

**Report of ACEJMC On-Site Evaluation**  
**Professional master's/Undergraduate programs**  
2021– 2022

**Name of Institution:** Florida International University

**Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer:** Kenneth Jessell, Interim President

**Name of Unit:** School of Communication and Journalism, the College of Communication, Architecture  
+ The Arts (CARTA)

**Name and Title of Administrator:** Brian Schriener, Dean

**Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit:** Jan. 18 – 21, 2022

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

**Date of the previous accrediting visit:** Feb. 25-28, 2015

**Recommendation of the previous site visit team:** Re-accreditation

**Undergraduate program:** Re-accreditation

**Professional master's program:** N/A

**Previous decision of the Accrediting Council:** Re-accreditation

**Undergraduate program:** Re-accreditation

**Professional master's programs:** N/A

Undergraduate program recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: **Re-accreditation**

Professional master's program recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: **Accreditation**

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: Marie Hardin, Professor and Dean

Organization/School: Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State

*Signature* 

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Andrew Alexander, Scripps Howard Visiting Professional

Organization/School: Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University

*Signature.* 

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Jessica Gisclair, Associate Professor of Strategic Communications

Organization/School: School of Communications, Elon University

*Signature* 

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Rafael Lorente, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Organization/School: Philip Merrill College of Journalism, Maryland

*Signature* 

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Hyunjin Seo, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development

Organization/School: William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Kansas

*Signature* 

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

**On site:** Hardin, Alexander, Lorente; **Virtually:** Gisclair, Seo

## Part I: General Information

**Name of Institution:** Florida International University (FIU)

**Name of Unit:** School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ)

**Year of Visit:** 2022

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

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

Florida International University (FIU) was established as a state university under the Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 6C8-1, which states the purpose of FIU as follows:

- (1) It shall be the business of Florida International University to provide for:
  - (a) Education of Students -- to provide a university education for qualified students which prepares them for useful careers in education, social service, business, industry, and the professions, furnishes them with the opportunity to become effective members of society, and offers them an appreciation of their relations to their cultural, aesthetic and technological environments.
  - (b) Service to the Community -- to serve the greater community, with a primary emphasis on serving the Greater Miami and South Florida area, in a manner which enhances the area's capability to meet the ecological, cultural, social and urban challenges which it faces.
  - (c) Greater International Understanding -- to become a major international education center with a primary emphasis on creating greater mutual understanding among the Americas and throughout the world.

**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: February 2015

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

1991

**6. Provide the unit's undergraduate mission statement and the separate mission statement for the graduate program. Statements should give the date of adoption and/or last revision.**

The mission of the unit has evolved since the last accreditation. At that point, the-then School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) mission was:

To be a high-quality, professionally oriented program; to attract minority students to the School and to launch them into successful communication careers and to distinguish our program through hands-on international involvement, especially in Latin America.

In April 2016, and in the years since then through the integration of the then-SJMC with the then College of Architecture + The Arts (CARTA), the mission shifted to more closely align with CARTA's strategic priorities and vision for the future. Today, the mission statements for the School's programs are:

**School of Communication + Journalism Undergraduate Programs**

*To be the nation's top program for training 21st Century media and communication professionals in English and Spanish, committed to inclusivity, experiential learning, and signature media and industry partnerships.*

**School of Communication + Journalism Graduate Programs**

*The SCJ graduate programs challenge students to become globally involved and socially conscious communication professionals. Our ethnically diverse students engage in research and reporting that advances communication industries and practices and the public interest. As leaders in their fields, our graduates contribute critical thinking, strategic solutions and creative ideas for addressing organizational and community issues.*

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

Semesters of 16 weeks for the undergraduate programs and the master's program in Spanish-language Journalism

Semesters of 8 weeks for the fully online master's degree program in Global Strategic Communications

Quarters of        weeks

Summer sessions of 6 or 12 weeks

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

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

**9. List the specific undergraduate and professional master's degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC.**

Undergraduate: Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication  
(this degree is being phased out and no new students were accepted after 2021)

- Advertising (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Public Relations (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Journalism (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)
- Broadcast Media (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)

Undergraduate: Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication

- Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication (120 semester hours)  
(offered in both online and on-campus modalities)

Undergraduate: Bachelor of Science in Digital Communication and Media

- Digital Media Studies (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Digital Media and Communication (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)
- Digital Journalism (120 semester hours)
- Digital Broadcasting (120 semester hours)
- Digital TV & Multimedia Production (120 semester hours)
- Digital and Interactive Media (120 semester hours)

Graduate: Master of Science in Mass Communication

- Global Strategic Communications  
(offered in both online and on-campus modalities) (30 semester hours)
- Spanish-language Journalism (36 semester hours)

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.) Students are required to complete a minimum of 120 semester hours to graduate from FIU with an undergraduate degree. Specific majors requirements within the SCJ are as follows:**

- Advertising (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Public Relations (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Public Relations, Advertising & Applied Communication (PRAAC) (120semester hours)
- Journalism (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)
- Broadcast Media (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)
- Digital Media Studies (no new admits after 2017) (120 semester hours)
- Digital Media and Communication (no new admits after 2021) (120 semester hours)
- Digital Journalism (120 semester hours)
- Digital Broadcasting (120 semester hours)
- Digital TV & Multimedia Production (120 semester hours)
- Digital and Interactive Media (120 semester hours)

Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 semester hours to graduate from FIU with a professional master's degree. Specific major requirements within SCJ are as follows:

- Global Strategic Communications (30 semester hours)
- Spanish-language Journalism (36 semester hours)

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

Undergraduate students enrolled in programs offered by the Department of Communication and the Department of Journalism + Media may earn a maximum of 6 semester hours (over two semesters) toward their degree requirements with an internship experience course. Students enrolled in the graduate Spanish-language Journalism program and the Global Strategic Communications program may earn a maximum of 3. Internship courses are offered in all majors as electives, not as required courses within the major. Internships are available to all majors who want to gain experience in the communication or journalism fields. Students must have met all undergraduate requirements and must have completed MMC 3123, Writing Fundamentals for Communicators, or COM 3714, Fundamentals of Written and Visual Communication. The internship requires a minimum of 100 hours of work per 1 academic semester credit.

In the Department of Journalism + Media, in order to earn academic credit, students may participate in an in-house experiential learning program such as Univision STEP (Student Training and Employment Program), NBCU Academy Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Fellowship, or the South Florida Media Network. The internship curricula in these programs have been developed by the Journalism + Media faculty to meet program and student learning outcomes. Both graduate and undergraduate students participate in these programs.

Students in both departments who wish to pursue an external internship for academic credit must submit a full job description and total hours per week in order for the department to evaluate the experience for academic rigor. Only those internships that meet rigorous academic standards in line with program and student learning outcomes will be approved for credit. All other internships will be approved as zero-credit experiences.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
<b>Department of Communication</b>	
● Communication Arts (not being reviewed by ACEJMC)	Aileen Izquierdo
● Advertising (no new admits after 2017)	Aileen Izquierdo
● Public Relations (no new admits after 2017)	Aileen Izquierdo
● Public Relations, Advertising & Applied Communication (PRAAC)	Aileen Izquierdo
<b>Department of Journalism + Media</b>	
● Digital Media Studies (no new admits after 2017)	Susan Jacobson
● Journalism (no new admits after 2021)	Susan Jacobson
● Broadcast Media (no new admits after 2021)	Susan Jacobson
● Digital Communication and Media (no new admits after 2021)	Susan Jacobson
● Digital Journalism	Susan Jacobson
● Digital Broadcasting	Susan Jacobson
● Digital TV & Multimedia Production	Michael Sheerin
● Digital and Interactive Media	Susan Jacobson

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

52,903 on January 16, 2022

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

<b>Academic Plan/Sub Plan (as of January 16, 2022)</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
<b>BS IN MASS COMMUNICATION</b> Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication (this degree is being phased out and no new students were admitted after 2017 in the Department of Communication and 2021 in the Department of Journalism + Media)	<b>89</b>
Advertising (no new admits after 2017)	2
Broadcast Media (no new admits after 2021)	47
Digital Communication and Media (no new admits after 2021)	3
Journalism (no new admits after 2021)	28
No sub-track declared	4
Public Relations (no new admits after 2017)	5
<b>BS IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA</b>	<b>443</b>
Digital Broadcasting	88
Digital and Interactive Media	92
Digital Journalism	109
Digital TV & Multimedia Production	116
No sub-track declared	38
<b>BS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING AND APPLIED COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>574</b>
PRAAC (on-campus)	429
Fully Online	145
<b>BA IN COMMUNICATION ARTS</b> (not being reviewed by ACEJMC)	<b>686</b>
Performing Arts Studies	75
Communication Arts Online	226
Design Studies	77
None	9
Organizational Communication Studies	299
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1792</b>



