johnston Lecturer 1
Betsy Rau Lecturer 1

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.

See Appendix G-2 in the General Information folder in the Appendices for more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>Number in Compliance</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021 academic year</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020 academic year</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Overview:

The Department of Journalism at Central Michigan University has a rich past, a troubled present and an uncertain future.

CMU is a state university in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, a college town an hour east of Saginaw and an hour north of Lansing. It has about 17,000 full-time students, which is down nearly 40 percent over the past decade. It is an R2 High-Research University in the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education, with an emphasis on teaching.

The Department of Journalism is one of six departments and/or schools within the College of the Arts and Media. The other departments in the college are the Department of Art and Design, the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts, the Department of Communication, the Department of Theatre and Dance, and the School of Music. The college offers three interdisciplinary programs, two of which – Integrative Public Relations and Multimedia Design – heavily involve the Department of Journalism. The Department of Journalism offers four majors: Journalism, Photojournalism, Journalism: Public Relations Concentration, and Advertising. Currently, the department has 147 students enrolled, down 44 percent since the last accreditation.

The Department of Journalism at CMU has a proud history and an impressive array of accomplished alumni, many of whom are celebrated in a Hall of Fame display in the department’s main corridor. The university first offered journalism classes in 1921 within the Department of English. The Department of Journalism was formed in 1959. The unit received initial ACEJMC accreditation in 1997 and prominently promotes this standing as “a distinction held by only one other Michigan university,” the other being Michigan State University.

In 2008, the unit received provisional re-accreditation, having been found in non-compliance on Standards 3 (Diversity) and 9 (Assessment). A 2010 revisit resulted in full re-accreditation, and the 2014 evaluation resulted again in re-accreditation.

That 2014 ACEJMC report cited as a weakness an “unsettled departmental climate.” In the seven years since, that climate appears not to have improved, and has almost certainly grown worse. By any measure, these have been tumultuous years for the unit: Five chairs in seven years, three of those with acting/interim status. The forced removal of two elected chairs. Two major faculty controversies, both of which garnered publicity regionally and nationally.

While each of these cases have unique elements, together they speak loudly to a unit in crisis. That conclusion was solidified in our conversations with faculty, staff and students.

Currently, the unit has an interim chair who was wooed out of retirement after serving as a faculty member and chair in the Department of Communication. While clearly liked and respected as an administrator by his Journalism colleagues, he has no experience nor expertise in the field. The interim chair reports to an interim dean. Previous temporary chairs during this period have included administrators from the School of Art and Design and the School of Music. The two most recent chairs who came from within the department were forcibly removed, one back to faculty status and the other terminated from the university. This turnstile of leadership has clearly had a negative impact on the unit’s morale and on its direction.

Additionally, the site team must note its disappointment that neither of the two aforementioned controversies was noted anywhere in the unit’s self-study. Background on those two controversies can
be found at these links:


While the site team had no intention or desire to relitigate these cases, an accreditation team and ACEJMC expect to be informed of such issues before a site team visit. And while the specifics of these controversies differ, both escalated in ways that experienced, talented leadership might have avoided.

The team also heard an unusual level of derision of university administrators, past and present, from within the unit’s faculty and students.

Despite all of that, the faculty remain passionate about teaching students and the students remain passionate about learning. Our assessment is that many of these issues could be addressed quickly and effectively with a visionary, experienced leader from within the field.

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 unit does have a mission statement and a strategic plan, but neither has been updated since the last re-accreditation visit, and many of the goals laid out in the 2014 strategic plan have not been pursued or achieved.

The mission statement of the Department of Journalism is the following:

“The mission of the Department of Journalism is to foster in its students the skills, values, and practices associated with professional journalism and strategic communication; to further their understanding of how those attributes intersect with local, national and global citizenship; to demand critical thinking; to challenge them to be the creators and leaders in a constantly changing communication environment, and to fully engage with diverse audiences.”

The unit also has a vision statement that lays out a series of goals:

- Maintaining its ACEJMC-accredited status.
- Offering a comprehensive range of professional and theoretical courses designed to cater to the employment potential and critical learning needs of its students.
- Ensuring a student-centered learning environment where quality teaching and concern for students are expected.
• Maintaining a state-of-the-art, cutting-edge curriculum that includes contemporary coursework and innovative programs.
• Maintaining sufficient enrollment in courses so that the department is economically viable on campus and within the college.
• Monitoring the department’s success in advising and implementing changes, if needed.
• Ensuring the department is diverse in students and faculty and working to enhance diversity through diversity events and initiatives of the university and the department and a curriculum that addresses diversity on campus, in the media and in society.
• Encouraging and supporting students to participate in student professional organizations and co-curricular activities. The CMU Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, the Central Press Photographers Association, the Public Relations Student Society of America, AdFed, and Grand Central Magazine have received considerable support from the department over the years so that students can attend regional and national conferences, participate in state and national competitions, and take advantage of professional workshops, etc. Additionally, students have received support regularly to attend the Michigan Press Association, the Michigan Press Photographers Association, the National Press Photographers Association, the Online News Association, the SPJ Mark of Excellence Awards, and the College Media Advisers Conference.
• Encouraging and continuing support for faculty research and grant-writing activities.
• Ensuring the long-term strategic needs of the department are met and actively engaging in advocacy to ensure the department’s well-being.

While these goals are laudable, it is clear that strategic planning and long-term visioning for the unit has been in abeyance during this period under review. Instead, the unit has been primarily in a reactive mode, moving from one crisis to another.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between the unit and the larger university is not healthy. There are different perspectives on the reasons for that, with those inside the unit largely blaming upper administration, and in particular a former dean of the College of the Arts and Media, and those outside the unit characterizing the department as a difficult outlier within the college and the university. Even several faculty members within Journalism concede that the unit has at times been its own worst enemy. One said, “We often act like confrontational journalists rather than as participants in an educational institution.” Another said: “We create our own issues by being confrontational and constantly questioning. There is too much head-butting and not enough compromise.”

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

The Department of Journalism functions within a highly structured university environment in which an Academic Senate has authority over curriculum. The faculty are unionized, with one association representing tenured and tenure-track faculty and another representing what are called fixed-term faculty.

The unit has a standard array of committees that oversee curriculum and personnel matters.

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.

As outlined in the summary above, the department has failed dramatically on this indicator over the
review period. While the current interim chair has skillfully calmed the stormy waters in which the unit was sailing 18 months ago, the lack of “effective leadership within the unit” is clearly at the heart of its problematic state. The faculty elected two chairs from their ranks within this period, but both were removed by the administration and replaced with interim chairs from outside the unit. Because of that history, several faculty members said that “no one wants to be the department chair now.”

The interim dean of the College of Arts and Media expressed both support and concern for the unit, and appears determined to address its issues during the remaining six months of her term.

The site team was disappointed that the president of the university declined to meet with us to receive the draft report on the final morning, as is normal practice, instead delegating that responsibility to a provost who will be leaving at the end of December.

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

In accordance with its bylaws, the unit normally elects its own chair, subject to approval by the administration. Chairs are evaluated informally every year and formally every three years.

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

The unit does have clear processes and procedures for handling student and faculty grievances. That said, in both of the high-profile controversies referenced above, affected faculty complained that proper protocols were not followed by the university. The site team did not pursue those complaints.

SUMMARY:

The unit has clearly and consistently fallen short on this standard over the review period.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: NON-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.

During the two years prior to the site visit, more than 95 percent of the department’s graduates completed 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and communications (100 percent in 2019-2020, 96 percent in 2020-2021).

