

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program

2021–2022

Name of Institution: **University of South Dakota**

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Sheila K. Gestring, President**

Name of Unit: **Department of Media & Journalism**

Name and Title of Administrator: **Dr. Michelle Van Maanen**

Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit: **October 24-27, 2021**

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **October 19-22, 2014**

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


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

Recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: **Re-accreditation**

Team Chair

Name and Title: David D. Kurpius, Dean

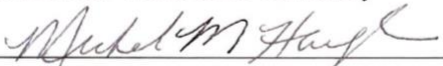
Organization/School: Missouri School of Journalism

Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: Michel M. Haigh, Professor

Organization/School: Texas State University

Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: Greg Luft, Department Chair

Organization/School: Colorado State University

Signature 

On site: All team members participated on site. _____

Part 1: General Information

Name of Institution: University of South Dakota

Name of Unit: Media & Journalism Department

Year of Visit: 2021 (originally scheduled fall, 2020)

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

Higher Learning Commission

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

New England Commission on Higher Education

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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

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

Private

Public

Other (specify)

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

As provided in SDCL # 13-57-1, the University of South Dakota is South Dakota's liberal arts university and meets the needs of the State and region by providing undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences, business, education, fine arts, law, and medicine.

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: 2014, Revisit 2016

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1997

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

The mission of the Department of Media & Journalism is to serve students pursuing careers in

journalism and strategic communication by providing a learning environment, promoting personal enrichment, developing students' professional potential, and encouraging the pursuit of excellence. The department actively contributes to scholarly knowledge in mass communication, and enthusiastically serves the university community and the general public.

(Adopted, August 2012; minor revision, August 2014; revisions considered during 2020-2021 academic year, but tabled.)

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 16 weeks

Quarters of _____ weeks

Summer sessions of 4-12 weeks

Intersessions of _____ weeks

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

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

Media & Journalism, B.A., B.S.

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

(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

120 semester credit hours

11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience.

(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

A minimum of 1 and a maximum of 2 internship credit hours may be earned per semester, and a maximum of 5 internship and/or practicum credit hours total may be earned over the course of the degree program.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Specialization: Journalism	Michelle Van Maanen
Specialization: Strategic Communication	Charles Lubbers

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 9,459 in Fall, 2020

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate majors in
Specialization: Journalism	58
Specialization: Strategic Communication	59
Total	117

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study, and update as needed when the site team arrives on site. Attach separate pages if necessary. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

Spring 2021	Description	Enrollment
MCOM 161 U015	Graphic Communication	18
MCOM 161 U015	Graphic Communication	18
MCOM 210 U015	Basic News Writing	15
MCOM 221 U015	Audio Production	16
MCOM 262 U016	Digital Imaging	18
MCOM 331 U015	Video Production	13
MCOM 331 U016	Video Production	16
MCOM 371 U015	Advertising Copy & Design	11
MCOM 436 U015	Directing for Video & Films	04

Spring 2021 Online	Description	Enrollment
MCOM 330 UT1	Writing for Digital Media	16
MCOM 334 UT1	Broadcast News Writing & Reporting	16
MCOM 338 UT1	Media Design	20
The 3 courses above were moved online due to the professor's status during Covid.		

Report of evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2021-2022 Visits

Fall 2021	Description	Enrollment
MCOM 161 U015	Graphic Communication	20
MCOM 161 U016	Graphic Communication	20
MCOM 210 U015	Basic News Writing	19
MCOM 262 U015	Digital Imaging	20
MCOM 305 U015	Sports Broadcasting	09
MCOM 325 U015	Digital Storytelling	16
MCOM 330 U015	Writing for Digital Media	16
MCOM 331 U015	Video Production	15
MCOM 331 U016	Video Production	15
MCOM 341 U015	Public Relations Writing	14
MCOM 374 U015	Advanced Field Production	14
MCOM 456	Multimedia Design and Development	09

Fall 2021 Online	Description	Enrollment
MCOM 161 UT1	Graphic Communication	17

16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2021–2022 academic year:

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

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

Total expenditures for the Department of Media & Journalism are listed below, along with the numbers from the previous three years:

Planned Expenditures:

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
\$831,540.22	\$936,884.18	\$956,307.17	\$949,162.48*

*Adjunct costs and General Activity Fund (GAF) monies are not included in budgets.

The current year's expected expenditures represent an increase of 16.28% over 2018-2019.

Full-Time Faculty Salaries:

2021-2022: \$699,094.41 (Salaries plus benefits: \$891,081.09)

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

Dr. Michelle Van Maanen	Chair, Assistant Professor
Dr. Charles Lubbers	Full Professor
Dr. Lori Costello	Assistant Professor
Dr. Travis Loof	Assistant Professor
Dr. Kyle Miller	Assistant Professor
Dr. Janet Davison	Lecturer
Gary Larson	Lecturer
Todd Mechling	Instructor

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2021. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2021. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2022, also provide the spring 2022 adjunct list when the team arrives for the visit.)

Spring 2021- 1 section each

Tanner Sifferath	MCOM 151 Introduction to Mass Communication online
Hanna DeLange	MCOM 210 Basic News Writing

Fall 2021- 1 section each

Tanner Sifferath	MCOM 151 Introduction to Mass Communication online
Hanna DeLange	MCOM 210 Basic News Writing
Hailie Warren	MCOM 370 Advertising Principles

19. Schools on the semester system:

For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.