**15. Number of graduate students enrolled on-site:**

Master of Science in Mass Communication:

- Global Strategic Communications (GSC) on-campus: 119 for Spring 2022
- GSC online: 75 for Spring 2022
- Spanish-language Journalism: 26 for Spring 2022

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

[Link to document for Fall 2021 Skills Courses](#) - Department of Journalism + Media

[Link to document for Spring 2022 Skills Courses](#) - Department of Journalism + Media

[Link to document for Fall 2021 Skills Courses](#) - Department of Communication

[Link to document for Spring 2022 Skills Courses](#) - Department of Communication

**17. Total expenditures from all sources planned by the unit for the 2020–2021 academic year: 1. Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

The table below shows the expenditures, for both departments, including the non-accredited Communication Arts major in the Department of Communication, from all sources planned for Fiscal Year 2021, which begins in July 2021; Fiscal Year 2020; Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2018. It shows that expenditures decreased slightly from FY 2019 to FY 2020 (-1.96 percent) but increased slightly from FY 2020 to FY 2021 (1.29 percent).

**SCJ Total Expenditures**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY 2021 Actuals (as of 6/22/21)</b>	<b>FY 2020 Actuals</b>	<b>FY 2019 Actuals</b>	<b>FY 2018 Actuals</b>
<b>Education &amp; General (State Budget)</b>	\$6,017,649	\$5,303,245	\$5,991,601	\$6,262,949
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	\$1,796,787	\$2,287,632	\$2,032,396	\$1,667,906
<b>External Grants</b>	\$263,119	\$392,851	\$108,292	\$176,247
<b>Financial Aid</b>	\$39,760	\$30,057	\$42,101	\$8,285
<b>Student Govt. Assoc.</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	\$8,117,315	\$8,013,785	\$8,174,390	\$8,115,387
<b>Percent Increase or Decrease</b>	1.29 percent	-1.96 percent	0.73 percent	

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:**

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>FY 2021 Faculty Actuals</b>
<b>Education &amp; General (State Budget)</b>	\$3,907,163.52
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	\$777,978.23
<b>External Grants</b>	\$68,152.18
<b>Total</b>	\$4,753,293.93

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

The FIU definition of full-time faculty includes all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track professors in the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor working at or above a 0.75 full-time equivalent (FTE). These faculty members have teaching, research, and service assignments.

**Unit Administrators**

Aileen Izquierdo, Chair, Department of Communication  
 Susan Jacobson, Interim Chair, Department of Journalism + Media

**Tenured/ Tenure-Earning Faculty**

**Professors**

Leonardo Ferreira, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Maria Elena Villar, Department of Communication

**Associate Professors**

Susan Jacobson, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Yu Liu, Department of Communication  
 David Park, Department of Communication  
 Sigal Segev, Department of Communication  
 Lorna Veraldi, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Weirui Wang, Department of Communication

**Assistant Professors**

Rokeshia Ashley, Department of Communication  
 Nicole Kashian, Department of Communication  
 Chun Zhou, Department of Communication

**Non-Tenure Earning Faculty**

**Professors**

Margo Berman, Department of Communication

**Associate Professors**

Teresa Ponte, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Neil Reisner, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Allan Richards, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Michael Sheerin, Department of Journalism + Media  
 Mercedes Vigon, Department of Journalism + Media

**Clinical Associate Professors of Professional Practice**

Alejandro Alvarado, Department of Journalism + Media  
Stephen Kairalla, Department of Journalism + Media  
Timothy Sullivan, Department of Journalism + Media

**Associate Teaching Professors**

Jessica Delgado, Department of Communication  
Grizelle De Los Reyes, Department of Communication  
Aileen Izquierdo, Department of Communication  
Raquel Perez, Department of Communication

**Assistant Professors**

Robert Jaross, Department of Communication  
Elizabeth Marsh, Department of Communication  
Lilliam Martinez-Bustos, Department of Journalism + Media

**Clinical Assistant Professors of Professional Practice**

Laura Kurtzberg, Department of Journalism + Media

**Assistant Teaching Professors**

Karla Kennedy, Department of Journalism + Media  
Hugo Ottolenghi, Department of Communication  
Mihaela Plugarasu, Department of Communication  
Paula Powell, Department of Communication  
Heather Radi-Bermudez, Department of Communication  
Charles Strouse, Department of Journalism + Media

**Visiting Assistant Teaching Professors**

Crystal Sears, Department of Communication

**19. 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, please provide the Spring 2022 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

FIU defines part-time faculty as instructors working less than 0.75 FTE; this designation may include adjuncts and other instructor types (e.g., graduate teaching assistants, who provide support for teaching and research under the supervision of qualified faculty members).

**Fall 2020**

Liza Alexander  
Mariana Alvarado  
Elio Arteaga  
Liz Baquero  
Jordan Basadre  
Judith Bernier  
Lauren Christos  
Mindyne Colon  
Chris Delboni

Raymond Elman  
Grace Ferrer  
Luis Gonzalez Perez  
Scott Kass  
Jesus Loggil  
Luis Montenegro  
Holly Morganelli  
William Nevin  
Daniela Ottati  
Rochelle Patten  
George Pearson  
Albena Petrus  
Margarita Salas  
Jay Sandhouse  
Jose Taboada  
Neil Thorpe  
James Van Voris  
Sabrina Vollrath  
Amy Winters  
Emmett Young

**Spring 2021**

Liza Alexander  
Elio Arteaga  
Liz Baquero  
Jordan Basadre  
Judith Bernier  
Raymond Elman  
Chris Delboni  
Grace Ferrer  
Anthony Frampton  
Eva Gasson  
Edward Gilhuly  
Juan González-Manrique  
Luis Gonzalez Perez  
Scott Kass  
Jesus Loggil  
Luis Montenegro  
Holly Morganelli  
William Nevin  
Daniela Ottati  
Rochelle Patten  
George Pearson  
Albena Petrus  
Marlon Quintero  
Margarita Salas  
Jay Sandhouse  
Jose Taboada

Neil Thorpe  
James Van Voris  
Jessica Vega  
Sabrina Vollrath  
Amy Winters  
Emmett Young

**Fall 2021**

Mariana Alvarado  
Elio Artega  
David Cabestany  
Patrick Farrell  
Grace Ferrer  
Luis Gonzalez  
PerezGiselle  
Heraux  
Christopher  
JimenezMindyne  
Joseph Scott Kass  
Alejandro  
Lodeiro Jesus  
Lopgil  
Holly Morganelli  
Louis Nerry  
Rochelle Patten  
George Pearson  
AJ Ricketts  
Michael Rodriguez  
Margarita Salas  
Jay Sandhouse  
Kate Stein  
Jose Taboada  
Christina Trinh  
James Van Voris  
Amy Winters

**Spring 2022**

Liza Alexander  
Mariana Alvarado  
Liz Amore  
Elio Artega  
Liz Baquero  
Jordan Basadre  
Judith Bernier  
Spero Canton  
Chris Delboni  
Grace Ferrer  
Eva Gasson

Edward Gilhuly  
 Juan Gonzalez-Manrique  
 Luis Gonzalez Perez  
 Giselle Heraux  
 Melody Hughes  
 Christopher Jimenez  
 Scott Kass  
 Jesus Lopgil  
 Luis Montenegro  
 Holly Morganelli  
 Emmanuel Munoz  
 Rochelle Patten  
 George Pearson  
 Alben Petrus  
 Marlon Quintero  
 AJ Ricketts  
 Margarita Salas  
 Jay Sandhouse  
 Jose Taboada  
 Christina Trinh  
 Neil Thorpe  
 Sabrina Vollrath  
 Jame Van Voris  
 Amy Winters  
 Emmett Young

**20. 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.**

FIU's advising system - Panther Success Network - prevents students enrolled in SCJ from taking more than 48 of the required 120 semester credit hours within the unit in order to stay in compliance with ACEJMC accreditation. The numbers in the table below reflect both departments, with the exception of the Communication Arts degree, which is not being reviewed by the accreditation team.