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

The curriculum contains courses covering professional skills and theory that somewhat achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council. A number of faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders who care about the program expressed concerns about the limited courses where multimedia and video content are taught across all majors, and a lack of instructors (full-time or adjuncts) with current industry knowledge and skills. These deficiencies in the curriculum in the department have negatively affected its reputation and student learning. Students reported that while they learn the basic skills, they have to seek opportunities and courses outside the department to advance their media skills. Employers and alumni echoed that concern and cited extra-curricular opportunities as giving students the edge they are looking for in hires and interns.

The university reduced the number of semester credits hours to graduate from 124 to 120 for the 2018-2019 academic year. The current majors are Advertising, Journalism, Journalism: Public Relations Concentration, and Photojournalism. The unit also participates in an Integrative Public Relations major with two other departments in the college.

Students who choose Journalism, Journalism: Public Relations Concentration, or Photojournalism must complete 42 hours in the major. Advertising majors must complete 39 hours.

All majors must complete either Media and Society or Introduction to Journalism, Law of Mass Communication, and either The Asian Media and Cross-Cultural Mass Communication or Racial and Cultural Diversity: Mass Media’s Role.

Here are details of each major:

Advertising: At the time of the site visit, Advertising had an enrollment of 64 students (Fall 2021). Students are required to complete the following courses: Introduction to Graphics and Visual Communication; Foundation of Strategic Public Relations; Advertising Principles; Writing for Advertising; Advertising Media; Advertising and Public Relations Research; Advertising Campaigns;
Advertising Internship; Introduction to Marketing; and one of the following – Advertising Account Management or Advertising Copy and Design or Advertising Account Planning.

**Journalism:** At the time of the site visit, Journalism had an enrollment of 51 students (Fall 2021). Students are required to complete the following courses: Writing for Mass Media; Information Gathering for the Mass Media; Basic Media Photography; Reporting; Editing; Introduction to Digital Journalism; and, either Journalism Practicum or Journalism Internship. In addition, students must complete either Multimedia Reporting Capstone or Current Issues in Mass Communication.

**Journalism: Public Relations Concentration:** At the time of the site visit, Journalism: Public Relations Concentration had an enrollment of six students (Fall 2021). Students are required to complete the following courses: Writing for the Mass Media; Information Gathering for the Mass Media; Basic Media Photography; Introduction to Graphics and Visual Communication; Foundations of Strategic Public Relations; Advertising and Public Relations Research; Public Relations Writing; Case Studies in Public Relations; Public Relations Seminar; Public Relations Internship; and one of the following – Introduction to Digital Journalism or Advanced Media Graphics and Visual Communication. Faculty noted that a primary reason for the low enrollment is that this major is focused primarily on transfer students who are interested in a degree in public relations. Students who are able to complete all 61 hours required in the Integrated Public Relations typically declare that major instead.

**Photojournalism:** At the time of the site visit, Photojournalism had an enrollment of 26 students (Fall 2021). Students are required to complete the following courses: Writing for the Mass Media; Basic Media Photography; Introduction to Digital Journalism; Introduction to Graphics and Visual Communication; Photo Editing; Photography Studio Techniques; The Picture Story; Online Visual Storytelling; Multimedia Reporting Capstone; Seminar in News Photography; and one of the following – a Journalism course 300-level or above or Photojournalism Internship.

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 in the department has evidence of engagement, but many of the students interviewed said instruction was “redundant” and not current. The site team was told that “there is too much repetition” and “similar things are being taught over and over.” One of the common concerns is that there is one course prior to the capstone that is focused primarily on multimedia content and that course “breezes by video, audio, and multimedia too quickly.” The site team was told that if students want to become broadcast or multimedia journalists, for example, some may choose to take courses in the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts (SBCA) instead of Journalism because that is where more of the video production courses are offered, or they may minor in Multimedia Design because that is where more multimedia techniques are available.

Stakeholders outside the department told the site team that there should be more collaboration or a merger with the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts (SBCA).

One employer said, “I have seen a regression in students’ skills. The department has delegated responsibility for certain aspects to CM Life,” the student media operation that is part of Student Affairs. This was a concern shared multiple times, both mentioning the strengths of CM Life, Multimedia Design, and SBCA and the weaknesses within the department’s curriculum.
Here are overviews of each of the majors:

**Advertising:**
Students report a general satisfaction with the instruction in the major. They appreciate the creative focus of most of their classes and the internship requirement. Most students agreed with the idea that the curriculum should include a course in social media analytics, but such a class was recently cancelled due to declining enrollment. A visit to an Advertising class demonstrated strong engagement between faculty and students.

**Journalism:**
Students appreciate the faculty, using the terms “friendly,” “care about you,” and “good people.” There are also deep concerns about the lack of up-to-date instruction and the notion that the major relies on external experiences (CM Life, internships, WCMU, courses in Broadcast and Cinematic Arts) to fill in the gaps for what is not covered in the curriculum. The site team tried to visit multiple classes, but the two digital journalism classes (Introduction to Digital Journalism and the Capstone course) were cancelled because of a faculty illness, a third class had students watching a film, and a fourth class showed minimal faculty/student interaction.

**Journalism – Public Relations Concentration:**
There are only six students in the major and none in the site team’s conversations with students. A visit to a class demonstrated high engagement and robust discussion.

**Photojournalism:**
Photojournalism students are aware of the national reputation of their major and take pride in their role in continuing that legacy. Students routinely place in the national Hearst awards, both individually and collectively. As with other majors in the department, they are concerned about a lack of multimedia content instruction and say it comes too late in the major.

**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’s student-faculty ratio is 20:1 for skills courses, with only two instances where a skills course had 22 or 21 students. No skills classes are offered online.

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

The department strongly encourages at least one internship for all majors, although an internship is required only in Advertising, and Journalism: Public Relations Concentration. Internships are options in Journalism and Photojournalism (students are required to choose an internship or practicum).

Internships for credit are offered as courses in each of the four majors and can be completed only with the permission of the department’s internship coordinator. Students must attend a required seminar about internships during the fall semester if they plan to do an internship for credit within the following three semesters. Students must apply to the department’s internship coordinator, Professor Jim Wojcik, to be able to register for the internship. Students submit an application to the coordinator, who then discusses
the potential internship with them. The application contains a credit agreement with the professional supervisor, which provides information regarding the intern’s duties, supervision, work expectations and conditions and renumeration, if any. The internship coordinator either approves or does not approve the proposed internship.

Students are required to complete periodic reports, including a short report after the first week. A mid-term report and final paper are also required, along with a portfolio of work produced.

As part of the internship assessment process, the internship coordinator makes on-site visits to most locations in Michigan and corresponds by either phone or email with internship field supervisors, who provide reviews of interns. During the pandemic, all visits were online.

**Advertising:**
Students appreciate the internship requirement and note that they would not have as strong an educational experience without one.

**Journalism:**
Students in Journalism must choose either an internship or a practicum. Most choose an internship. Students felt generally prepared for internships, although they see a need for more multimedia training before they enter an internship.

**Journalism: Public Relations Concentration:**
There are only six students in the major and none in the site team’s conversations with students.

**Photojournalism:**
The few students interviewed by the site team said they spent their internships in *CM Life*, the student media operation that is within Student Affairs. The faculty report, however, that in the past five years photojournalism students interned with Michigan newspapers, private photo studios, CMU University Communications, sports teams, summer camps, national forests and parks (Denali, Kenai, Huron-Manistee Forest), the CMU College of Education, Potter Park Zoo, internet production companies, and one program in the Philippines.