72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications

Year	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percent
2020-2021 academic year	__40__	__40__	100%
2019-2020 academic year	__37__	__37__	100%

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

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 Department of Media & Journalism in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of South Dakota is the oldest journalism program in the state and describes itself as “a regional leader in media education.” Founded in 1915, the Department of Journalism has a history of evolving with new technology developments in the field. Radio and speech courses were added in the 1940s and television production courses followed in 1951, which preceded the department adding a radio, television, and film curriculum in the 1960s.

In 1982 the mass communication unit was reorganized under the College of Fine Arts. In 2001, the department name changed to the Department of Contemporary Media & Journalism (CMJ). In 2003 the department moved again, this time to the College of Arts and Sciences where it is one of 17 departments. 2014 brought another name change. The current name, Department of Media and Journalism, reflects faculty desires to remove the word contemporary from the department name.

The department is proud of its facilities. In 2003, the department moved into the newly renovated Telecommunications Building, which was renamed the Al Neuharth Media Center. The \$4.5 million renovation was funded by the Freedom Forum Institute, The University of South Dakota and state funding through South Dakota Public Broadcasting, which is also located in the renovated facility.

The department currently offers two undergraduate degrees: a B.A. or B.S. in Media & Journalism with areas of specialization in Strategic Communication and Journalism, and a B.A. or B.S. in Sport Marketing and Media major, which was added in 2015. There are three minors in the department: Social Media Marketing (added in 2014), Sport Marketing and Media (added in 2015) and Media & Journalism.

Originally accredited in 1997, the department received provisional re-accreditation in 2003 and was re-accredited after a revisit in 2004. The department earned re-accreditation in 2009 and was provisional in 2015. A subsequent revisit in 2016 granted re-accreditation.

The University of South Dakota developed a strategic plan in 2017 that is intended to guide the University through 2026. The College of Arts & Sciences does not require separate strategic plans from units. According to the dean, the update of the University’s strategic plan was delayed until Fall of 2021 by Covid-19 and Senate Bill 55 that is currently working its way through the legislative process. SB 55 seeks to find efficiencies through consolidation and elimination of duplicate or under-enrolled higher education programs. It also aims to combine administrative operations at all levels to reduce costs. The college and department are actively participating at the university level. It plans to update objectives to align with the revised University of South Dakota strategic plan. The current University of South Dakota strategic plan has six themes, including academic excellence, engagement, facilities and infrastructure, diversity, serving South Dakota, and affordability. The faculty adopted the 2017 university strategic plan for their long-range planning. The chair said the department intends to make the mission statement more intentional in the new plan to convey what they are doing. However, she said they need to wait until SB 55 is resolved. The Media & Journalism Department’s current objectives focus on assessment strategies,

diversity partnerships, enrollment strategies, external research funding partnerships and alumni/industry activities.

The unit relies on the campus institutional research operation to update their data for the website. That data tends to have a long lag time. The unit regularly updates and prominently displays its data on student success on its website. It also keeps the ACEJMC database information up to date.

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

The college and department use the USD Faculty Handbook. Faculty governance policies and procedures are handled at the university level and administered at the department level. Involvement of faculty in the governance of the department is evident in the records of monthly faculty meetings, ad hoc meetings with faculty and through faculty descriptions of their involvement. The faculty is clearly engaged in all levels of campus life through formal committees and collaborative work. This service work extends into the athletic department and the surrounding community.

In the last academic year, there were 10 departmental faculty meetings. A review of a randomly selected set of meeting minutes show regular updates on campus, college and department issues surrounding budget, curriculum, technology and the campus faculty senate. There is little recorded evidence of extended discussions. Faculty reported the chair generally met with them in an ad hoc manner to hear concerns and resolve issues.

The self-study states that many issues and decisions in the department result from meetings of the department faculty through discussion and debate. There was at least one comment about the lack of activity of department committees. This appeared not to be an issue for faculty input on key decisions. There are three subcommittees in the department including admissions and recruitment, assessment, and graduate program. Recently, the most activity has been with the assessment committee. Faculty also serve on committees at the college level.

c). The unit's administration provides effective leadership within the unit and effectively represents it in dealings with university administration outside the unit and constituencies external to the university.

The department chair demonstrates effective leadership and has the support of the faculty and the dean. She has been on the faculty since 2005 and has served as chair since 2011. The faculty report she is supportive of their work, ensuring that they have the resources they need in a resource limited environment. She helps secure research and travel funding and encourages their work. They describe her as collaborative in her leadership of the unit. The College of Arts & Sciences dean described her as strategic in forming partnerships across campus and in the local community. He noted that the department is recognized for their engagement on campus. The alumni and professionals noted her leadership and constant connection to the profession across the state. One example is her work advocating for student opportunities to gain play-by-play experiences covering USD athletic events. State broadcasters noted that the students come to their stations with good skills because of this experience.

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

The chair of the department serves at the pleasure of the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. The dean selects the chair. There is an annual process for evaluating the chair's performance that seeks faculty input and is managed by the dean's office.