**Students Graduating with 72 or More Semester Hours Outside of SCJ**

Academic Year	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percentage
2020-2021	469	469	100
2019-2020	463	463	100

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

**Overview:** The School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University, the fifth-largest university in the nation, was established in the late 1980s and first accredited in 1991. The School, which comprised two academic departments, was continuously reaccredited as the SJMC through its last site visit, in 2015. In 2016, the School was integrated with the College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts (CARTA) and renamed the School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ). One department in the former school, Advertising and Public Relations, was integrated with CARTA's Department of Communication Arts and renamed the Department of Communication. The other, the Department of Journalism, was renamed the Department of Journalism + Media. The self-study states that "the School is not a traditional academic unit that functions as one singular entity" but is instead two independent departments that between them offer six undergraduate majors (five being reviewed for accreditation) and two graduate programs (both under review). Both department chairs report to the CARTA dean, who is the budget executive for the SCJ. The SCJ departments are part of the infrastructure of CARTA.

### 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 SCJ has a mission statement that was revised in 2016, after the last accreditation visit and when it was folded into CARTA. It was revised to read: "*To be the nation's top program for training 21st Century media and communication professionals in English and Spanish, committed to inclusivity, experiential learning, and signature media and industry partnerships.*" The School's mission is designed to support that of CARTA, which "drives the information, innovation and cultural economy of South Florida and beyond."

The SCJ was involved with drafting and is now guided by CARTA's strategic plan; the department chairs have access to data dashboards to monitor SCJ's progress on key metrics in the CARTA plan. The CARTA plan includes specific goals for graduation and retention rates, internships completed by students, research expenditures, national rankings and industry partnerships. The SCJ is expected to contribute across all thematic areas of the CARTA plan, which supports FIU's plan. The School currently relies on "student success dashboards" that provide a "comprehensive roadmap inclusive of strategic priorities." The two departments within the SCJ plan to create "formalized strategic plans," an objective that the site team views as a high priority.

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

The SCJ is guided by the CARTA Constitution, which stipulates substantive faculty governance over curriculum and policies that govern the School. The Constitution calls for the maintenance of a Faculty Assembly to share in governance of the unit, and to which "[t]he Dean shall afford great deference." The

Assembly, which is currently co-chaired by a member of the Journalism + Media Department and comprises all full-time faculty in CARTA, met twice last academic year.

Each department in the SCJ has committees for faculty searches and promotion and tenure. The SCJ, in its self-study, identified “a lack of some formalized policies” specific to the School as a weakness. “As a result, some of the SCJ’s policies are guided by policies set by the University,” the self-study states. The Dean has encouraged each department, in line with FIU policy, to formulate specific departmental workload allocation formulas and promotion and tenure guidelines to fit their specific cultures within CARTA.

**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.**

CARTA’s Dean is Brian Schriener, who was appointed to the role in 2011 after serving as interim dean for two years. Based on university policy, the provost appoints a dean after a national search that involves a “search and screen” committee comprised of faculty, staff, and at least one student. Deans are appointed to four-year terms for up to two terms, and then reappointed annually. They are evaluated annually. According to the Provost, Dean Schriener has one of the strongest reputations among academic leaders at FIU for his entrepreneurial approach, energy and collegiality.

Each department chair in the SCJ reports to Dean Schriener. University policy also guides the appointment of chairs. The process involves consultation with departmental faculty and a decision on whether to appoint an internal candidate after a presentation and anonymous vote by the faculty; or whether to launch an external search. Chairs are evaluated annually. In the past six years, there have been changes in leadership for both departments in the SCJ. A longtime chair in the Department of Journalism + Media stepped down last year and Susan Jacobson was nominated to become chair. She was appointed to an interim role for two years. A national search for the chair will take place next year, according to the Dean. In the Department of Communication, a chair served from 2015-2019 and was promoted to another role in CARTA. After a failed search for an external chair, the interim chair, Aileen Izquierdo, was appointed to the permanent role. She is in her second year in that role. Both chairs have the support of the faculty in their departments and are seen as effective managers.

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

The unit is guided by the university’s *Procedures for Administrative Positions in Colleges/Schools* and by the CARTA Constitution. A step-by-step process is outlined for appointment and, when necessary, removal of administrators.

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

The university, and subsequently CARTA and the SCJ, are guided by a Collective Bargaining Agreement to address faculty complaints and concerns. Staff concerns are addressed according to policies and practices established by FIU’s Employee and Labor Relations unit. FIU’s Student Handbook provides steps for students to take if they have a concern. All of the relevant documents are



posted online. Faculty, staff and students confirm that the avenues described in these documents are available to them.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The SCJ has two master's programs under review: the Spanish-language Journalism program, and the Global Strategic Communications program. The Spanish-language Journalism program resides in the Department of Journalism + Media; the Global Strategic Communications program is administered out of the Department of Communication.

The Spanish-language program has a mission statement, vision statement, and a short-term strategic plan (2019-2021) that is scheduled to be updated this year. Goals in the 2019-21 plan included reaching 20 students enrolled in the program by '20-21; the addition of sports journalism classes to the program; and a greater emphasis on entrepreneurial journalism.

According to the self-study, "though not through a formal strategic plan, the GSC is guided by a comprehensive roadmap of strategic priorities, key performance indicators (KPIs), financial data, human resources, demographics, and student success metrics and goals."

**g). The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional master's program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional master's program.**

Administrative and curricular oversight of the graduate programs in the SCJ is governed in the same manner as for the undergraduate majors; the CARTA Constitution provides for faculty oversight of policy and curriculum. Each program has a program director.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate:) The School, just five years old in its new form, is functioning effectively and continues to solidify its identity and aspirations as a standalone unit within the large college in which it now resides. Faculty report that they have a voice in governance of the School and CARTA. University and CARTA policies guide the School, which is encouraged to design more specific policies and departmental strategic plans to capitalize on its unique strengths and aspirations.

(Professional Master's:) The two graduate programs under review, each administered at the departmental level, have unique identities, missions and goals, and policies and procedures that guide curricula and programming. Each is effectively administered, according to faculty and students.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/ noncompliance: 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 within the scope of accreditation review in the unit.

**a). The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.**

The School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ) requires 72-credit hours outside of journalism and mass communication courses, which includes a 12-credit hour Area of Concentration in a program outside of the School. The School and its Academic Advising Services monitor the credit hours of its students, assuring the required number of credits outside the School and the required credit hours for all degrees are met. Students have real-time access to their degree progress through the Panther Degree Audit (PDA). The School met the 72-hour requirement in the two academic years preceding this accreditation visit.

**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 School offers two degrees from two departments. The Department of Communication offers a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication (PRAAC). Another degree, Communication Arts, is not reviewed by ACEJMC. The Department of Journalism + Media offers a Bachelor of Science in Digital Communication and Media with four areas of concentration: Digital Journalism, Digital Broadcasting, Digital and Interactive Media, and Digital TV and Multimedia Production. Both degrees require 120 credit-hours for graduation with 60 of those hours required within the major degree.

PRAAC and Journalism + Media majors share four required courses that demonstrate a balance of theory, concept and professional skills. Those courses include Writing Fundamentals for Communicators, Global Media and Society, Media Law and Ethics, and Visual Design for Globalized Media. All students enroll in a zero-credit orientation in addition to 15-credit hours of core curriculum courses in their majors. Additional courses are offered in each major that meet this requirement.

PRAAC has 725 students enrolled (581 on-campus/144 online). Required courses in the major include a balance of theory, concept and professional skills courses. Those courses include Principles of Advertising, Principles of Public Relations, and Campaigns. The curriculum integrates digital media instruction into courses to prepare students for online and interactive media industries. Students are exposed to both advertising and public relations disciplines.

Digital Communication and Media has 203 students enrolled. Required courses in the major include a

balance of theory, concept and professional skills courses. The curriculum integrates production and skills courses such as Multimedia Production with fundamental theory and conceptual courses such as Digital Theories.

An additional 421 students are enrolled in a soon-to-be phased out degree of Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication.

Student competencies are demonstrated through experiential learning opportunities such as the student-run communications agency BOLD and new industry partnerships with NBCU Academy and Univision. (See further assessment in Standard 6: Student Services).

Some syllabuses do address the spirit of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, some use specific language, and some have no mention of the professional values and competencies. Inconsistencies in the professional values and competencies were occasionally found in different sections of the same course, a concern for the site team.

Students felt classroom discussions were a safe space to talk about global topics and those discussions helped them feel engaged and excited about learning. Students felt faculty welcomed first-generation students. Students did not mention the values and competencies directly but recognized and appreciated the balance between theory and skills courses. The curriculum and course syllabuses demonstrate a balance between theory and conceptual courses and skills courses.