**SUMMARY:**
The department’s faculty understand that they are continuously in the process of modernizing the curriculum and that they are “not where they need to be.” They also take pride in engaging instruction that has helped students win numerous awards. The curriculum has a logical progression in each of the four majors, but there are significant concerns that it is neither current nor appropriately responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Based on the lack of assessment data and closing of the loop (discussed in more detail in Standard 9), the site team saw challenges with the curriculum that may be tied to leadership issues, the silos between this department and other units in the College, and the lack of implementation of what the previous site team called a promising assessment plan.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **NON-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 Department of Journalism does have a diversity plan, updated in Spring 2021 from its 2014 version. The plan is wide-ranging and ambitious, reflecting the high-profile elevation of the values of diversity, equity and inclusion by Central Michigan University as a whole in recent years. CMU has committed to becoming an “anti-racist institution,” and has launched an “I Am” campus-wide campaign to educate and engage the community.

The university’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement says:

“At Central Michigan University, we:
  ◼ Stand in solidarity with Black and African American communities, because Black Lives Matter.
  ◼ Acknowledge the ongoing racial disparities and injustices challenging people and communities of color in our country and here on our campus.
  ◼ Accept the responsibility to listen, learn and take action.

“We do this because we:
  ◼ Embrace our core values of integrity, respect, compassion, inclusiveness, social responsibility, excellence and innovation.
  ◼ Know that diversity, equity and inclusion strengthen our community of scholars.
  ◼ Expect accountability from every member of our community.

“And so, moving forward we will:
  ◼ Actively invite feedback from all members of our community.
  ◼ Review our policies and practices to seek opportunities for improvement.
  ◼ Promote the open exchange of ideas by inviting curiosity and asking respectful questions.”

The Department of Journalism itself lists four priorities relative to diversity, equity and inclusion:
  ◼ Foster a welcoming and inclusive departmental environment
  ◼ Recruit, hire, and retain faculty and staff who will enhance diversity in the department
  ◼ Recruit and retain students from diverse backgrounds
  ◼ Infuse diversity into the curriculum and promote teaching strategies that encourage student involvement and facilitate respect for diverse perspectives

Each of these departmental priorities carries several strategies and actions. The plan is aspirational but lacks clear metrics and timelines that will be necessary for assessing success. It does meet the indicator’s requirement of focusing on domestic minority groups and does include international groups. It also does include the unit’s definition of diversity to be “racial/ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, individuals with disabilities, and internationals, as well as others.”
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 site team found both strengths and some gaps in assessing this indicator. While the self-study presented a robust and impressive catalogue of ways in which DEI is represented in the curriculum, the site team found that these issues could and should be more prominent in day-to-day learning.

The department offers two foundational courses centered on diversity:

- JRN 380, Racial Diversity: Mass Media’s Role
- JRN 372, The Asian Media and Cross-Cultural Mass Communication

These are core courses within the Department’s four majors, and students are required to take at least one of the two. These courses are also offered to all CMU undergraduates. Students reflected that these courses are strong, and some described them as paradigm-shifting. Others, however, said that JRN 380, which is the more commonly taken class, focuses more on entertainment media and not enough on news and advertising.

The self-study and interviews with faculty indicate that, as the self-study puts it, “the department offers a variety of courses that foster understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.” The self-study provided dozens of such examples taken from classes across the curriculum.

However, in a review of course syllabi, the site team found few direct references to diversity and no consistent diversity statement from the department. And in conversations with students in classes and student leaders, some indicated that they wished diversity issues – and in particular, the dynamic nature of diversity in journalism and media – were discussed more regularly in their classes.

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.

As a result of steadily declining enrollment, the department has done little hiring in the period under review. There have been two tenure-track faculty positions filled during this time, and both were filled by women of international origin.

The state of Michigan has among the most restrictive laws regarding the use of race and gender in recruitment and hiring. Within those parameters, the department works closely with the university’s Affirmative Action office to ensure that pools of finalists for positions include women and people of color.

Facing both the state’s restrictions and its rural and politically conservative location, the unit has done relatively well in recruiting and retaining faculty of color and/or international faculty. Among the 16 full-time faculty, nine (56 percent) are domestic white and seven (44 percent) are POC and/or international. Of the latter category, one is Black, one is Latina and five are international (four of Asian origin). The unit has advertised openings in a variety of minority-serving sites and publications and has done much personal outreach.
The drop in enrollment has meant a sharp decline in opportunities for working professionals to join as adjunct faculty. In the past, the department has endeavored to recruit people of color to teach part-time, but at the time of the site team visit nearly all classes are taught by full-time faculty.

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.

Since the last accreditation visit, the department has grown the percentage of students of color in its enrollment, and vigorous recruiting efforts by the unit and the university are apparently paying some dividends. Although the student population remains largely white, at 71 percent, the percentage of people of color, at 29 percent, exceeds both the university’s percentage (27) and that of the state of Michigan (25). It is all the more notable given that the counties in the region in which CMU is located are 85-95 percent white.

One of the most prominent scholarships the department offers is named for a pioneering Black journalist who was an alumnus of the program, Lem Tucker. That full-ride scholarship has gone to students from underrepresented populations.

In addition, the unit hosts high-school workshops called “Journalism Rocks” that attract participants of color. The department uses these one-day short courses as a recruiting tool as well as a service to high-school students throughout the state.

Also, the unit participates in what is called the “Multi-cultural Talent Pipeline Forum,” described this way on the Publicis Group website: “The Forum is an interactive, virtual educational experience committed to creating a more diverse workforce by engaging and identifying diverse college students to join the media, advertising and marketing industries.” More than 30 students of color from CMU have participated in this event, with numerous internships and several full-time jobs ultimately resulting.

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.

Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the laws of the countries in which non-U.S. institutions are located.

The site team found no evidence of discriminatory practices within the unit. As noted in Standard 1, there was last year a highly publicized incident in which a professor was terminated for creating what the university called a “hostile learning environment.” In the ensuing months, that case fomented vigorous national debate about academic freedom and the First Amendment. While the site team assiduously avoided relitigating that case, we did probe whether this was indicative of broader issues within the department and found no such indications.

SUMMARY:

The department has done an admirable job of recruiting and retaining students of color under challenging circumstances. Faculty diversity overall is satisfactory, though future hiring opportunities
should focus on increasing domestic diversity. The department’s DEI goals are laudatory but must be more measurable and tied to timetables. And while areas of the curriculum embrace and demonstrate DEI values, this, too, is an area for future attention and improvement.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

**Academic year: 2020 – 2021 Full-time faculty**
**9 Regular Faculty and 7 Fixed-Term Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>% of total faculty</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>% of total faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan native</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (any race)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (any race)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.25%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*% of total faculty represents total full-time faculty (16)
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.

The unit’s criteria for selecting and evaluating instructional staff is governed by its bylaws and by the two contracts with faculty: one with the tenured/tenure-track faculty and another with the “fixed-term” faculty. This unit has nine regular faculty and eight fixed-term. One fixed-term faculty member is not full time. The unit also hires part-time faculty as needed, though declining enrollment has largely eliminated that need.

Selecting faculty: The unit’s processes and criteria for the selection of full-time faculty are specified in the unit’s Departmental Procedures, Criteria, Standards and Bylaws and the CMU and in the bargaining agreements with the two faculty unions. As a general rule, the department requires a Ph.D. degree (or ABD status with a view to the doctorate being in hand for assistant professor rank on the tenure track) or a terminal degree such as the MFA, depending on the position, and professional experience for all “academic track” positions. The department traditionally has required a bachelor’s degree and distinguished professional experience for appointment as fixed-term faculty.