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

Complaints are managed at the campus level. There is a website link (<https://www.usd.edu/about-usd/contact-us/concerns-and-complaints>) for reporting formal concerns or issues. The self-study reports no formal complaints and few informal complaints since the last site team visit. The chair and faculty report open-door policies. Formal complaints follow a process that starts with the faculty member and then escalates to the chair and the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. Informal complaints often come through student course evaluation forms, which are regularly reviewed and discussed with faculty members.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Media & Journalism is a small and engaged unit on campus. Due to its size and the structure of the University of South Dakota, the unit relies on campus structures for planning, administration and resolution of issues. They do not have a department long-range plan. This was noted in the last site team report. The campus structure and department size make it difficult to create a department strategic plan. The added complication of legislation focused on higher education, which is currently working its way through the state senate, adds to Covid-19 delayed the university work to revise the strategic plan and mission statement. The structure of the university is such that the unit needs to closely align their plan with the university's strategic plan. Faculty have input on the direction and governance of the department and are also active in campus governance. The director is an effective and highly engaged leader. She cares deeply about the success of the students, faculty and department and garners respect from the profession and the academy for her work. The department would benefit from a revised mission statement that more clearly states their focus.

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

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

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

The University of South Dakota requires 120 credit hours to graduate, and the Media & Journalism major requires students to take a minimum of 72 credit hours outside of the unit, and a minimum of 65 credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences. The department requires a minor outside of the unit. Students cannot take more than 48 credits inside the unit.

The last three graduating classes preceding fall 2021 met these requirements.

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 department offers a B.A. in Media & Journalism and a B.S. in Media & Journalism. Students can select a journalism specialization (15 hours) or a strategic communication specialization (18 hours). The curriculum in each specialization provides a good blend of theory and skills courses. Specific courses are tied to the competencies for the purposes of assessment. The competencies specific to the course are included on the syllabi that were reviewed.

All students in the unit take 11 hours of core courses. The core courses include: Introduction to Mass Communication, Video Production, Media Law & Ethics, Internship and or Practicum. Other courses for each specialization are discussed below.

Journalism Specialization

In fall of 2021, there were 58 students in the journalism specialization. They are required to take 15 hours including: Basic Newswriting, Digital Storytelling, Writing for Digital Media, Broadcasting News Writing & Reporting and Media Design. They also take 12 credits of electives within the program (see below).

Journalism students said the classwork and student media experience prepared them for internships. The equipment and software they were using was industry standard and made the transition easy. They also indicated that if someone wanted to participate in student media as a freshman, peers would help train them. Students noted the elective courses were offered at least once a year. One student did note there is no photojournalism course because the faculty member who taught it left.

Strategic Communication Specialization

In fall of 2021, there were 59 students in the strategic communication specialization. They are required

to take 18 hours including: Graphic Communication, Strategic Communication, Research Methods and Integrated Marketing Communication. They then select **one** of the following: Basic News Writing or Digital Storytelling. They also select **one** of the following: Public Relations Writing or Advertising Copy & Design. They then take 9 credits of electives within the program (see below).

Strategic communication students said the coursework was preparing them for internship positions. They noted the professors are quick to respond to emails and very helpful with mentoring. The strategic communication students have the opportunity to participate in the NSAC competition.

Electives. The students choose between the following electives: Sports Writing, Audio Production, Social Media Marketing, Public Relations Principles, Introduction to Sport Marketing & Media, Digital Imaging, Photojournalism, Sports Broadcasting, News Editing, Feature Writing, Advertising Principles, Advanced Field Production, Mass Communication Ethics, Advanced Reporting, International Media, Gender & Media, Advanced Multiplatform Storytelling, Directing for Video & Films, Event Marketing and Management, Internet Marketing Communication, Sport Marketing & Media, Tourism Marketing & Promotion, Multimedia Design & Development, Advanced Digital Imaging, Mass Communication Theories and Your Brain on Media. They have also added a Crisis Communication class, a Media Analytics course and Video Game and Society course.

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

Student interviews indicate the instruction is demanding, faculty are helpful and provide one-on-one mentoring about equipment or assignments when needed. A review of the syllabi indicated expectations for the course and the assignments required.

The last major curriculum update was completed in 2012 according to the self-study. However, the unit added one major program, two minor programs and a new certificate program since the last accrediting cycle. The new major is not included in this review because it is an interdisciplinary major. Additional courses in graphic design and multimedia development were added, as well as a class in internet marketing communication and social media marketing.

Faculty take part in regional industry organizations such as the South Dakota chapter of the American Advertising Federation, the South Dakota Newspaper Association, the South Dakota Broadcasters Association and Midwest Broadcast Association.

Three of the unit's faculty members have been nominated for the university's highest teaching award since 2016.

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.)

All classes categorized as skills courses met the 20-1 ratio.

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.

All students in the unit are required to complete a minimum of two course credits of internship or practicum. Each internship credit is 100 hours. They are also encouraged to take non-credit internships to gain professional experience. The chair of the department serves as the internship coordinator and approves all for-credit internship opportunities. Students who enroll in practicum instead of the internship course work at student media. They enroll in one credit hour.

SUMMARY:

The curriculum is current, demanding and preparing students for internships and careers. The students have co-curricular activities available to hone their storytelling skills in a variety of formats. Students noted the courses are demanding, provide problem solving/critical thinking skills, stress the First Amendment principles and train them to be media professionals. There are a number of co-curricular opportunities outside of student media including GEN:US and PRSSA that are currently not active and appear to be victims of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The university has a diversity and inclusiveness statement and a plan that was adopted in 2013. The unit's plan dovetails with that of the university. They updated their goals in 2017.

