

# Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program  
2021-2022

Name of Institution: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: James Schmidt

Name of Unit: Department of Communication and Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: Jan Larson

Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit: November 14-17, 2021

Date of the previous accrediting visit: November 20-December 2, 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: Barbara B. Hines, Professor Emerita

Organization/School: Howard University

Signature Barbara B. Hines

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Charlotte Hall, Retired

Organization/School: Orlando Sentinel

Signature Charlotte Hall

**Team Member**

Name and Title: T. Kenn Gaither, A.J. Fletcher Professorship in Communications

Organization/School: Elon University

Signature T. Kenn Gaither

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

On site: November 14-17, 2021

Virtually:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part I: General Information

**Name of Institution:** University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

**Name of Unit:** Department of Communication and Journalism

**Year of Visit:** 2021-2022

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

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

*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.**

[Wisconsin state statutes, Chapter 36](#), provide the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, as a part of the University of Wisconsin System, authority to provide an education beyond secondary school in the state.

**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:**

Full visit 2014; Revisit Fall 2016

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

1978

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

The Department of Communication & Journalism prepares students for successful professional, personal, and civic lives by providing theoretically grounded academic and experiential learning in communication studies, organizational communication, integrated strategic communication, and journalism. We affirm the key role of these disciplines in creating and maintaining an informed and engaged democratic citizenry and creating and maintaining effective relationships. Adopted 2013. Revised 2016.

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

Semesters of 14 weeks  
 Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
 Summer sessions of \_\_\_\_\_ 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.**

B.A./B.S. in Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising  
 B.A./B.S. in Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations  
 B.A./B.S. in Journalism

**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.)**

Students may earn a total of 6 credits in internship. Three credits can be earned in an Interdisciplinary Studies (IDIS) internship course (these are counted toward the major only in exceptional situations), and 3 in a department internship course. Most students do only one or the other. Students may pursue internships independently of the university.

**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
Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising	Dr. Won Jang
Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations	Dr. Mary Worley
Journalism	Prof. Jan Larson

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

The 2020 [Fact Book](#) lists 9,255 full-time undergraduate students and 323 full-time graduate students.

Total FTE: 9,578.

**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
Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising	40
Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations	84
Journalism	53
Communication Studies	59
Organizational Communication	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>303</b>

***Minors and Certificates***

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate Minors	Undergraduate Certificate
Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising	15	7
Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations	15	<i>(Certificate is in ISC without PR or Advertising specialization)</i>
Journalism	20	
Communication Studies	33	11 <i>(Certificate is in Social Advocacy)</i>
Organizational Communication	17	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>37</b>

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

**In-Person Skills Courses**

Term	Dept	Course Number	Section	Component	Course Title	Enroll Total
Spring 2021	CJ	184	801	LEC	MULTIMEDIA COMM	57
Spring 2021	CJ	184	802	LEC	MULTIMEDIA COMM	59
Spring 2021	CJ	184	310	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	19

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Term	Dept	Course Number	Section	Component	Course Title	Enroll Total
Spring 2021	CJ	184	311	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	19
Spring 2021	CJ	184	312	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	19
Spring 2021	CJ	184	320	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	19
Spring 2021	CJ	184	321	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Spring 2021	CJ	184	322	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Spring 2021	CJ	241	801	LEC	A/V PROD PROCESS	15
Spring 2021	CJ	241	310	LAB	A/V PROD PROCESS	15
Spring 2021	CJ	260	801	LEC	INTRO ISC	27
Spring 2021	CJ	260	931	LAB	INTRO ISC	13
Spring 2021	CJ	260	932	LAB	INTRO ISC	14
Spring 2021	CJ	284	001	LEC	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	13
Spring 2021	CJ	284	310	LAB	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	13
Spring 2021	CJ	284	310	LAB	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	13
Spring 2021	CJ	373	801	LEC	WRITING ISC	23
Spring 2021	CJ	373	931	LAB	WRITING ISC	15
Spring 2021	CJ	373	932	LAB	WRITING ISC	8
Spring 2021	CJ	380	001	LEC	VIS COMM DESIGN	16
Spring 2021	CJ	380	310	LAB	VIS COMM DESIGN	16
Fall 2021	CJ	184	801	LEC	MULTIMEDIA COMM	60
Fall 2021	CJ	184	802	LEC	MULTIMEDIA COMM	60
Fall 2021	CJ	184	310	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Fall 2021	CJ	184	311	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Fall 2021	CJ	184	312	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Fall 2021	CJ	184	320	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20