The department’s bylaws (approved December 13, 2012), Article XXV, note: The Department of Journalism recognizes the value of granting appointment, reappointment, tenure, and promotion to two different, but equally valuable, “tracks” of faculty members: traditional academic and distinguished media professionals. Such recognition allows the department to best carry out its mission as an undergraduate program that prepares students for entry-level jobs at mass communication organizations.

In searches for tenure-track faculty, the department works with the university’s Affirmative Action Office through the dean’s office to ensure that the finalist lists in faculty searches include qualified women and minorities. There is always a search committee for every tenure-track hire.

The department undergoes scrutiny in the faculty recruitment and hiring process. The associate dean of the college reviews documentation on all candidates before directing the list of candidates to the affirmative action officer. Only when the affirmative action officer approves the candidates in the pool is the unit allowed to bring in candidates for interviews. Once the candidates are interviewed, the unit has to justify its hiring decision. If the unit’s justification passes the scrutiny of the dean’s office, then the hiring process is put in motion with Faculty Personnel Services. A determination is made about the salary range, an offer is made, and the candidate either accepts or rejects the offer.

The unit chair is responsible for hiring non-tenure-track faculty members and consults with the personnel committee regarding hiring decisions. Article X of the unit’s bylaws outlines the duties of the chairperson and specifies that the chair “leads and aids in the selection of qualified staff and faculty.”

The unit recruits fixed-term faculty members every semester. However, given that the unit has a consistent cohort of full-time, fixed-term faculty, the majority of whom are guaranteed two-year appointments at the Lecturer 2 rank, there is limited opportunity for part-time hires. The unit hires part-time faculty on an “as needed” basis. It usually has a file of potential part-time faculty on whom it can draw or relies on local advertising or word-of-mouth advertising to attract local professionals or doctoral candidates at Michigan State University, for example, as part-time faculty. In recent years, the unit has not had the opportunity to hire additional fixed-term faculty and declining enrollment has affected the unit’s ability to hire part-time lecturers.
For fixed-term faculty, Article 9, Appointments, in the CMU/Union of Teaching Faculty Agreement (2020-2022) outlines the criteria for appointment at the Lecturer I, Lecturer II, and Lecturer III level. Given that Lecturer II status confers a guarantee of “a two-year appointment” for the fixed-term faculty member, it can be seen as a promotion. Article 9, Paragraph 2.a, specifically addresses promotion to the Lecturer II level as do Paragraphs 2.b, c, d, e, f, and g under Article 9. The agreement also indicates “a three-year appointment” is guaranteed for Lecturer III as the fixed-term faculty member. It can be seen as a promotion. Article 9, Paragraph 3.a, specifically addresses promotion to the Lecturer III level as do Paragraphs 2.b, c, d, and e under Article 9.

Evaluating faculty: The union contracts and unit bylaws lay out the process for evaluation. Promotion, tenure and salary adjustments for tenured and tenure-track faculty are dictated by the CMU/FA Agreement (2019-2024) and the terms of the faculty member’s contract with the university. Promotion and tenure criteria also are specified in the unit’s bylaws. The Union agreement designates the unit as responsible for specific criteria to evaluate the bargaining member’s work.

Paragraph A of Article 11, notes: “The basis upon which an Employee will be evaluated is that of instruction and instruction-related responsibilities. Other professional activities, such as publications and conference presentations, which benefit the reputation of CMU, may be considered as part of the evaluation process; however, the quality of Employees’ teaching is the paramount concern in the evaluation process and the absence of other professional activities will not be used as evidence against an Employee.” All faculty members are formally evaluated each semester for their teaching, using the university-wide instrument — The Student Opinion Survey.

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

The Departmental Procedures, Criteria, Standards, and Bylaws delineate the unit’s criteria for regular faculty (tenured and tenure-track) pertaining to teaching, research, creative and professional activity, and service.

Teaching: In the current semester and the three years preceding the site team visit, full-time faculty taught an average of more than 95 percent of the courses in the unit’s offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>% TT <em>&amp; FT</em></th>
<th>% TT**</th>
<th>% FT***</th>
<th>% PT****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Percent taught by combined tenure/tenure track faculty and full-time fixed term faculty.
** = Percent taught by tenure/tenure track faculty.
*** = Percent taught by full-time fixed term faculty.
**** = Percent taught by part-time, adjunct faculty.

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.
As of fall 2021, the department had a total of nine regular (tenured/tenure-track) faculty members and eight fixed-term faculty members (one fixed-term faculty is not “full-time”).

Eight of nine regular faculty members hold doctoral degrees, and one holds a Master of Fine Arts degree. All of the six female regular faculty and two of the male regular faculty have doctoral degrees, and one of the male regular faculty has an MFA degree. Thus, 88.9 percent of the faculty members hold doctoral degrees. Please note that the MFA is considered a terminal degree in the arts.

Combined, the regular faculty have a total of 81 years of professional experience, an average of 9 years. They also have a total of 142 years of teaching experience, an average of 15.8 years. The longest-serving member of the faculty has taught for 39 years at CMU; the most recent hire has just completed her third year at CMU.

Of the seven tenured faculty members and two tenure-track faculty members in the unit, four are at the full professor rank; three at associate professor rank; and two at the assistant professor rank.

Of the eight fixed-term faculty, four have master’s degrees, three have bachelor’s degrees, and one holds a J.D. degree. Most of them have extensive professional experience, with a combined total of 157 years. Together, they have 100 years of teaching experience. Two of the eight fixed-term faculty hold the rank of Lecturer 3, five are at the Lecture 2 level, and one is at the Lecture 1 level. Among the fixed-term faculty, seven fixed-term faculty are full-time while one fixed-term is part-time. However, due lower enrollments in 2020-2021 and in fall 2021, not all full-time fixed-term faculty had or have full loads.

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

All faculty participate in semester-end teaching evaluations. The university-wide Student Opinion Survey is a key part of instructor evaluations and the annual review process. Tenure-track faculty make copies of their SOS evaluations available to the associate dean and the chair at the time of their annual Article 6 review meetings, which are pre-tenure performance reviews for faculty development purposes, and also to the members of the unit’s personnel committee for reappointment considerations. SOS evaluations also are available when promotion and tenure applications are considered. The chair tracks grade distributions of all faculty and makes available to each faculty member a record of her/his grade distribution for each class and that of other faculty members, highlighting the distribution across faculty for multiple sections of the same course. The chair holds individual conferences to discuss teaching with faculty members when needed.

The unit’s curriculum committee also reviews course content and revises courses to keep curriculum relevant to the evolving needs of the students. When active, the alumni advisory boards for journalism and advertising are used to keep curriculum and instruction current. For most of this review period, however, those boards were dormant.

Members of the faculty participate in unit, university and other workshops by professional organizations, such as the Poynter Institute, to improve teaching. The university’s Office of Curriculum and Instructional Support (CIS) offers opportunities to facilitate engaging learning, from development of curriculum through to the demonstration of student learning, and to have professional development. CIS provides various services for faculties to enhance their teaching effectiveness, for example, teaching and learning conferences, teaching feedback, class observation, consultation on course design and teaching method, and Blackboard review.
e). The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.

Faculty have received recognition and been awarded grants from the university to attend teaching seminars. In addition, faculty have published and presented at conferences to showcase their teaching and pedagogy research. As a unit in the College of the Arts and Media, the faculty often interact with other departments in the college. Faculty in the college speak highly of their colleagues in the unit, especially those who work closely with them in the Integrative Public Relations program. During interviews with some university colleagues, however, the issue of the unit’s lack of stable leadership was raised and cited as a factor in the unit not being able to keep up with emerging media trends.