The statement on diversity and inclusiveness notes "members of diverse groups possess gifts, talents, experiences, histories and cultures that allow them to make valuable contributions to the education mission of the institution and to all those associated with the institution." It also notes gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, veteran's status, first-generation status, nationality, citizenship and age as well as other personal and social dimensions are valued at the university.

The unit has two goals in its plan. The first goal includes actions for faculty diversity and understanding. It indicates faculty will pursue ongoing training efforts in diversity. The unit will advertise open positions with organizations representing diverse populations, ensure course syllabi identify learning outcomes and objectives related to diversity as well as include the university's diversity and inclusiveness statement. The second goal is about student diversity and understanding. The action items in this section are tied to increasing student diversity within the unit.

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.

Gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation are discussed in the unit's curriculum. They teach a Gender & Media course as well as an International Media course. They have also cross-listed a course with the history department called American Indians in Film. The course is taught by a Native American who is a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and is the director of the university's native recruitment effort.

Student interviews indicated diversity and inclusiveness are discussed in class. One student stated, "the classes teach diversity and inclusion, but the student population on campus is that of the state." Students also discussed the impact of SB 55, a bill that required the state's board of regents to assemble a taskforce to study operations and functions at state universities. Students are concerned about the future of the university's Center for Diversity and Community. One student stated campus as a whole is fighting to be more inclusive in a political climate that is being less inclusive.

A student of color noted the unit provides a "safe space," and she feels comfortable expressing her opinions in class. She stated she felt supported by her peers and the unit's faculty. Another student of color stated peers and faculty were interested in her story and her culture and would ask her questions to learn more about her.

The students stated they felt diversity and inclusiveness and diverse cultures in global society were topics discussed across the curriculum. They indicated professors encouraged them to look for alternative voices and opinions and to think about telling the story from a different point of view. They felt confident they could work with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds in the professional setting.

Faculty have invited various guest speakers to present in classes. The speakers were white females, Black males, Black females, a Native female and several that identified as LGBTQ. Students noted faculty included diverse class speakers. They learned from the speakers – even in a Zoom environment – and were happy to see faculty making the effort of including diverse voices in the classroom through the use of technology due to the limited diversity in the state.

The student media leaders formed a new student group devoted to diversity, equity and inclusiveness called DiME, Diversity in Media and Entertainment. The group has the goal of supporting and creating diversity in entertainment opportunities across campus. Their efforts led to more than 12 hours of programming on the student radio station, KAOR-FM, called “Loud and Brown.” The group connects those involved in choral activities, musical expression, theatre, film, photography and other activities. The group was not as active during the site team visit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

c). The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.

The department has made an effort at recruiting women and domestic minority faculty. Since the last site team visit, there were three faculty searches. Minority candidates were offered on-campus interviews for two of the three searches. They declined the campus interviews because they took positions elsewhere. The unit also admits minority students to the master’s program hoping the students will then continue their education. One of their M.A. students of color entered a Ph.D. program at another university.

The self-study states the department has two primary goals in terms of faculty recruitment: gender balance and faculty members who reflect minority or international communities. The unit’s diversity plan indicates this is a priority and a goal.

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 self-study reports the unit oversees a scholarship fund created to encourage and support Native American students to become media majors. One to two students per academic year benefit from the up to \$4,000 annual awards. The unit awards the Al Neuharth Scholarship for Excellence in Journalism. When awarding that scholarship, the unit has selected diverse candidates for the past four years. That scholarship provides a total of \$20,000 over the course of the student’s degree program.

The unit will also rotate the annual South Dakota High School Press Convention between USD and another university in the state. This serves as a recruiting tool for Native American students who participate in the annual convention.

There are three specific examples of retention. One student of color noted she was not going to be able to return to the university because of the financial burden. She went to the department head who helped her find additional sources of funding on campus as well as provide scholarship money from the unit. The student said she felt comfortable reaching out and being direct about her financial situation with the department chair because of the culture the unit promotes. A faculty interview also indicated there were two additional instances where the department chair was able to help Native American students access additional financial resources to keep them enrolled.

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

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

The unit prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment. The self-study indicated faculty include the university inclusivity statements on their syllabi. They discuss the freedom of learning, disability accommodation, academic integrity and diversity and inclusive excellence. The unit accommodates those with physical, academic and psychological needs. As one student stated, the unit creates a safe space for students to succeed.

SUMMARY:

The last site team noted the diversity plan had not been updated and there was a lack of diverse faculty in terms of race and ethnicity. The unit made an effort to address those weaknesses, but has not turned the corner as far as having a diverse faculty. However, students do not see this as a weakness because of the faculty's ability to discuss diversity and inclusiveness in courses as well as invite a diverse group of guest speakers. The unit has created a culture and climate where students of color feel safe to express their points of view and be active members of the unit. The current political climate is hindering some efforts at the university and unit level, but students feel the campus community is making strides to be more diverse and inclusive.

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

Academic year: 2020 – 2021 Full-time faculty

Group	% of total		% of total	
	Female	faculty	Male	faculty
Black/African American	0	0%	0	0%
White	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	0	0%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	0	0%

Academic year: 2020 – 2021 Part-time/adjunct Faculty*

Group	% of total		% of total	
	Female	faculty	Male	faculty
Black/African American	1	25%	0	0%
White	2	50%	1	25%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	0	0%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	0	0%

*GTA numbers are included if they were the Instructor of Record for one or more courses

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.