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

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications became the School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ) in 2016 after its integration with the College of Architecture and the Arts (CARTA). It now consists of two departments, the Department of Communication and the Department Journalism + Media, offering six undergraduate majors (five assessed by ACEJMC) and two graduate programs.

The School draws on the expertise of members of the Dean's Advisory Board to assess current needs and future trends in communication industries. The School collaborates with local media organizations and professional partners to consider changes to curriculum such as writing, video instruction and social media content development.

The department chairs maintain consistency in courses with multiple sections including review of course syllabuses, learning objectives, and meetings with faculty during the academic year to determine new content and approaches. Department chairs may delegate duties to full-time faculty to oversee curriculum of multi-section courses.

Emerging technologies are integrated into the curriculum through courses such as Visual Design for Global Media, Motion Graphics, Digital Editing and Design, and Interactive Visualizations.

The School provides funding for faculty professional development such as externships, teaching

workshops, and on-site technology training. Faculty participate in seminars and workshops provided by the university Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT). Department-level workshops include Immersive Storytelling and Open Data Day. Faculty achievements in teaching include a CARTA Faculty Senate Excellence in teaching citation (2021), a teaching fellow for the CAT (2020), and a Scripps Howard Foundation's Teacher of the Year (2016).

The integration with the CARTA and subsequent curriculum redesign of two departments shifted faculty and resources. Faculty appreciated the intentionality of the changes and praised the leadership team that managed the transition. Faculty felt a part of curriculum decisions and felt the School made the right changes to remain current and responsive to industry expectations.

Students praised the faculty for their dedication to deliver relevant content, encourage experiential learning, and provide a safe space for learning content that teaches students challenging content and applicable skills. Students appreciated the opportunity to work on real-client projects in classes to add to their professional portfolios.

**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.)**

Student-teacher ratios are within ACEJMC limits in skill and laboratory sections enrolling 20 students or fewer for online, hybrid or face-to-face instruction. One section of MCC: 3123: Writing Fundamentals enrolled 80 students online fall 2021 and 93 students online spring 2022.

Faculty indicated that the enrollment caps on skills and laboratory courses and offering additional sections of those courses helped maintain the student-faculty ratio of no more than 20-1. Students stated they do have access to these courses.

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

The School does not require students to complete internships. Students can earn six semester hours (over two semesters) toward their degree requirement. Internships require a minimum of 100 hours of work per one academic semester credit. Internships are approved for credit if they meet rigorous academic standards and student learning outcomes set forth by the Departments. All other internships are approved as zero-credit experiences and require entry-level skills. Students can find listings of internal and external internships through Handshake, an online database, and events hosted through the CARTA Career Services office.

Students in the Department of Journalism + Media can earn academic credit through in-house experiential learning programs such as Univision STEP or NBCU Academy Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fellowship. Students in both Departments can earn academic credit through external internships approved by the Departments. For example, students in the Department of Communication can earn academic credit through COM in the District, an immersive experience in Washington

Students must complete prerequisites prior to serving internships. Further career-readiness is offered through the Career and Talent Development Department at FIU. Students complete a departmental required internship course to receive academic credit. In-house and external internships follow the same steps and processes, supervision of the internship by a faculty director along with an external partner, and evaluation and grading of student performance including Pass/Fail or letter grade for external internships. Students and employers are required to submit an internship evaluation at the end of the semester/internship.

The internship program had 396 students serve as interns from 2018-2021 (85% were third- and fourth-year students) with 89 for-credit and 307 zero-credit. Internships varied in forms of remuneration from hourly pay, stipends, or credit hours. Of the 256 journalism and media student internship evaluations completed from 2018-2021, 98% indicated the internship met or exceeded their expectations of contributing to their professional development. Professionals reported interns are “multimedia professionals” and “multilingual storytellers.” Students reported numerous opportunities to apply to internships, being prepared for internships based on their course work, and gaining valuable experience at the intern site.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**f). At least half of the required credit hours are in either professional skills or courses that integrate theory and skills appropriate to professional communication careers.**

More than half of the classes in the Spanish-language master's program, and in the Global Strategic Communications master's program, are in professional skills or a mix of skills and theory.

**g). Instruction and curricular requirements for professional master's students are more advanced and rigorous than for undergraduate students, including courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students.**

Other than for students in the 4+1 program, the unit does not have Spanish-language courses that are open to both undergraduates and master's students. They will have one combined class starting in the fall of 2022 on multimedia production and are planning to have more rigorous assignments for the graduate students.

The curricular requirements for the Spanish-language master's program are rigorous and up to date. The requirements include a theory class, visual storytelling, investigative reporting, and media management and entrepreneurship, among others.

Students praised the hands-on nature of the program, its uniqueness as one of only a few Spanish language programs, and the ability to take courses outside the school that deepened subject-specific knowledge. One student was especially pleased to be able to take a course with the Latin American and Caribbean Center, with which the school has a partnership. The course on violence in Latin America allowed the student to learn about the academic perspective of a problem they want to report on in the future.

Students also praised the leadership of the program for being accessible and helpful.

“If it’s not here, they make it happen.”

Students did note that the curriculum could use an introductory course to help those who arrive without much journalism background or experience. The program has already responded by adding the multimedia production class mentioned above.

The Spanish-language program director and faculty use their impressive industry connections to help students get internships and jobs.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate:) The School has responded effectively to curriculum development to prepare students for evolving careers in communications industries, journalism, and media. The School has developed a robust pedagogy in emerging technologies while maintaining a balance of skills, theory, and conceptual courses. The School supports faculty development through grants and workshops. Syllabuses are inconsistent in reflecting the ACEJMC professional values and competencies.

(Professional Master’s:) The Spanish-language master’s program has a dedicated and energetic faculty and a strong and evolving curriculum. The curriculum is experiential and the director and the faculty work hard to get the students placed at internships and jobs at Univision, El Nuevo Herald and other Spanish-language outlets in the United States and in Latin America. The Global Strategic Communication program has a good mix of faculty with professional backgrounds and academic research experiences. Professors are globally minded with diverse international backgrounds.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness**

### **Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The School has a written diversity plan adopted in March 2014, before the last re-accreditation visit, that defines diversity and identifies under-represented groups. The plan includes goals for curriculum, faculty population, student population and other measures. The college requires each department in the school to file annual diversity reports that track faculty diversity training, best practices for hiring, student retention, and more.

**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 unit articulates diversity principles and includes diversity coursework throughout the curriculum at both the undergraduate and master's levels. However, not all syllabuses are explicit about diversity principles, content or assignments.

At the undergraduate level, courses such as "Global Media and Society" and "Racism in Communication," among others, include discussion and instruction on topics including diverse audiences and cultures. "Digital Theories" explores inequalities in big data.

Master's level courses such as "Reporting Social and Ethnic Issues" explicitly deal with diversity issues. Instructors in other master's courses also include diversity expectations in their syllabuses.

The school is intentional about its curricular diversity efforts.

**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.**

In their annual diversity reports, the departments track the makeup of search committees, candidate pools, training for faculty, use of diversity statements and other measures. Chairs are responsible for reviewing the pools selected for on-campus interviews and can extend the search if they are not satisfied with the diversity of the pool.

Sixty-one percent of the unit's full-time faculty is female, an increase from about 50 percent during the last site visit. African-American and Asian faculty have each increased from zero to three since the last visit.

One faculty member said that in addition to the hiring progress, the School is also a home for “diversity of thought.”

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

The student population of the unit is diverse and mostly reflective of the population it serves. Latino undergraduates make up just under 69 percent of the student population, almost exactly the same as the area population. African-American undergraduates make up almost 12 percent of the student population versus almost 18 percent of the area population. Asian students and the local population are both under 2 percent. American Indians make up less than 1 percent of the school and local populations.

The graduate student population is similarly diverse.

As part of its recruitment efforts the unit offers dual-enrollment programs for local high school students. It also partners with a local state college to help make the transfer process smoother for students. Last summer, the unit hosted a High School Journalism Jumpstart program to recruit under-represented students from high schools without journalism programs.

The unit no longer has a dedicated recruiter, instead relying on the University’s Office of Admissions for such activities. Graduate recruitment is done by the Office of Admissions, as well as units across campus.

The University and the unit have extensive retention efforts in place to support students. Students generally described accessible and qualified advisers who help them from arrival to graduation. This was the case for students who arrived as first-years, and those who transferred after attaining an associate’s degree elsewhere. The University’s “Panther Success Network” provides students and their advisers alerts and success markers to help everyone stay on track.