SUMMARY:

Full-time faculty have primary teaching responsibility in the unit and that has grown during a time of enrollment decline. The unit is governed by unit bylaws and its collective bargaining agreement in its hiring, evaluating and promoting of both tenure-track and fixed-term faculty. Faculty and students agree that the unit has dedicated and caring faculty. While there is concern over classroom instruction being up-to-date, faculty do seek out and participate in ways to improve their teaching.

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.

Expectations and rewards for research, creative activity and/or professional activity are spelled out in the unit’s bylaws and the university’s contracts with the faculty unions. The unit says it embraces a broad definition of scholarly and/or creative work, which is listed as the second imperative under the university’s strategic plan. Both tenure-track and lecturers are eligible for promotion, although only tenure-track can earn tenure. Per the union contract, tenured full professors also are eligible for “promotion” by way of seeking salary adjustments once every four years.

At the end of the sixth continuous year, or twelfth semester, of regular full-time duties and post-tenure attainment, regular faculty members are eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave to engage in research, improve teaching or carry out other intellectual and professional development activities. Since the last reaccreditation visit, four faculty members have been awarded sabbaticals.

The university supports faculty activities through a variety of awards, including the Teaching Excellence Award, the President’s and Provost’s Awards for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity, and the Provost’s Award for Assessment; and through various grants awarded by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). The vice president for research also supports one-time requests through a discretionary fund for research-related activities that are not covered by other ORSP competitions and programs. The Office of International Affairs also provides some funding assistance to faculty who participate in faculty-led study abroad programs.

The unit’s bylaws address the quality and quantity of research and creative activities. The unit’s personnel committee makes recommendations to the dean on reappointments, promotions and tenure. The union agreement stipulates the policy in relation to the applicant’s responsibilities, the department-level review, the dean and provost reviews, the president’s action, notification and appeal process.

There is no university mandate for fixed-term, full-time faculty to contribute to scholarly or creative activities.

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

All criteria for research, creative activity and/or professional activity in hiring, promotion and tenure is explicated in the unit’s bylaws, university policies and procedures, and in the collective bargaining agreement.

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

Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition account for and acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members’ professional as well as scholarly specializations are found in the unit’s bylaws, university policies and procedures, and in the collective bargaining agreement. The Faculty Research and Creative Endeavors (FRCE) Premier Display Funds promotes research and creative endeavors at CMU. This includes the dissemination of research findings. Premier Display
Funds provide support for the initial presentation of results from research and scholarly activities generated by a CMU faculty or staff member, either alone or with colleagues, or by students under his or her direction. The unit also has funds to support faculty development. Course release time also supports teaching initiatives.

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

The work of 11 tenured and tenure-track or “regular” faculty is below. Of those, one resigned in summer 2020 and another in fall 2020; two faculty members are new since 2014. One came to CMU in fall 2017, and another in fall 2018. It also should also be noted that much of the scholarship attributed to those at the rank of associate professor was conducted at the rank of assistant professor. Two of the five associate professors were promoted in fall 2016 and 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities</th>
<th>Total from Unit*</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Prof (4)</td>
<td>Assoc Prof (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards and Honors</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Received Internal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Received External</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books Edited</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Chapters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monographs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles in Refereed Journals</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refereed Conference Papers</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invited Academic Papers</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encyclopedia Entries</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articles in Non-refereed Publications</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juried Creative Works</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-juried Creative Works</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Published Photographs</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invited Conference Presentations</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Refereed Presentations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
e). The unit fosters a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, critical analysis and the expression of differing points of view.

Interviews with faculty found support for differing points of view, intellectual curiosity and critical analysis. Despite the turnover of unit leadership since the last reaccreditation visit, the site team found a collegial faculty who are supportive of each other. The variety of published research, conference presentations and creative work shows the depth and variety of faculty members’ scholarship. The university is placing more importance on the quality of research and unit bylaws and the union agreement detail the criteria for evaluating scholarship. Financial support for research comes from the university, the dean, and the unit.

SUMMARY:

The university is putting more emphasis on the importance and the quality of research at CMU, which has traditionally been an institution focusing on undergraduate teaching. Tenure-track faculty typically have a 3:3 teaching load. Both the CMU-FA Agreement and department bylaws spell out clear and specific expectations and criteria on research when personnel decisions are made. Among the nine tenure-track faculty, research productivity is commendable, ranging from books and book chapters to journal articles, conference research presentations, and creative work. Research topics range from news to public relations to advertising, from media history to digital and social media, from the history of the local Native American tribe to media’s role in shaping public perceptions of AIDS patients, from journalism and public relations trends in Russia to media reforms in China, use of social media for philanthropy in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan to digital activism #metoo movement in the U.S. and around the world, and international media ethics.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE
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.

Formal academic advising occurs through the Office of Student Success in the College of the Arts and Media as well as in the department. Advisors at the college level focus on advising on degree options and requirements. All students must meet with an academic advisor in the College of the Arts and Media to manage progress on their “major maps.” These “maps” are four-year plans that plot all major courses (with modified maps for transfer students).

Department faculty also serve as advisors and provide academic advising, including signing majors and minors, reviewing degree progress, internships, and career options. Each student is assigned a faculty member, often one who is experienced in the student’s focus area.

Students have access to an online advising program (Advising Workbench), which allows them to monitor their own progress.

Students are satisfied with the quality of advising and are clear in their understanding of how to progress toward graduation.

b). Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Faculty are clearly committed to the success of the students. They have a passion and dedication to being available for them through an open-door culture and office hours. The department chair also sees students when needed.

Students universally appreciate and praise the faculty for being available, caring about them, and working hard to help them prepare for graduation and beyond.

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

The department utilizes an email list of all majors and minors to share information, requirements and policies. Office staff keep this list current. The self-study states that the department’s website is a good resource for students, but a review of the website revealed dated and inaccurate information that could confuse students. For example, the website includes information from the 2016-2017 University Undergraduate Bulletin that explains students must take 80 hours outside of journalism and that “of those 80 semester hours, 65 must be in the liberal arts and sciences.” This reflects an older requirement of ACEJMC. The current University Undergraduate Bulletin is correct in explaining the 72-hour rule, but students do not see that on the department’s website.

Prior to the pandemic, the department offered special advising sessions each semester called “Major Signing Night.” In these sessions, faculty would answer students’ questions about declaring a major or minor, career opportunities and general questions. The department has not offered this session for the past two years, although this is an event that seems to be able to work online.
d). The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.

Student media at CMU are independent of the department and students serve as both staff and in leadership positions. CM Life is the award-winning student newspaper and online news site, and is published in print twice per month under the guidance of a professional staff member who is not part of the unit faculty. Grand Central is the department’s digital magazine. Other student media opportunities are part of the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts or at the University level: WMHW-FM; Moore Hall TV; News Central 34; Moore Media Records; Moore Media Digital Design; and WCMU. Students from the department are able to participate in any of the units.

Students in the department can participate in a number of professional student organizations and activities, among them are the CMU Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, a chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, the Ad Club, PRSSA and PR Central.

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 Department receives data from the university’s Office of Academic Planning and Analysis and has posted enrollment, persistence, and graduation data on the main page of its website. The data listed there, however, are different than the data listed in the About Us section of the website, which is the link provided in the self-study. These inconsistencies can be confusing for students, both prospective and current. The site team believes the differences are due to a different year being used on separate pages and a lack of staff to maintain more current data.

Using the data from the self-study, the department has fewer than 150 majors, a retention rate of 96 percent, persistence rates of 80 percent (year 3) and 74 percent (year 4), and a four-year graduation rate of 65 percent.