The university has detailed, written procedures describing the process for hiring. These procedures are also followed at the department level. There are procedures detailing the approval of the search, the appointment to the search committee and the development of the position description (including advertising and recruiting strategies). The college also has a detailed explanation of how campus interviews are conducted, how the final hiring decisions are made (at the chair's level, dean's level) and what should be included in the letter of appointment. The college also has detailed criteria and guidelines on how to hire adjunct and part-time faculty.

The university requires annual reviews of faculty performance. The department chair conducts the review of all unit faculty, and the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences reviews the department chair. The evaluations are used to determine salary increases for the following year. Adjunct faculty members are evaluated by students using the standard teaching evaluation.

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

The unit had 8 full-time faculty in the fall of 2021. The unit has four assistant professors (one of which is chair), one full professor, two lecturers and one instructor. They had two adjunct faculty members during the spring of 2021, and three adjunct faculty in the fall of 2021. They have three female faculty members and five male faculty members.

The full-time faculty taught a majority of the courses and are responsible for the research/creative activity and service responsibilities of the unit. Those things are part of the yearly review.

During the 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, all core and required courses were taught by full-time faculty. One adjunct and two graduate teaching assistants also taught sections of required courses utilizing the curriculum and activities employed in the other sections.

University tenure-track faculty devote 70 percent of time to teaching, 20 percent to research/creative activity and 10 percent to service. The work-load percentage can vary in consultation with the department chair and approval from the dean. For example one faculty member has a 2/2 workload because of work with the graduate program. The normal course load is 3/3 for tenure-track faculty or 4/4 for lecturers.

c). Credentials of the unit's faculty represent a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise kept current through faculty development opportunities, relationships with professional and scholarly associations, and appropriate supplementation of part-time and visiting faculty.

The unit's faculty bring a blend of professional and scholarly experience. Five faculty have PhDs, one faculty member has an ED.D., another an ED.S. and one has a B.A. All faculty bring years of industry experience and connections to the classroom.

The faculty are active members of local/regional organizations tied to the profession as well as national academic and professional associations such as: Broadcast Education Association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the American Advertising Federation, the Midwest Broadcast Association, The Radio Television Digital News Association, College Media Association and South Dakota Advertising Federation.

The university has the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) to provide faculty custom programs to improve teaching. The center offers faculty professional development opportunities to improve their teaching. The center offers faculty training on how to create an environment for students that fosters inclusivity. The CTL offers classes and workshops to help with Word, Adobe Photoshop, building web pages and other technical support faculty might need.

Students noted the faculty were readily available for mentoring, advising and life advice. Faculty are quick to respond to student emails, passed on career and internship opportunities and created a fun climate in the unit.

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

The unit uses the IDEA student evaluation form. All faculty are evaluated each semester for the courses taught. The unit's faculty consistently score above average for the college. Teaching evaluations are used in determining the effectiveness of adjunct faculty members, as well as in promotion and tenure decisions. The IDEA evaluation provides quantitative and qualitative data.

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

Administrators and faculty on campus spoke positively about the unit's faculty members and students. They stated the faculty are involved in the university and the local community. They noted the service load the faculty carries is extensive. A number of campus representatives stated the students were the epitome of what a University of South Dakota student should be in their demeanor and professionalism when interacting with members of the university and local communities. They noted the students are always prepared when conducting interviews and are aware of the First Amendment principles when creating content for student media outlets or in their internships.

SUMMARY:

One of the unit's strengths is the dedicated faculty. The full-time faculty are actively engaged in teaching, research and service. The unit's teaching means are regularly above the college means. They have been awarded five grants for curriculum development from the CTL center on campus. Faculty are active in professional organizations. The unit adheres to the 20-1 ratio in skills courses.

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The Department of Media & Journalism encourages and supports research, creative activity and professional engagement, recognizing that this work is represented in diverse forms. In addition to teaching a 3/2 load (this reflects a course release for advising student media), and service obligations, tenure-track faculty members are challenged to produce relevant research and creative work, and to mentor junior faculty. University and unit expectations are clear that the results of scholarly and creative work should first and foremost support superior teaching, but that the work should also serve a broader community and the profession.

Tenure-track faculty members feel supported. They believe they have the resources needed to pursue research in their areas of interest. Assistant professors receive \$1,000 per year in travel funds from a dedicated account within the unit. Faculty members also can apply for funds from the College of Arts & Sciences to support presentations. A media effects research lab is available for faculty use.

Full-time lecturers in the department generally teach a 4/4 load. They engage at varying levels and roles in service within the university and the profession, but do not have expectations for scholarship or creative activity. Professional development funding for non-tenure-track faculty is available through the USD Center for Teaching and Learning. Additional travel and professional engagement funds are provided for an advisor for The Volante, and limited funding to attend local and regional meetings of professional associations.

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

The university and unit outline expectations and options for tenure-track faculty members to engage in scholarship, including traditional research, creative performances and productions, artistic expression and the study of teaching and learning. Numerous examples of relevant and appropriate scholarship and creative activities are provided in university 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.