The School’s retention and graduation rates are on par or higher for Latino, African-American and Asian students than they are for White students.

**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.**

Students and faculty alike described a collegial and supportive environment.

Students repeatedly praised their professors for being accessible, supportive and aware of diversity equity and inclusion issues. One student credited a one-credit race and culture class with sparking their interest in covering those issues at an internship, and possibly professionally. Students cited the diversity



of the surrounding area as a strength and said the School and the university make them feel at home.

“I’ve always felt celebrated,” said one.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate): Diversity is a strength and a source of pride at the school. The student population is racially and ethnically diverse, as is the faculty. The students also are diverse in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds. Many are first-generation immigrants and/or first-generation college students. The faculty is diverse and committed to centering diversity, equity and inclusion in the curriculum.

(Professional Master’s): The Spanish-language master’s program serves a unique population of students who want to work in Spanish-only or bilingual markets. The students come from the school’s undergraduates, from across the United States and from countries all over the Caribbean and Central and South America. The faculty are diverse and dedicated to getting these students hired in jobs where they will serve a mostly Spanish-speaking audience.

The Global Strategic Communications program attracts diverse students in terms of professional experience, race/ethnicity, and gender. There is a good mix of faculty with professional backgrounds and academic research experiences, and professors in the program are globally minded with diverse international backgrounds.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/ noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Race/Ethnicity of Full-Time Faculty in Department of Communication, 2020-2021**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Asian	3	18.75
Black	2	12.5
Hispanic/Latino	5	31.25
Not Reported	2	12.5
White	4	25
TOTAL	16	100

**Race/Ethnicity of Full-Time Faculty in Department of Journalism + Media, 2020-2021**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Asian	0	0
Black	1	5.8
Hispanic/Latino	6	35.29
White	10	58.8
TOTAL	17	100

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

### **Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

In accordance with the university's Faculty Search and Screen Handbook, the School has a clearly documented procedure for selecting and hiring faculty. For full-time faculty hires, a search committee is formed, and that committee reviews the applications and selects candidates to be interviewed. After the final round of interviews, the committee provides hiring recommendations to the Dean, who then makes the final selection of the candidate to be hired. The FIU Office to Advance Women, Equity & Diversity reviews and approves job descriptions and certifies the applicant pool to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the hiring process. The position is advertised through various channels, including appropriate websites and academic associations.

Part-time faculty search/hiring processes are conducted by the hiring manager or team and include application reviews and interviews. Part-time faculty are expected to have appropriate professional credentials and/or the relevant terminal degree.

In evaluating full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff, the School follows the FIU Tenure & Promotion Manual, the CARTA Tenure & Promotion Policies and Procedures, the departments' Tenure & Promotion Guidelines, and the Appointment and Promotion Guidelines for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (Department of Communication). Tenure-track faculty have up to six years to apply for tenure and receive an extensive retention review (i.e., third-year review) following the midpoint in the faculty member's probationary period (typically the fourth year of employment). The candidate's tenure package is reviewed by the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee, the department chair, the CARTA Tenure and Promotion Committee, the Dean, and the Office of the Provost.

During the accreditation period, five tenure-track assistant professors were promoted to associate professor with tenure, and one tenured associate professor was promoted to full professor.

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

The majority of courses offered by the departments are taught by full-time faculty, although in the Department of Communication, the proportion has declined since 2020. The decrease in the proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty in the department is a result of an increased number of sections of public relations courses, with no additional full-time faculty assigned to them during that period. These courses are mostly taught by part-time adjunct professors currently employed in the public relations field, though full-time faculty developed syllabuses, course objectives and assessment methods for the courses. Several faculty members expressed concern that certain skills courses are taught heavily by part-time faculty.

Both departments have been asked to develop differential workload assignment policies that will be used

to respond to specific needs and faculty composition of each unit. These policies will guide the departments' workload assignments in conjunction with policies specified in the Florida International University Board of Trustees and the United Faculty of Florida–FIU Collective Bargaining Agreement and the university's differential assignment policy adopted by CARTA.

**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.**

There is an appropriate balance of professional and scholarly experience in the School's faculty. The majority of tenure-track and tenured faculty in the School have Ph.Ds. Most full-time faculty members have relevant professional experience. Faculty members with limited professional experience are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities, including faculty summer internships and consulting. Part-time faculty typically provide students with current professional experience.

As of fall 2021, the Department of Communication had five tenured faculty members (one full professor and four associate professors), one non-tenured full professor, five associate teaching professors, three tenure-track assistant professors, one non-tenure-track assistant professor and five assistant teaching professors. The Department of Journalism + Media had three tenured faculty (one full professor and two associate professors), nine clinical professors of professional practice (seven associate professors and two assistant professors) and two assistant teaching professors. Several faculty members expressed concern that the balance between practitioners and researchers has recently been tilting toward practitioners. However, the Dean told the site team that his priority for Journalism + Media is on practitioners who are equipped to provide experiential learning opportunities for students.

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

Every course is evaluated every semester using an instrument developed by the university. All regular, adjunct and visiting faculty are required to administer the student questionnaire toward the end of the semester. In addition, peer teaching reviews are typically conducted for each assistant professor prior to their being considered for promotion and/or tenure.

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

University administrators and representatives from other units on campus give the School strong marks for collaboration and service, as well as for the quality of education it provides students. Those who have interacted with students in the School lauded their professionalism and skills in media, communication and technology. There is an increased level of interdisciplinary collaborations between the School's faculty and members of other units in research and creative projects.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**f). Faculty members teaching in the professional master's program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at that university.**

A mix of faculty members with professional experiences and academic research backgrounds teach courses within the professional master's program. In addition, faculty members bring a variety of international experiences.

**g). Graduate faculty teach the majority of professional master's courses.**

The majority of professional master's courses are taught by the School's graduate faculty (full-time faculty who meet the institution's criteria for graduate instruction): 100% for Global Strategic Communication and 80% for Spanish-language Journalism in 2018-2019; 86% for Global Strategic Communication and 81% for Spanish-language Journalism in 2019-2020; and 71% for Global Strategic Communication and 92% for Spanish-language Journalism in 2020-2021.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate): The School's procedures for hiring and evaluating full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff are clearly documented in the self-study and supporting materials. Though the majority of courses are taught by full-time faculty, several faculty members raised the concern that certain skills courses are too heavily taught by part-time faculty. There is an appropriate balance of professional and scholarly experience among the School's faculty members. Most faculty members have relevant professional experience, and the majority of full-time, tenure-track faculty hold Ph.Ds.

(Professional Master's): The School's procedures for hiring and evaluating full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff are clearly documented in the self-study and supporting materials. The majority of courses are taught by full-time faculty. There is a good balance of professional and scholarly experience in the School's graduate faculty.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance: 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.**

The School requires, supports and rewards faculty scholarship. Research, creative activity and/or professional activity is valued both in terms of generating new knowledge and contributing to local, national and international communities. Support for faculty scholarship is provided in various ways, including research assistants, internal seed grants, travel support, course releases and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities. For example, tenure-track assistant professors are typically granted student research assistants during their first three contract years (pending budget availability) in order to support their progress toward tenure. Several junior faculty members noted that the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges in their gaining access to research assistants.

Internal grants to support faculty scholarship are available at the department, college and university levels, including the CARTA seed grant fund program. All faculty are eligible for travel support for conference presentations or professional training. During the past six years, most faculty in the School have received travel funding. In addition, faculty members are eligible for sabbaticals and professional development leaves. The School's Steven Cruz Institute for Media, Science + Technology, established in 2019, provides interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities related to science communication.

Most faculty said they felt supported in their scholarly activity and free to pursue scholarship, whether creative, professional or more traditional research. Some tenure-track/tenured faculty members expressed concern that the School's research support is not as strong as they expected at an R1 institution.

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

Expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity are described in the CARTA Tenure & Promotion Policies and Procedures, the Department of Journalism + Media Draft Tenure & Promotion Guidelines, the Department of Communication Tenure & Promotion Guidelines, and the Appointment of Promotion Guidelines for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (Department of Communication). In addition, the School abides by the FIU Tenure & Promotion Manual. These documents lay out categories of eligible works of scholarship, research and creative activity expectations by rank. The self-study summarized these criteria and provided links to relevant documents.

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

Overall, evaluation criteria for research faculty (tenure-track/tenured), clinical professional practice faculty and teaching faculty are appropriate to professional, creative and scholarly specializations. Evaluation criteria are specified in promotion guidelines in the departments and the college.