**SUMMARY:**

Overall, the department provides an appropriate level of student services. Students have access to advising at multiple levels within the university, are able to gain experience in multiple student media and organizations, and report they are generally satisfied with student services. The department lacks clarity in reporting data that is required by ACEJMC, which may be a result of the inconsistent leadership and a lack of staff support within the program.

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 department does have a detailed annual budget, the allocation of which appears to be in line with its stated priorities. The total budget, now $1.75 million, has declined steadily year by year since the last site visit, but that slope parallels enrollment enrollment declines.

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.

Central Michigan operates on an unusual form of the Responsibility Centered Management budgetary model, one in which departments are taxed at vastly different rates based on a calculation of the cost of producing a student credit hour. That cost is a function of faculty and staff salaries, equipment, facilities, etc. The Department of Journalism pays a relatively high tax to the central university, at 61 percent of its received tuition, reflecting that its departmental costs are low relative to some other departments. The Department of Music, by contrast, pays only 16 percent back to the university.

Although the unit’s resources are modest, faculty and staff say they are adequate and fair given the university’s overall financial pressures.

There is surprisingly little conversation or consideration for philanthropic fund-raising within the department, and no evidence of current engagement with past or potential donors.

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

The Department of Journalism, along with the other departments in the College of the Arts and Media, is housed in Moore Hall, built in 1971. The department occupies much of the building’s 6,800-square-foot fourth floor, which also includes the office of the student publications CM Life and Grand Central.

A highlight of the building is the Caponigro Multimedia Lab, a large laboratory space equipped with fully loaded Mac desktops. This is funded by an endowment gift from an alumnus. There are two other, smaller computer labs on the fourth floor.

All department labs are adequately equipped for the courses taught by the unit, although, as noted in Standard 2, those course offerings are more limited than in most other up-to-date programs. If the unit updates and expands its offerings, there may be more demand for studio space, audio and video editing labs, and appropriate technology.

All Journalism faculty have private offices and computer software and hardware for their on-campus needs. In fact, with dwindling enrollment, some classrooms and offices are going unused.

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

All students and faculty have access to Adobe Creative Cloud and Microsoft Office Suite.
The Photojournalism sequence has the largest supply of equipment, and there is a room dedicated to storage and checkout. Most students and faculty feel the supply is adequate for their needs. There were some complaints that the non-journalism students staffing the equipment room lack the necessary expertise to advise students, particularly underclassmen, on what they need, when.

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

Moore Hall is centrally located and provides ready physical access to the million-plus-volume campus main library, the Park Library. CMU’s library system has a robust catalog of research materials and databases, including digitized volumes of Michigan newspapers.

SUMMARY:

For a modestly sized department with relatively modest ambitions, the resources, facilities and equipment here are sufficient. If the department elevates those ambitions, and particularly its multimedia offerings, more resources will be needed. External funding may provide great opportunity.

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 unit has a loyal and engaged alumni base, including several faculty members who are alumni. Students said area professionals visit classes, although the pandemic restrictions moved that to virtual visits. The department has a Hearst Visiting Professionals Program with an endowment of about $120,000 from the Hearst Foundation. This endowment generates a spendable amount each year, and the university augments that with a 50 percent match. It enables the department to bring in experienced professionals to work with students and make presentations to them in classes. Visitors included experts on diversity and global media.

The two alumni and professional advisory boards were reorganized in 2020 after a long hiatus. The boards, which will convene twice each year (met online in spring and fall 2021 due to the pandemic), offer advice on curriculum and industry trends and engages in an exchange of ideas about the future of media professions and journalism and advertising education.

Alumni are involved in many unit activities. Until the pandemic hit, the unit invited alumni to present at the Michigan Community College Press Association Annual Conference. The unit hosts the conference every year. CMU alumni populate the Michigan media, and many of them are involved in various initiatives at their alma mater.

The unit partners with its Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) to arrange the annual internship fairs to match students’ career interests and goals. The campus-wide internship fair invites public relations agencies, businesses and nonprofit organizations to participate and meet with potential internship candidates. The 2020 internship fair was a virtual event with 25 organizations participating. More than 250 students attended the 2020 virtual internship fair.

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.

For the last decade, the unit coordinated and hosted the annual conference of Michigan Community College Press Association (MCCPA). MCCPA has 10 Michigan community colleges that publish newspapers. The department is the focal point for these schools, serving as their reference point for questions and issues during the school year. Every spring, the department hosts, sponsors and puts on an all-day conference for the community colleges and the students who work on the newspapers.

Additionally, faculty members conduct short courses and give presentations on media-related topics to organizations in Michigan and beyond. In 2016-2018, faculty members gave workshops at Yantai University (YTU) in China.

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

Faculty members also serve as judges for such events as the National Press Photographers Association’s National Monthly Clip Contest, the Michigan Community College Press Association’s annual contest,
the Freep Film Festival Student documentary competition in 2015, and the American Journalism Historical Association best book contest in 2017. A retired faculty member manages CARR-L, the online archives of AEJMC, the NPPA-L list for the National Press Photographers Association and JOURNET for journalism educators.

In addition, faculty members annually review research papers for various divisions in:

- The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention
- The International Communication Association Annual Convention
- The National Communication Association Annual Convention
- The American Academy of Advertising Annual Conference

The list of academic journals for which faculty members serve as reviewers is impressive and includes the American Journalism Historical Association, the Asian Journal of Communication, Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, Information, Communication and Society, International Journal of Communication, Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, New Media & Society, Russian Journal of Communication, and Journal of Advertising.

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

The unit fosters relationships with local communities and provides support through a variety of activities. Faculty members incorporate service-learning components in their classes through community-based assignments, such as developing PR/advertising campaigns, engaging in video production, media relations and event planning and coordination. Faculty are engaged in local and state media and other business organizations as members, presenters and contest judges.

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

The unit engages with scholastic journalism primarily through a program called “Journalism Rocks.” Until 2017, it ran a summer workshop that was part of the unit’s diversity outreach and attracted strong numbers of high-school students of African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, and Native American backgrounds. In 2017, the unit merged its workshops with “Journalism Rocks” short courses for 50 high-school students from around the state. Students take various writing sessions, photography, video, and sound slides, creating content for social media, public relations, and advertising during this event. They tour the unit and the CM Life newsroom and meet with professors and current CMU students one-on-one. The courses were held virtually in 2020. The short courses also serve as a recruiting tool for the unit.

SUMMARY:

The unit serves central Michigan, the state and beyond in its service to the professions, students and alumni, and scholastic journalism. The list of contributions as reviewers, presenters and other service to academic journals is impressive. While fixed-term faculty do not have service obligations, they are engaged on a variety of levels to support their communities and the professions of journalism, photojournalism, public relations, and advertising.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE
PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another. Please respond to each of these questions in your report on indicators (a), (b) and (c):

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 department has experienced a lack of consistent leadership during this accreditation cycle and that has damaged the assessment process. In the last site team report, the department was applauded for “a promising new assessment process.” Unfortunately, the current assessment plan is the same as that “promising new assessment process” that was established in 2012.

The interim chair said he is the champion of the assessment program, but he admits that there has been little programmatic assessment and “closing of the loop” over the past six years. More specifically, a review of the most recent assessment reports (from 2019-2020), which look at each of the four majors individually, showed that the pandemic prevented important measures from being implemented (i.e., no exit exam). Furthermore, a review of the 2018-2019 assessment reports showed that the majority of action steps recommended – for each of the majors – were from years prior with some of the faculty assigned to implementing the actions no longer part of the department. There is little to no evidence of closing the loop over the past six years.

There is evidence that information gleaned from post-internship interviews and assessments with employers was used to make adjustments to classes and to create new ones.

The department has established a committee that is charged with revising the current assessment plan.