The self-study notes that expectations for tenure-track faculty are substantial. The document lacks some clarity when defining the volume of work, and the type of review necessary for promotion. The Media & Journalism Department does not prescribe numerical expectations for publications or creative work, relying instead on interpretation and evaluation of individuals' work consistent with national norms in the discipline. This approach is supported by a recent College of Arts & Sciences decision to accommodate discipline-based flexibility in the evaluation of scholarship.

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.

A chart of faculty activities provides evidence of success in awards, grants and fellowships, as well as types of publications, presentations, conference papers and creative works. The bulk of research is reflected in refereed journal articles and refereed conference presentations. Several significant grants acquired by faculty help with these endeavors. Another chart in the appendices lists evidence that faculty members are active in a broad swath of professional and academic programs within academic, professional, community and campus organizations.

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

Faculty members indicate they are encouraged and supported to express their opinions and views. Their ideas regarding curriculum and departmental initiatives are respected, and monthly faculty meetings provide a venue for open discussion. The department, in general, presents an environment of cohesion and respect. All full-time faculty can participate in recommendations for new faculty hires.

SUMMARY:

Academic and creative scholarship in the professorial track is expected and supported through (limited) travel funding and reasonable teaching expectations. A media effects research lab is available for faculty use. All faculty are involved in campus, community and regional presentations and activities, with more limited engagement at the national level. Success in garnering several large grants indicates that faculty are encouraged to seek outside support, and regardless of rank, all faculty members have a voice in department decisions.

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

Report of evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2021-2022 Visits

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				
		Full Professors (1)	Associate Professors (1)	Assistant Professors (5)	Other Faculty** (4)	Totals (11)
Awards and Honors	7	3		4		
Grants Received Internal	14	4	1	9		
Grants Received External	2			2		
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	0					
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	0					
Books Edited	0					
Book Chapters	1	1				
Monographs	0					
Articles in Refereed Journals	23	12	2	9		
Refereed Conference Papers	22	14	1	7		
Invited Academic Papers	7	6	1			
Encyclopedia Entries	2	2				
Book Reviews	1		1			
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	3	3				
Juried Creative Works	0					
Non-juried Creative Works	1				1	
Other (please specify)	7			2 Course Design fellowships from CTL 1 Open Textbook fellowship	4 Course Design fellowships from CTL	

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.

Students and faculty members believe that advising is a strength of the unit. Information about requirements is prominent on the unit's website, and prospective students get program information on their first visit to campus. A First-Year Experience Plan includes a one-credit MCOM 101 class that introduces students to programs, careers, resumes and portfolios. Enrolled students can access resources on the unit's website, and in the university's proprietary advising portal. An advisor from the Academic Career Planning Center mentors students through 45 credits and helps to create a multi-year plan with a 'plan B' safety option, then faculty members take over. Students must meet with advisors before they can register for classes. Some advisors still rely on traditional, written advising records, but the university promotes the DegreeWorks online advising tool for both student and faculty use, and provides instructional videos on how to use the tool.

b). Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Students uniformly report that advisors are available, caring and attentive, helping them to understand program options, select courses and assist with on-time graduation. Students also appreciate faculty help with practicum opportunities, student media mentorship, and as sources of information about practicum, internship and job opportunities.

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

Members of the unit share communication duties and sometimes use student assistants to create announcements via flyers, billboard postings, social media, email, a website and calendar notifications to keep students up to date on activities. Faculty members regularly provide information in class about opportunities, deadlines, and requirements, and the location of courses and faculty in the Neuharth Center is important for social connections and information transfer.

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.

Eight media organizations provide student opportunities in: advertising, campaigns, television, radio, newspaper, and online news, leadership, entertainment, weather and sports marketing. Students can earn stipends for leadership positions in these media. Practicum credit is available for student media activities, and internship credit is provided for positions across campus, the community and region. Faculty members often serve as intermediaries to help organizations find students with appropriate interests, and vice versa. Email and social media also are utilized to inform students of opportunities. Paid internships are preferred, and the South Dakota Broadcast Association provides cash stipends for students who land appropriate positions. The internship and career fair builds important relationships and creates opportunities for students.

e). The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its website.

The unit relies on the university to gather, maintain and post information about enrollment, retention and graduation, and that data is published annually on the unit's website. The unit relies on this data to inform its student success rates, and relies on the senior exit survey to track student placement numbers.

SUMMARY:

Significant opportunities exist for students to be involved and successful during their time in the Department of Media & Journalism. Advising starts early and continues through a senior year, and students have the opportunity to stay in touch with faculty. Scholarships and stipends are provided for 58 students at the time of this writing. This appears to be a good level of per-capita student support.

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

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The College of Arts & Sciences controls the department's budget with allocations determined by the dean under a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) fiscal model. The allocation of funding to the Department of Media & Journalism follows the RCM model. The chair and faculty report the university and college provide adequate funding that aligns fairly with funding allocations for other units. Due to a change in the RCM model, the college and department both received increased funding in the last year.

The department controls three small development funds and receives support from the campus General Activities Fund for the student media needs. The GAF provides annual funding opportunities for needs up to about \$10,000, which department members report is enough for small items, but not enough for major purchases. Those are handled as emergency funding. A student lab fee that helped support the department ended when the university revised the funding structure with a greater focus on STEM fields. The dean reported that change brought more funding into the college budget which has benefited the department.

The total annual Department of Media & Journalism budget over the last three years has increased from \$831,540.22 in 2018-19 to 956,307.17 in 2020-21. The RCM model was reworked in 2019 and the college benefited from the change. The department also benefited because their student numbers were up at that time.