**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 self-study identified 19 awards and honors, 81 refereed journal articles, four scholarly books, 28 book chapters, 97 refereed conference papers and 34 non-refereed and industry trade articles during the six-year period. Compared with the previous accreditation cycle, this reflects an increase in the number of refereed journal articles, book chapters and non-refereed articles and a decrease in the number of awards/honors and refereed conference papers. In the past six years, faculty received a total of 21 internal grants and 17 external grants, a significant growth from the previous accreditation cycle. These accomplishments reflect activities by all tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members. The Provost said he saw the School's scholarly strength increasing in recent years.

Faculty research and creative/professional activity include publications in peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books and book chapters, textbooks, conference papers, encyclopedia entries and juried/non-juried creative works. Refereed journal articles are published in some of the top journals in related fields including *Health Communication*, *New Media and Society* and *Science Communication*. Faculty received external grants from national and regional organizations.

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

The School supports diverse research agendas and values a range of scholarship categories. In addition, the School contributes to the intellectual climate at the university through participation in public lectures, symposia and interdisciplinary collaboration projects. Faculty noted that different points of view are welcome and respected in the School.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate and master's:) The School is maintaining its scholarly output that was enhanced during the previous accreditation cycle. The School's faculty are appropriately productive in terms of research output and are active in sharing their research through relevant scholarly and professional associations and public engagements.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

Report of on-site evaluation of professional master's and undergraduate programs for 2021-2022 Visits

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				
		Full Professors 5	Associate Professors 17	Assistant Professors 10	Other Faculty** 5	Totals 37
Awards and Honors	19		16	6		22
Grants Received Internal	21		10	16		26
Grants Received External	17	4	13	2	2	21
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	4		2	3		5
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	3	2	1			3
Books Edited	1		1			1
Book Chapters	28	10	21	8		39
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	81	11	51	35		97
Refereed Conference Papers	97	15	71	27	8	121
Invited Academic Papers	2		2			2
Encyclopedia Entries	3		2	1		3



Report of on-site evaluation of professional master's and undergraduate programs for 2021-2022 Visits

Book Reviews						
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	34	4	26	5	1	36
Juried Creative Works	1		1			1
Non-juried Creative Works	17	1	15	3		19
Other (please specify) <i>(includes non-refereed conference presentations, invited presentations and research projects)</i>	33	10	17	3	3	33

\*Co-authored work should be counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However, if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors. \*\*Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. Many faculty in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.

## **PART II — Standard 6: Student Services**

### **Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The School and Academic Advising Services have several points of contact with students to inform them about graduation requirements and career and academic advising. For example, first-year and transfer students receive copies of their enrollment notes, degree-seeking students have access to their academic degree audits through an online system, and all majors complete a Department orientation course their first semester. Advisers use the online academic degree audit system, Panther Success Network (PSN), to provide academic progress reports to students. The School offers program information sessions each semester to update students on curriculum changes. Online track sheets help students monitor their progress in each major. Advisers recommend students run a degree audit through PSN twice a semester.

Career counseling is conducted by academic advisers and faculty who direct students to the university Career and Talent Development Center (CTD) for resume reviews, interviewing techniques, and networking training. CTD uses Handshake, an online database, that connects students and alumni with employers. School faculty connected to professional industries assist students with internships and job placements. The School recently hired a career counselor to unify career counseling strategies.

Students described advising as helpful and informative concerning course selection and planning towards graduation. Students track their degree requirements through the PNS and have easy access to their degree audit. Students use Handshake to network with professionals and find internships. Students described academic advisers as hands-on and attentive.

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

The Office of Academic and Career Success (ACS) conducts academic advising assessment for the College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts (CARTA), which includes the School. With a response rate of more than 50%, the survey results indicate students found it easy to make appointments with their academic adviser with less than 25% indicating they did make regular appointments with their adviser. Virtual advising sessions and the impact of COVID were reasons students stated for not making regular appointments.

Students described academic advisers as knowledgeable about the students and interested in their success. Students use email to set up in-person or virtual appointments. Academic advisers and career specialists are accessible beyond the advising period to offer advice about courses, graduation requirements, internships and careers.

Student comments included, "It is encouraging to see the availability and access to faculty each semester." Students praised faculty for their personal attention and for keeping them motivated to succeed.

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

The School offers program information sessions each semester to keep students updated on activities, requirements and policy changes. Advisers use the online academic degree audit system, PSN, to

communicate with students and recommend students run a degree audit through PSN twice a semester. Students indicated they keep up to date through PNS, CARTA and SCJ email messages, an online CARTA newsletter, and social media like Twitter and Instagram for CARTA.

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

The university and School provide students with relevant extra-curricular activities that showcase their professional and intellectual abilities and interest. For example, the university-wide student media organization, PantherNOW, publishes a weekly newspaper with updates on its website and runs a 24/7 radio station. The School offers extra-curricular activities to students such as BOLD Club, a student-run communications agency, an active chapter of the FIU Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), and the National Association of Black Journalist. The South Florida Media Network (SFMN) is a student-produced media production of the Department of Journalism and Media that has garnered the 2020 EPPY for Best College Produced Community website along with national and regional awards.

Students reported opportunities to work with real clients in courses such as the media campaign strategy capstone course for public relations and advertising students. Students use their extra-curricular activities to gain skills such as attending workshops offered by the Public Relations Student Society of America or participating in student-run media. These skills help them get jobs in the community such as conducting social media work for local businesses. Students felt well equipped to go into media industries after graduation.

**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 School participates in the State University of Florida Board of Governors Performance Finding Metrics, which includes metrics for retention and graduation rates. The School leaders meet with the Dean to review the data and discuss ways to improve results. The School shares data with the public on the college website. School leadership meets regularly with the college Dean to review the data.

The School's enrollment fell 11.2% Fall 2021 when compared to Fall 2020. The two-year retention rate for the college was 90.9% which was on par with the university's retention rate of 91%. The first-year-in-college four-year graduation rate for the School was 63% and the six-year graduation rate was 77%, which was above the university's rates of 48% and 66% respectively.

The School awarded 21 and 22 student scholarships in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively with the median individual scholarship of \$500. The total amount of scholarship funds controlled by the School dropped in 2020 because the School did not send students to internship sites through the South Florida Media Network news bureaus in New York City and Washington because of the pandemic.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**f). The unit has appropriate admissions and retention policies for the professional master's program. The retention and graduation data are published on the unit's website.**

The unit has admissions and retention policies, which are outlined in separate handbooks for the Global Strategic Communications program and for the Spanish Language Journalism program.

With some appropriate exceptions, the unit requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, a 3.0 grade point average, GRE scores, and language tests for international students whose native language is not English. Transcripts, a resume, two letters of recommendation and a statement of purpose are also required.

The unit posts retention and graduation data for its master's programs on its website.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate:)

With many students who are first-generation-in-college and many who are transfer students, the School has a robust strategy in place to help students navigate their degree requirements and receive graduation and career advising. Students have easy access to academic advisers, career specialists, and faculty who offer quality, thoughtful advice. Students engage in extracurricular activities within the School. Retention and graduation data are available on the university's website with the School outpacing the university in graduation rates.

(Professional Master's:)

Master's students have easy access to advising. They described the program's leadership and faculty as accessible and responsive. The students get lots of assistance with internship and job placement. Retention and graduation rates are posted on the School's website.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance: 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 self-study includes a breakdown of SCJ budgets for recent years, as well as more granular itemizations for both the Department of Communication and the Department of Journalism + Media. These are developed using the “zero-based budgeting” method, in which each new budget is created essentially from scratch, instead of being built on the previous year’s budget.

Conversations with unit leaders and faculty confirmed the self-study assertion that the budgeting process is consultative and collaborative. Budget preparation involves department chairs seeking faculty input about anticipated needs for things like travel, research and adjuncts, as well as requests for new faculty and staff positions. Each March, department chairs meet and discuss these budget requests with the Dean, the Associate Dean and the Finance Team.

Like state funding for the university, the unit’s overall budget has decreased in recent years. For the SCJ, it contracted from roughly \$8.4 million in 2018-19 to about \$7.6 million in 2020-21. This reduction was influenced by what the self-study noted was a “cumulative decline in enrollment over the past two years due, in part, to the pandemic.” It also noted that the Department of Journalism + Media has seen a “steep decline” in enrollment since 2016.