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

The department’s written assessment plan had served as a good tool for curricular and programmatic changes in the past, but it needs revision and a long-term champion. Each of the four majors uses a consistent set of goals and objectives that are intended to be measured in a variety of ways, all of which are tied to student learning outcomes based on the 12 ACEJMC professional values and competencies.

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

A review of syllabi noted learning outcomes that are connected to ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies.

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 department reports that it utilizes four direct measures of learning: 1. An exit exam administered by the department; 2. A PUGS exit exam that focuses on punctuation, usage, grammar, and style; 3. An
external review of a student’s capstone project; and, 4. An evaluation by a field supervisor in an internship. These instruments are given at the end of a student’s program.

There was some discussion about the lack of any type of benchmark assessment upon a student’s arrival into the program. By having the direct measures only at the end, it is difficult to assess whether a student has gained knowledge through the curriculum or may have already possessed that knowledge.

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

The department utilizes three indirect measures of learning: 1. Graduate placement; 2. Student success in awards; and, 3. Retention and graduation data. These instruments are measured at various times.

**Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC’s Professional Values and Competencies?**

The assessment measures would be effective if there was a more concerted effort – like the effort prior to the previous site visit in 2014.

For example, the exit exam has not been applied universally over the past seven years. Until the interim chair began his appointment 18 months ago, the number of graduating seniors who completed the exam was unsatisfactory. Now, the exit exam is being reinforced as a requirement. In the most recent cohort of graduating seniors, the department received much stronger data from a larger number of graduates.

Other measures, such as the internship supervisor evaluation, has proven helpful in providing limited, but important, feedback.

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 self-study indicates that “each year for the past five years, the department has submitted assessment reports to the university on the measures from its assessment plan that it did assess (or indicated that it did not assess a particular measure that year).” A review of these reports showed that the department had gathered data from a variety of measures that were sufficient in fulfilling the expectations of the university and provided some level of measurement against department standards.

Where these reports fell short were in providing evidence of an updated action plan or closing the loop through curricular or programmatic changes. Many faculty supported this conclusion and said that the past six years without stable leadership and faculty champions, the assessment effort lost much of its previous momentum.

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

In the 2018-2019 data gathered by the department, graduating seniors who took the exit exam did not meet the 60-percent threshold in the following three competencies: research, writing, and evaluating their own work and the work of others.

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

There is no evidence of the unit addressing these areas of concern except to reinforce the requirement that students must take the exam.
There is a new committee that will review and revise the assessment plan in 2021-2022, but it will take new and effective leadership to help operationalize this effort.

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

The department, by its own admission, has fallen short in this area over the past few years. There is a commitment to improve, but it will take long-term and strong leadership to do that.

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

Much of the data is available, but the assessment and closing of the loop to improve curricula has not been effective.

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

There are two main ways that assessment involves outside professionals and alumni. The first is that all students who earn internship credit with the department must have a supervisor’s evaluation of the intern’s conduct and performance. The second is that outside professionals (many of whom are program alumni) evaluate the portfolios of students in capstone classes.

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

Many of the alumni mentioned above also are employers who work with students during internships or in other ways.

There are two alumni boards – one for the journalism major and one for advertising. The 15-member Journalism Alumni Advisor Board was reconstituted by the interim chair after a long hiatus, and the 12-member Advertising Alumni Advisory Board was newly created. The department consults with these alumni and other professionals on a variety of issues.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Journalism developed a strong assessment plan with a number of highly involved faculty just before the time of the previous site team visit. It was a strength in 2014. It is not in 2021. The interim chair and faculty want the plan to be revised, a long-term system to be implemented and stable leadership to help rebuild their effort. The interim chair needs to be commended for his work in re-establishing the alumni board, increasing the number of graduate students completing the exit exam and taking ownership of multiple parts of assessment.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: **NON-COMPLIANCE**
PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths:
- Students who are passionate and thoughtful about their education and about the work and responsibility of journalism, advertising and public relations.
- Faculty who clearly care about their students and the education those students receive.
- Vibrant, award-winning student-media outlets that provide needed opportunities to learn and apply skills.
- Engaged alumni eager to help the unit improve.
- Some success in efforts to recruit a more diverse student body and faculty.
- An interim chair who has calmed stormy waters and better positioned the department for progress.

Weaknesses:
- A turnstile of leadership in the department – five chairs in seven years, with three imposed upon the faculty and two others removed by administration – has led to deep problems of morale and vision that manifest themselves throughout the unit’s structure and plans.
- Dramatic declines in enrollment threaten the financial viability of the department.
- An out-of-date curriculum that fails to prepare graduates adequately for careers in media.
- Structural silos, both within the department and within its College of the Arts and Media, that limit collaboration that would benefit students.
- An outdated strategic plan that has become largely irrelevant.
- A diversity plan that needs metrics, timetables and more visibility in curriculum and programs.
- An assessment plan that, while promising on its creation, has not been executed.
- Alumni boards that were neglected for nearly a decade.
- A pervasive obsession by faculty with perceived offenses by upper administration toward the department, and a sense by faculty, staff and students that the department is not respected within the university.

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

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration
Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction
Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

This is a deeply troubled program, and the site team actually considered recommending denial of re-accreditation. Ultimately, however, we concluded that effectively and quickly addressing the issues of leadership, governance and administration could make a profound difference in a short time and could put this department back on a positive trajectory. It is an important program in the state of Michigan and the Upper Midwest, and we believe that a finding of provisional re-accreditation provides the optimal path to save and improve education in journalism, advertising and public relations at Central Michigan University.

That said, addressing the myriad problems the team found within the two-year provisional period will be a significant challenge. We have addressed the problems and deficiencies in detail within the report. In
the next item, we enumerate the major deficiencies that must be addressed to achieve full re-accreditation.

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

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration
- The climate within the unit is one of trauma, victimization and deep distrust of upper administration. Although the interim chair, brought in from outside the unit, has done an admirable job of calming troubled waters, the unit needs and deserves stable leadership with expertise in and connection with the discipline.
- The strategic plan is outdated and has been largely ignored for nearly a decade.
- The norms of shared governance have been largely lost and must be restored.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction
- Students, alumni and employers reinforced the site team’s own assessment that the unit’s curriculum is outdated, particularly as it pertains to the use of modern delivery platforms for media.
- Curriculum and instruction is far too siloed, both within the majors of the unit itself and particularly in the stark separation that exists between the Department of Journalism and the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts. This deprives students of opportunities for learning many of the skills they are seeking in video, audio and emerging technologies.
- The curriculum shows little if any evidence that it is tied to assessment of student outcomes.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes
- The unit has an assessment plan that was once promising but has neither been updated nor executed for many years.
- Data has been gathered on a basis enough to comply with university requirements but has not been effectively utilized to inform curricular changes.
- Some direct measures, such as the exit exam, have not been implemented consistently. Others, such as professional evaluations of the capstone classes, have not used the feedback to make substantive and effective curricular changes.
- There is a need for a new champion who understands assessment and can work with faculty to close the loop between assessment findings and curricular improvement.

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.

In 2014, the unit was found in compliance on all nine ACEJMC standards. The weaknesses cited were:

- *An unsettled departmental climate.* Clearly, that has not improved and is in many ways worse.
- *Limited collaboration with the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts.* This, too, appears to be at least as much a problem as it was seven years ago. As the self-study states: “The two departments have seen as much divergence in their missions and trajectories in the last five years as convergence.” Improving this relationship may be key to many of the department’s current deficiencies, and must be addressed quickly.
- *Only one tenure-track faculty member for the department’s largest major, advertising.* Between declining enrollment in the major and addition of faculty, this is no longer a problem.
- *A shortage of faculty offices and limited control over classroom spaces.* Again, declining enrollment has eased this pressure.