The 2014-15 Site Team noted faculty and student concerns with the replacement of two aging computer labs. Those labs and two editing suites were replaced in June 2021 at a cost of \$30,000. The faculty, staff and students report they have the computers they need to accomplish their work, with one exception. The labs have new computers. New faculty typically get new computers with upgrades when needed. That is either through a "trickle-down" process of newer computers when someone leaves or replacement at end of life, which is typically around five years. Efforts are made to support the technology available. Faculty, staff and students reported good support from the broadcast technician across technology.

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

The department's budget is managed by the College of Arts & Sciences. Allocations are determined through a RCM fiscal process that allocates funding based on revenues and state allocations tied to student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. RCM models tend to favor units with large classes and low skills/lab course numbers. The department is a higher cost unit in the college due to the number of small skills courses and few large lecture courses. According to the dean and the chair, the department receives a little more than its fair share of funding under the model.

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

The department is located in a historic building on campus that was renovated in 2003 by the Freedom Forum Foundation to honor Al Neuharth. While the chair noted updates to spaces in the building were delayed due to Covid-19, the facilities are aesthetically pleasing, open to faculty and student work and interactions, and well maintained. The common areas in the building are bright and nicely decorated, giving the appearance of a welcoming, professional space. The classrooms are updated and equipped with modern computers, projectors and microphones. The microphones were recently added to improve hybrid course audio for students online.

The student media spaces include The Volante campus newspaper (independent, but partially supported by the department), KAOR-FM and cable station KYOT-TV. All are well kept and have appropriate workspace and equipment to accomplish the goals of each unit. In walking through these spaces with the chair, it was clear that both students and faculty care about the spaces and the work. They clearly know and engage the students. Students reported that the spaces worked well and that they felt well-supported to accomplish their work in these spaces.

The department reports no pressing needs for resources, facilities or equipment to achieve their mission.

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 department works to make it easy for students to access equipment and workspaces. They have installed card access to allow 24/7 access for students and faculty. The broadcast equipment and spaces have the appropriate equipment to accomplish the work. Students noted that after-hours access was difficult, but that they know each other and find ways to share information. There are impressive spaces for student and professional activities that include full operations to broadcast live events or meetings built into the space. The director reported that when USD graduate Tom Brokaw comes to give a speech, they broadcast it widely from their large multi-purpose conference space. This is also true of other significant visitors to the department. The same is true of student government meetings held in the same space.

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

The department has access to library and information resources through the main library on campus. They have a librarian assigned to assist with acquisition of books and materials. He reports a flat budget for purchases overall and a small budget for purchases specific to the discipline. He regularly requests input from faculty on books or journals needed to complete their work. He also reported that the budget for the Department of Media & Journalism is higher than other similar departments. The university has embedded an information literacy program into the general education courses, ensuring that all students develop basic research skills. Most of the resources are available online. Interlibrary Loan typically takes two to three days and significantly expands the resources available.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Media & Journalism is housed in the Al Neuharth Center. The facility is modern and well kept. The resources within the building support faculty offices, administration, classrooms, student media and conference spaces. Equipment is up-to-date and well maintained by the broadcast technician on staff. The College of Arts & Sciences supplies the budget for the unit, which is slightly better than peers on campus. The interim dean is supportive of the unit and understands the resource needs. The computer issues noted in the last site team report are no longer an issue. The department reports no unmet needs for equipment or facilities within the normal budget constraints of the campus RCM system

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

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit has an alumni advisory board of 11 members, but invites additional alumni back as guest speakers, and relies on alumni to provide jobs and internships. Under normal, non-pandemic conditions the unit communicates to alumni and others with a regular newsletter that involves both faculty and students. The most recent alumni-focused publication is *The South Dakotan* from the College of Arts & Sciences. It is a polished magazine that includes stories and photos by or about students, faculty, and alumni, including those from Media & Journalism.

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

Faculty members are active as judges in competitions, sponsorship of campus seminars, speakers for professional and academic media organizations, and involvement with groups such as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. They also are involved in scholastic journalism talks and events. Recent speakers included a Pulitzer Prize winner, and a nationally-famous sports announcer, both of whom addressed current topics of national concern related to diversity, inclusion and justice. Faculty also work to get students involved in professional activities through journalistic endeavors of *The Volante*, sports marketing for USD athletics, advertising competitions through the Coyote Competition and communications work with other campus programs.

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

The unit is supportive of faculty involvement with organizations related to fields which may provide career opportunities for students. A listing of professional activities by faculty indicates they are active across a wide range of professions, including, but not limited to groups related to advertising, broadcasting, public relations, journalism, scholastic advising and business.

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.

Faculty served as judges, reviewers, advisory board members, moderators, editors and on-air talent for pledge drives within the profession and the community. These activities demonstrate a broad swath of engagement outside of the department and university.

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

The department is active with scholastic journalism efforts. This includes regular contact with high school journalist advisers, recruitment visits with students on campus, and guest speaking engagements about media careers in high schools. Faculty also invite high school students (and complete classes) to the department, observing classrooms and student media activities. Faculty also serve as judges for high school journalism competitions, and in 2019, USD helped to plan, and hosted the South Dakota High School Press Association Convention.