To offset budget reductions, the unit said it has raised funds through philanthropy to make infrastructure improvements. These include enhancements to interior spaces of several buildings, upgrading its TV studio, creating a conference space for its student-run PR agency (BOLD), creating a computer classroom, adding a student writing lab and adding some new offices for faculty. In addition, a gift from Bridgegate Pictures, Inc. was used to build the impressive iSTAR (Immersive Studio for Altered Reality). And private donations helped create student-run, faculty-led news bureaus in New York City and Washington

The self-study states that the SCJ has been able to expand some programs without any budgetary impact. This has been done through partnerships with some national news organizations. For example, since 2020 more than 50 bilingual students have received paid internships and training through STEP (Student Training to Employment Program), a partnership with Univision. And in a separate partnership, NBCU Academy provided \$500,000 for student training, stipends and equipment. NBCU works with universities to prepare students for careers in the news and media industries.

More specific to the Department of Communication, additional revenue has been generated through a fully online academic program. In its initial years, the program generated roughly \$1 million a year to offset budget reductions caused by cutbacks in state funding. But the self-study notes that revenues from the program have been negatively impacted in 2020-21 “due to the financial impact of the coronavirus on the economy.”

The self-study would have benefitted from explaining how its budgets reflect the unit’s strategic goals. The self-study notes that while no “formal strategic plan” exists, the unit and its individual departments are guided by “student success dashboards” that provide a “comprehensive roadmap inclusive of strategic priorities, key performance indicators (KPIs), financial data, human resources, demographics, and student success metrics and goals.” It continues: “In the coming year, the SCJ will build on these

dashboards to create formalized strategic plans for each of its respective departments.” But in interviews, several faculty members said creating these strategic plans has not been pursued with urgency.

The narrative in the self-study provides sufficient information to indicate that budgets are generally aligned with dashboard metrics, so the site team felt the absence of a strategic plan specifically for the School does not rise to the level of non-compliance (See Standard 1). That said, the site team underscores the importance of strategic plans for each department, reflecting their respective distinctive qualities and aspirations.

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

The self-study states that the School “has sufficient facilities to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff, and administrators.” It notes no inadequacies with respect to general purpose classrooms, faculty offices, technology support services, or spaces dedicated to student media or organizations.

Through interviews with faculty and students, and an examination of facilities at its BBC and MMC campuses, the team found broad evidence to support this. Computer labs (with a mix of Macs and PCs) and up-to-date software are plentiful on both campuses.

Students use the Equipment Office to check out equipment through an online booking system. Staff at the Equipment Office said the inventory is sufficient to fulfill all student requests. On rare occasions when the latest version of equipment is not available, they said, an older version (adequate for a student's needs) is provided. The inventory includes:

- 32 digital audio recorders
- 5 audio boom poles
- 27 hand-held microphones
- 79 lavalier microphones
- 27 camera-mounted microphones
- 14 shotgun microphones
- 68 Canon HD camcorder kits
- 16 Samsung Gear 360 video kits
- 25 DSLR cameras
- 31 HD cameras
- 15 light kits
- 8 mic stands
- 90 tripods

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

Interviews with students and faculty, as well as visual examination of facilities, provide evidence that this is the case.

**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.**

The unit has multiple labs on the BBC and MMC campuses that are heavily Mac-based, with a lesser number of computers using Microsoft's Windows-based operating system. Some rooms are equipped with cameras for remote learning and videoconferencing. As noted above (b) an online portal allows

students to arrange for the use of a wide range of audio and video equipment for up to five days at a time.

Because the Department of Journalism + Media has upgraded skills classes in all its majors, all students must now take at least two video courses. As a result, the self-study states, unit leaders project a need for more video equipment, as well as “a growing need for equipment in areas of emerging media.” This has already begun with the purchase of some hand-held 3-D scanners, virtual reality headsets and other cutting-edge equipment.

The self-study noted that the pandemic-induced switch to remote learning “revealed that some students did not have access to software like Adobe Creative Cloud and the computers needed to run this software at home.” The remedy: the SCJ and the University “pooled resources and raised money to make laptops equipped with Creative Cloud available to students.” This was confirmed in interviews with students and faculty.

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

Students and faculty may use libraries at both MMC (Green Library) and BBC (Hubert Library). Together, they hold more than 2 million print volumes and offer access to over 100,000 journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as more than 1,000 databases.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate): The budgeting process for the unit is clear and collaborative, with involvement of faculty and department leaders. It will be helped by specific departmental strategic plans. Budget reductions have been offset by philanthropic gifts and partnerships with some national news organizations. Equipment and technology are widely seen as up-to-date and adequate.

(Professional Master's): Due to budgetary constraints for the final year of the accreditation cycle, funds that had previously supported Global Strategic Communications graduate program students were eliminated. As noted in the self-study, “The ability to offer tuition waivers or in-state tuition rates to out-of-state or international students through assistantships is a benefit the program would like to offer again.” That said, the unit asserts that available resources are adequate for a “strong and effective professional master's program,” although additional resources would allow it to “move on to the next level of excellence.”

For the Spanish-language Journalism program, the self-study says resources “are more than adequate to meet current needs.” But, it says, more faculty will be needed if the program grows. It is “aggressively promoting” the Spanish-language Journalism program to potential students in South Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean. If successful, it will help the unit make the case for increased faculty.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance: 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 site team found ample evidence to support the self-study assertion that the unit is “deeply engaged with the professional and academic communities of South Florida.” It receives guidance on industry trends from a 20-member Advisory Board. The board is commendably diverse by gender, race and cultural background. Its professionally accomplished members (many of them alums) work at well-known news, public relations, advertising and philanthropic organizations.

The SCJ has more than 10,000 alumni and uses social media to keep them updated on its activities through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Its Instagram alumni group has roughly 3,400 members. A review of the unit’s social media showed that they are updated regularly (including a post welcoming the site team).

In 2019, in an effort to recognize distinguished alumni, the School inducted its inaugural class into the SCJ Hall of Fame. Faculty confirmed that alumni regularly teach or speak in most courses offered by the SCJ. They said this provides valuable industry input. As an example, several veteran journalism faculty members said they have heard alumni concerns that the School’s emphasis on experiential learning has allowed some students to advance without mastering the basics. That was echoed by a faculty member. “Sometimes I think we get too hung up on getting their (students’) hands dirty with technology,” said the journalism instructor. “But if they miss the basics it catches up with them later and it ends up shortening their careers.” Acknowledging that recent curriculum changes have added more “foundational” courses, the faculty member said, “we still need to do more.”

Faculty frequently judge contests such as the Scripps Howard Awards, the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Bateman competition, and the Public Relations Society of America’s (PRSA) Silver Anvil and Bronze Anvil competitions. They also hold leadership positions on the boards of professional associations like the American Academy of Advertising.

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

The self-study notes the “thought leadership” contributions of faculty through op-eds and as panelists at conferences. In addition, several have participated in training programs for journalists in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East. And the self-study notes that “for more than 5 years several SCJ faculty members have been involved in citizen science communication initiatives designed to raise awareness of sea-level rise and extreme heat.” These involve collaborations with local groups and governments concerned about the impacts of climate change, an issue of elevated importance in South Florida.



**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.**

An appendix to the self-study provides a long list of examples of involvement by faculty and unit leaders. These range from co-chairing international journalism workshops, participating in U.S. and international panels, serving as faculty adviser for a national student journalism association, serving as a consultant for the Inter-American Press Association and helping as a reviewer for academic journals. All told, the appendix listed 17 faculty members involved in these activities.

**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 self-study lists a number of examples of faculty and unit leaders being engaged with civic and professional organizations in Miami.

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

For many years, the SCJ has worked with the Florida Scholastic Press Association to cosponsor South Florida Journalism Day for local high school students and teachers. Although the event was on hiatus due to the pandemic in 2020, 2019 marked the 47<sup>th</sup> year for the Journalism Day. In 2021, roughly 300 middle and high school aspiring journalists and their advisers heard experts and attended workshops and seminars aimed at helping them improve student media at their schools.

In 2021 a SCJ faculty member received a \$5,000 grant for a three-week "Journalism Jumpstart" program aimed at students at high schools that lack journalism programs. The event, attended by 20 high school students, included presentations by FIU faculty.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate and master's programs): The SCJ is engaged with its alumni, who provide valuable feedback on industry trends. Faculty and School leaders are involved with professional and civic endeavors that promote the improvement of journalism locally and internationally.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance: 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)?*

Each department in the School has a staff-level program manager who works with the department chair and faculty as needed to ensure the unit is responding to the multiple university deadlines for assessment materials. FIU requires assessment as part of its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

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

Courses and curricula must meet FIU’s required learning objectives and those required by ACEJMC. FIU’s requirements are dictated, to a great degree, by Florida’s “Academic Learning Compact,” a set of specific measures. There is substantial overlap with ACEJMC requirements. The Compact requires learning outcomes, tailored by discipline, related to critical thinking, oral and written communication skills, content knowledge, and technology. Each department has “mapped” courses in the majors to each ACEJMC value and competency; these are outlined in Standard 2 of the self-study.