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.

Given the context in which this self-study was constructed – with the chair and primary author being removed midstream – the self-study was acceptable. It did lack certain data the site team had to seek out during the visit, and some calculations were inaccurate within the study. But in at least one case – faculty diversity – the actual numbers were better than what was in the report.
February 24, 2022

Dear ACEJMC Executive Committee,

This letter is intended to support the Journalism Department at Central Michigan University in their request for provisional reaccreditation. We want to help assure the committee that we are very much taking to heart the seriousness of the matter in front of us, and that we do intend to work arduently in the direction of being reaccredited in two years’ time. We do not argue the outcome and recommendations in the report. It is clear there was much that should have happened in the last 6 years, and unfortunately, too much fell by the way. We have discussed questions of fact with our visitors, and these were addressed in the final version of the report. What follows is structured according to the main points of deficiencies in the report. As much as we can, we hope to demonstrate to the committee that we have started taking action, that we will continue with good faith actions and changes, and that we are a good candidate for the opportunity to have provisional reaccreditation pending our accomplishments in the coming two years. We take each point in order as they appear in the report.

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

Our responses are italicized

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

- The climate within the unit is one of trauma, victimization and deep distrust of upper administration. Although the interim chair, brought in from outside the unit, has done an admirable job of calming troubled waters, the unit needs and deserves stable leadership with expertise in and connection with the discipline.

  • The department agrees that a climate of deep distrust has pervaded the department for many years. The interim chair was brought in 2 weeks after the start of the 2020 academic year, after upper administration informed the unit that the current chair was “no longer employed by the university.” Since then, the climate within the unit has been excellent with a peaceful and productive working relationship with the interim dean. The current climate is one of enthusiasm, positivity, forward-thinking as the unit welcomes a new dean in 2022.

  • We are working on a path toward stable leadership. Among our options would be to produce a leader from our existing faculty base, seek to hire a chair from the outside, and/or evolve a different kind of administrative structure through joining forces with our sister communication departments. Currently, representatives of all the communication departments in the college are meeting bi-weekly in an effort to reimagine ourselves, explore model programs, and consider interdepartmental and interdisciplinary units. It may be that a different sort of departmenital collaboration and structure could come from this, which would have a bearing on leadership in the unit.

- The strategic plan is outdated and has been largely ignored for nearly a decade.

  • We revised and ratified a new strategic plan on February 2, 2022; this includes a section on analysis of how the process is unfolding. The department has prioritized the objectives and actions in the plan. In the fall 2022 retreat, we will set out formally how to implement the strategic plan for the 2022–2023 academic year.
The department has outlined a two-year plan with deadlines for dealing with the deficiencies highlighted in the report.

The norms of shared governance have been largely lost and must be restored.

The college will have a new dean (search completed), and the university will have a new provost (search underway) in fall 2022. The department will set out to forge a healthy working relationship with each of the new leaders based on mutual trust and shared governance. We are optimistic that an improved culture will ensue.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Students, alumni and employers reinforced the site team’s own assessment that the unit’s curriculum is outdated, particularly as it pertains to the use of modern delivery platforms for media.

The department has started a review of the curriculum so that it reflects the modern needs of the industries and better prepares out students for careers post graduation. We are working with our alumni as well as other professionals to find out what is needed, how we are currently meeting those needs, and what we should consider adding or changing.

We have convened a student advisory group to collect and respond to concerns on the part of our present students, given there were concerns and complaints voiced in their interviews with the visitors.

We have reached out to the ACEJMC for names of colleagues who might also advise the revision and modernization of the curriculum.

We will discuss all of the various inputs and opportunities in the fall 2022 retreat and forge a plan for all curricular revisions and proposals to be submitted to our college curriculum committee in Spring 2023.

Curriculum and instruction is far too siloed, both within the majors of the unit itself and particularly in the stark separation that exists between the Department of Journalism and the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts. This deprives students of opportunities for learning many of the skills they are seeking in video, audio and emerging technologies.

We are already working on the silos problem. We are involved in a semester-long “reimagining” discussion with our communication colleagues in the college

(Broadcasting and Cinematic Arts, Communication, and Integrative Public Relations). A report will be prepared at the end of the semester with recommendations for future collaboration and possible unit mergers that could strengthen our programs and better prepare students for success in the future.

Part of the fall 2022 retreat will focus on a first steps and a process for adapting the curriculum
The curriculum shows little if any evidence that it is tied to assessment of student outcomes.

- This will require that we first create a solid accounting of the information that assessment has revealed so far (see below). We do have some initial concerns looking at 6 years of assessment records; a few competencies need attention which will be discussed at the fall 2022 retreat with an eye on concrete actions for the coming academic year.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

- The unit has an assessment plan that was once promising but has neither been updated nor executed for many years.

  - In the last two years, the plan has been executed more extensively than before. It is true that there has been no change to the plan in many years. Changes will be considered at the fall 2022 retreat. Three are in the works. First, the exit exams need to be reconsidered and adapted to make sure they reliably measure what is hoped for in the specific department concentrations. Two, we have looked at a trove of data from comments of internship supervisors in the field. These data are not in the current plan but should be added. Three, we need to reconsider the rubrics attached to the capstone projects and forge a new relationship with outside professionals to have a smooth process for getting the projects reviewed.

- Data has been gathered on a basis enough to comply with university requirements but has not been effectively utilized to inform curricular changes.

  - Six years of assessment data have been analyzed. While targets have been met consistently for many measures (grammar and style exam, internship supervisor numerical evaluations), exit exam results have been both strong and weak given a particular competency. Ranking from worst to best, student performance on the competencies:

    - Research Competency
    - Historical Understanding
    - Domestic Diversity Understanding
    - Quantitative Competency
    - Writing Competency
    - Global Diversity Understanding
    - Legal Understanding
    - Conceptual Understanding and Application
    - Thoughtfulness
    - Evaluative Competency
    - Tool Competency
    - Ethical Understanding

- In the fall retreat, we intend to focus on our weakest subset of competencies, examine the exact nature of the measures and results, and determine what modification will be made to get stronger and more consistent scores.
Some direct measures, such as the exit exam, have not been implemented consistently. Others, such as professional evaluations of the capstone classes, have not used the feedback to make substantive and effective curricular changes.

- The last two years have seen a department effort to make sure that all graduating seniors and students in the capstone classes sit for the exit exams, resulting in the largest compliance to date.
- Evaluation of the capstone projects is a challenge and needs a serious reconfiguration so that we can be assured of collecting this information in a smoother, less idiosyncratic way. We will work on that.

There is a need for a new champion who understands assessment and can work with faculty to close the loop between assessment findings and curricular improvement.

- Getting an assessment champion is a challenge for most academic departments, but we recognize the importance of assessment to the accreditation process and to demonstrate quality assurances and continuous improvement.
- The Interim Chair has had a long interest in assessment, so the process is moving along, but yes, the department needs to have a serious discussion on how to implement and use the assessment process. Perhaps the different subspecialities can take on ownership; perhaps a different departmental structure with other units more experienced in assessment will help. Any new chair will have responsibility for assessment to begin with until other "champions" can be developed and commissioned.
- The department will also actively work with the college assessment coordinator and other assessment experts on campus to develop useful and manageable assessment tools.

We hope that our immediate actions demonstrate that we understand the seriousness of the current state of affairs and fully recognize the need to own our situation and our destiny. We think our actions to date give some evidence as to our ability to address our deficiencies, as well as our motivation to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.

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