SUMMARY:

The department has active, productive relationships with alumni, with significant outreach across campus and the community. Faculty members lend their expertise when necessary to professional organizations, actively work to recruit students and participate in activities that reflect the strong reputation of the department.

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

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

a). The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of the Council.

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

The assessment process is managed by the department chair and involves most faculty. One professor actively works with the chair to administer the assessment program across the department.

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

The department focuses on the ACEJMC 12 professional values and competencies, as well as eight university level learning goals, which incorporate campus and department values. This structure makes it a little difficult to see the ACEJMC 12 in the self-study and in syllabi. Posters displaying the ACEJMC 12 hang in the classrooms and many of the values are prominently displayed throughout the building. This is likely a result of the Freedom Forum having an office here for years. The campus structure for syllabi does not create a good place for presenting these values. The chair provided a chart that indicates which ACEJMC 12 competencies were covered in each core course. The chart indicates strong cross class coverage of the competencies and values and matches the reports from both faculty and students. Students reported that they were aware of the ACEJMC 12 and that those values were discussed in many of their courses. It would be helpful if the department made the ACEJMC professional values and competencies easier to see in their department documents.

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

Most core courses include the ACEJMC professional values and competencies. A good deal of sensitivities exist around topics of diversity and freedom of expression in the state and on campus. Faculty are aware of the political climate and are careful in their construction of messages around these topics. Even with these sensitivities, students reported class discussions and activities covering all 12 ACEJMC values and competencies.

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

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

The department has a written assessment plan with four direct measures (portfolio review, ethical climate survey, grammar exam and internship reports). These are found primarily in the upper level courses. The grammar tests are conducted every semester in a pre-test/post-test format to gauge growth and recurring issues. The portfolio reviews are conducted each spring for the major specializations. The ethical climate survey is conducted in the fall and spring semesters in the media law and ethics courses. The internship reports are conducted each semester, including summer.

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

The department has three indirect measures (exit survey, employer survey and internship/career fair employer survey). The exit survey is conducted every semester, including summer and targets graduating students. The employer survey is conducted once every three years. The chair reports good participation as a result of being respectful of not overburdening the professionals who hire their graduates. The internship/career fair survey is conducted at the end of the fall fair. No fair was offered in 2020 due to the pandemic.

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

The direct and indirect measures are effective in assessing the ACEJMC professional values and competencies. The measures more than cover each of the 12 areas.

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?

It is a small department where the chair and one faculty member handle the collection and analysis of the data. The entire faculty is involved in decisions on how to respond to the data.

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

The two areas of concern for the faculty were writing and presentation of images and information.

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

The issue with writing was that the students did not continue to progress in development of their writing skills in the upper level courses. The portfolio reviews surfaced issues with the quality of portfolios that were cause for embarrassment for the department. The faculty changed the expectations, moved the competencies into courses with greater oversight. In both cases, the quality improved.

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

The department saw immediate anecdotal results from the changes and continues to assess these competencies.

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

The data and action was effective in improving student competencies in the areas of concern.

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

The department maintains regular contact with alumni through outreach and an annual newsletter. The alumni database is maintained by the USD Alumni Association, which is managed by the USD Foundation. The database was updated in August 2021. The newsletter was paused in 2020 due to the pandemic. The connection to alumni is at the basis of involving alumni in the assessment process. The

professionals and alumni we met with affirmed their involvement in the assessment process. They also noted that there are informal opportunities to provide feedback to the chair and the faculty.

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

The department reports significant interaction with professionals in the field as part of its assessment process. This is particularly evident in the portfolio review, internship report, employer survey and career fair survey. The department has significantly increased its use of professionals since the last site team visit.

SUMMARY:

The department has significantly improved its assessment of learning outcomes since the last site team visit and subsequent revisit. It aligns goals with the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies, though these could be better stated in syllabi. The department follows a regular timeline for assessment that probably is more aggressive than is needed. This is likely the result of the issue in the last reaccreditation process. The department does a good job of maintaining contact and building relationships with alumni and professionals who are also involved in the assessment process.

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

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

*An outstanding, dedicated facility centralizes coursework and student media activity, while also displaying a visual commitment to the first amendment, the history of journalism, the strength of media in a democracy.

*A committed core group of faculty members who represent both academic and professional values. The department chair has a strong work ethic and is respected by faculty, administrators and students.

*A strong sense of cohesion and respect among faculty members, who believe they are treated fairly, and who have a voice in departmental affairs and decisions

*The department and faculty are focused on creating an engaged student experience through coursework, advising, and extracurricular activities.

*Students care about and appreciate opportunities in the department, across campus, and in the profession.

Weaknesses

*The size of the faculty is limited, and members already are working to capacity. This constrains the ability to evolve into emerging media research and professional practices.

*Distance from major metro areas limits the ability to recruit diverse students, faculty and speakers.

*Tight budget models restrict opportunities for faculty and students to have a larger professional impact.

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

The department is in full compliance with the standards.

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

None.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

The department was found noncompliant on standard 9 in the last accreditation process. The report from the revisit indicated that the issues were resolved. The department now has a written assessment plan, has gathered and analyzed data and made changes based on those results. The department takes assessment seriously and continues to improve its process, even with limited available resources.

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

The self-study was a good document. It gave an overall accurate picture of the department. In a couple areas it lacked contextual detail. When the team requested information or clarification, the chair had the information readily accessible.