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

A review of syllabuses indicates that any mechanism to ensure that ACEJMC-related learning objectives are listed on syllabuses is not effective. The presentation of learning objectives on syllabuses is inconsistent, and in many cases it is difficult to map learning objectives listed on syllabuses to the values and competencies.

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

Both departments in the School have assessment plans that align them with FIU requirements related to its accreditation by SACS.

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

The primary direct measure for each program in the School is the capstone course in each major. Multiple evaluators use rubrics to provide feedback on the projects, and that feedback is distilled into a report for the university that also requires that the unit propose ways it can be used to improve instruction. The data is collected at least once a year. A pre-test/post-test is also used for a lower-level

course required of all students in the School (How We Know What We Know) to meet university requirements for University Core Curriculum Courses. It is collected at least once an academic year.

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

The School uses multiple indirect measures that include: feedback from professionals about the work of students on internships and in classes they visit; retention and graduation rates; awards and honors; student course evaluations of teaching; and peer evaluations. Some of these measures happen each semester; others happen annually.

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

Yes, in sum and collectively. No single measure is effective for all of the values and competencies. Attention to some values and competencies is more pronounced than to others.

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

- *How does the unit collect and analyze the findings and identify unsatisfactory learning of specific values and competencies?* A program manager in the unit is charged with ensuring the data is collected, analyzed and submitted to FIU's Office of Academic Planning and Accountability – Institutional Effectiveness. The report must include plans on how faculty plan to use results to improve rubrics and/or instruction, courses, or curricula.

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

Examples during the last accrediting cycle include:

- Need identified by the Communication Department to give students more hands-on practice in conducting research.
- Need identified by the Journalism Department to give students more case studies to reinforce ethical principles in the practice of journalism.

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

Faculty, either working with department chair or program manager, undertake changes. For example, the research-focused course in the PRAAC major was redesigned by an instructor to allow for much more time for “real-world” practice in applied research.

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

Revisiting the concern in the rubric for capstone evaluations in the same major, along with attention to the concern where applicable in indirect measures, allows the unit to assess whether changes are effective. In this case, the concern did not reemerge.

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

The combination of approaches leads to continuous improvement of courses and the curricula.

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

Faculty in the School maintain robust relationships with alumni, and professionals engaged with classes and programming, allowing faculty to gain insight on ways to update courses and the curriculum. Industry partnerships also provide a pipeline for continual feedback; an example is the partnership with Univision through STEP. The self-study reports that podcasting, motion graphics, and immersive-reality instruction, along with additional emphasis on AP style basics, have been suggested by industry partners. Additionally, the use of highly qualified adjunct instructors from the Miami media market also help keep instruction and the educational experience current for students.

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

Departmental assessment plans stipulate that “faculty and staff” assess capstone projects. However, professionals are also involved. For instance, in the Journalism + Media Department, students who participate in the STEP (Student Training and Employment Program) have their capstone projects evaluated by professionals at Univision as part of the assessment process. Capstone projects in the PRAAC major have been evaluated by advertising and public relations professionals in the Miami market.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate:) Evaluation by professionals of student work is the linchpin for the School’s approach to assessment. Perhaps what is most valuable about this approach is the conversations and informal feedback faculty and students receive as a result, although formal mechanisms are also in place to document the process. Indirect measures provide additional reinforcement and data points. The School should be especially vigilant to ensure that ACEJMC values and competencies are foregrounded, and more evenly, in their rubrics, syllabuses and other assessment materials, even as they also seek to satisfy the (often overlapping) priorities presented by the Academic Learning Compact.

(Professional Master’s:) At the advanced master’s level, professional evaluation of student work is also the linchpin for assessment, and appropriately so.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE**

**PART III: Summary by site visit team  
of the undergraduate program**

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

**Strengths**

- *Strong faculty engagement with and support for students.* Many FIU students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and must work and care for families as they attend classes. Even without a pandemic, these students often need extra support. In the School, they get it.
- *Diversity that is not taken for granted, but is intentionally cultivated.* The SCJ may have one of the most diverse student populations in the U.S. The School underscores that fact with employers, encourages students to embrace their identities, and continues to diversify its faculty.
- *A visionary dean who is focused on acquiring resources for the unit, supported by department chairs who are collegial, supportive, and adept at managing a changing environment.* This is an effective combination that has, together, continued to carry the School through its transition into CARTA.
- *A collegial, productive faculty focused on forward momentum.* The reorganization and integration of the School was within this review cycle, and that, combined with the challenges of COVID and its physical separation on two different campuses, might have made for continuing upheaval. “Carry on” seems to be this School’s mantra.
- *A growing number of experiential learning opportunities, including innovative partnerships with media employers that benefit students and deliver jobs.* During this review cycle: This newly integrated /reorganized School launched a strategic communication agency, innovative partnerships with Univision and NBCUniversal, and a news bureau that gives students professional experience and an outlet for their work.

**Weaknesses and challenges**

- *The need to ensure that ACEJMC values and competencies are consistently emphasized through learning objectives in syllabuses and foregrounded more in assessment rubrics.* The Academic Learning Compact is critical and there is great overlap with the values and competencies. But there needs to be more explicit emphasis on the role of the ACEJMC learning objectives, *specifically*, in coursework and across the curriculum.
- *The need for increased resources if it is to meet its potential.* The School’s new mission is to “To be the nation’s top program for training 21st Century media and communication professionals in English and Spanish...” The School’s trajectory is strong, but it cannot enact this mission without increased programming and additional faculty expertise.
- *The need for a distinct strategic plan and policies that strengthen the School’s unique place in CARTA.* The School certainly contributes to CARTA’s vision and milestone goals in a variety of ways, but each department should hone strategic goals and policies that strengthen the School’s position and provide the necessary roadmap for its mission.

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

NONE.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

No standards were out of compliance. However, the site team pointed out the following:

- *The lack of a three- or five-year plan that defines the distinctive opportunities, priorities and resources for achieving the School's strategic objectives.*

We address this above. The School is no longer a stand-alone unit as it was during the last review. However, it should develop a strategic plan that aligns with its parent unit and points it toward enacting its ambitious mission.

- *Underdeveloped vision and aspiration for the public relations and advertising majors that capitalizes on a time of stability after years of disruption and uncertainty.*

Purposeful leadership and faculty involvement was instrumental in the creation of the Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communications major that integrates these disciplines to create a comprehensive major that develops digital and traditional skills.

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

It was obvious a great deal of careful planning and work went into the self-study, which was rich with data and links to additional material. Errors were rare. The report could have benefited from more clarity at times but was helpful to the team.

**PART III: Summary by site visit team  
of the professional master's program**

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

**Strengths**

- *Good mix of theoretical and hands-on experiences.* Given the good balance of professional and scholarly experience among the School's graduate faculty members, students have the opportunity to be exposed to both theoretical and hands-on aspects of the subject area.
- *Engaging and dedicated teachers with diverse backgrounds.* Students describe teachers as knowledgeable, responsive, caring and going above and beyond. In particular, students noted that faculty members demonstrated empathy and care for students during the pandemic. Faculty in the program are globally minded with diverse international backgrounds.
- *Professional development opportunities.* Students benefit from a variety of opportunities for professional development and networking (e.g., career advice from professors, guest speakers, client-based assignments) within the program. There are additional professional development opportunities at the college and university levels.
- The Spanish-language master's program serves a critical market, especially for a school in South Florida, and provides students with professional opportunities at news outlets in the United States and Latin America.

**Weaknesses**

- *Enhancing interactions among online program students.* Several students doing their master's program online expressed desire for more opportunities to engage with fellow students. Some students suggested a hybrid format might be helpful in this regard.
- *More in-depth learning on specific topics.* Students indicated that they want to see more in-depth learning opportunities on particular subjects such as strategic planning.

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

NONE

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

N/A

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

It was obvious a great deal of careful planning and work went into the self-study, which was rich with data and links to additional material. Errors were rare. The report could have benefited from more clarity at times but was helpful to the team.