Term	Dept	Course Number	Section	Component	Course Title	Enroll Total
Fall 2021	CJ	184	321	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Fall 2021	CJ	184	322	LAB	MULTIMEDIA COMM	20
Fall 2021	CJ	222	001	LEC	BEGIN JOURNALISM	19
Fall 2021	CJ	222	310	LAB	BEGIN JOURNALISM	19
Fall 2021	CJ	241	001	LEC	A/V PROD PROCESS	13
Fall 2021	CJ	241	310	LAB	A/V PROD PROCESS	13
Fall 2021	CJ	260	001	LEC	INTRO ISC	15
Fall 2021	CJ	260	310	LAB	INTRO ISC	10
Fall 2021	CJ	260	311	LAB	INTRO ISC	5
Fall 2021	CJ	284	001	LEC	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	16
Fall 2021	CJ	284	310	LAB	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	16
Fall 2021	CJ	284	311	LAB	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	16
Fall 2021	CJ	373	001	LEC	WRITING ISC	24
Fall 2021	CJ	373	310	LAB	WRITING ISC	15
Fall 2021	CJ	373	311	LAB	WRITING ISC	9
Fall 2021	CJ	427	001	LEC	ADV REPORT AND EDIT	10
Fall 2021	CJ	427	310	LAB	ADV REPORT AND EDIT	10

*Notes.* Courses with section numbers that begin with “8” have the lecture portion of the course online, but the lab portion of courses were offered in-person. Courses with section numbers that begin with “9” are hybrid courses meaning that due to the University’s decision to lower classroom capacities to allow physical distancing, the course was taught with some students in the room and some attending synchronously via Zoom or a related technology.

**Online Skills Courses**

Term	Dept	Course Number	Section	Component	Course Title	Enroll Total
Spring 2021	CJ	222	801	LEC	BEGIN JOURNALISM	20
Spring 2021	CJ	222	831	LAB	BEGIN JOURNALISM	20
Spring 2021	CJ	321	801	LEC	INTER JOURNALISM	13
Spring 2021	CJ	321	310	LAB	INTER JOURNALISM	13
Spring 2021	CJ	429	801	LEC	DIGITAL NEWSROOM	12
Spring 2021	CJ	429	831	LAB	DIGITAL NEWSROOM	12

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

Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2021-2022 academic year: \$1,021,025

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

- 2018-2019 AY + 1.4% (from AY 2017-2018)
- 2019-2020 AY - 3.5% (from AY 2018-2019)
- 2020-2021 AY - 2.6% (from AY 2019-2020)
- 2021-2022 AY + 16.5% (from AY 2020-2021)\*

*\*The increase seen in AY 2021-2022 comes from the restoration of funds removed during AY 2020-2021 to meet expected budget shortfalls during COVID. Additionally, the AY 2021-2022 budget includes grant funds for updates to department-sponsored radio and television studios; these funds are non-renewable and as such the unit will see a budget decrease next academic year.*

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

Full-Time Faculty Salaries 21-22: \$872,750

**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.**

**Full Time Faculty**

Name	Rank
Dr. Won Jang	Full Professor
Prof. Jack Kapfer	Associate Professor
Prof. Jan Larson	Full Professor
Prof. Mengyan Ma	Assistant Professor
Prof. Ellen Mahaffy	Associate Professor
Dr. Ganga Vadhavkar	Associate Professor
Dr. Mary Worley	Assistant Professor

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2021. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching Spring 2021. (If your school has its accreditation visit in Spring 2022, please provide the Spring 2022 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

**Fall 2021**

Tiffany Lewis (CJ 202: Fundamentals of Speech)\_

**Spring 2021**

Dr. Mike Dorsher (CJ 222: Beginning Journalism; CJ 429 Digital Newsroom)

**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.

Year	72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications		
	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percent
2020-2021 academic year	__54__	__54__	__100%__
2019-2020 academic year	__47__	__47__	__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 Communication and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is one of two programs accredited in the state of Wisconsin. Journalism education has been offered in various unit configurations since 1953; accreditation was first earned in 1978. The program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, one of four colleges on the Eau Claire campus.

Faculty and instructional academic staff approved the current 5-year strategic plan in 2020. It clearly articulates the mission, vision, and values for the Department, focusing on both ACEJMC professional values and competencies and the National Communication Association's Outcomes in Communication. In developing the plan, the Department analyzed its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to develop goals and strategies to assure the sustainability of a healthy and viable department and learning environment. Those goals range from providing for a four-year degree completion to providing each student with two High Impact Practices (HIPs); from housing an expansive equity, diversity, inclusion program encompassing recruitment efforts, curriculum, and programming. It offers a crisis response plan to support students, staff, and faculty in times of emergency (i.e., a house fire, family tragedy, or the COVID-19 pandemic). Each year, the faculty identifies a list of priorities for the year at a Fall Faculty Workday; progress toward those goals is summarized during the final department meeting each year.

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

The *Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures (FASRP) Handbook*, recently updated in 2021, provides policies, procedures, and the roles of faculty and students in governance and development of educational policy and curriculum. All department faculty, staff and support staff meet at least once a month, more typically twice a month. Committees often begin discussion separate from the entire unit faculty/staff and develop recommendations; those recommendations are then brought to full unit faculty/staff for a vote. In addition to the traditional committees, the faculty has four project work groups: Community Engagement, Diversity Initiatives, Curriculum Mapping, and Strategic Plan.

University support for shared governance is evidenced by the many committee membership opportunities available to faculty/staff. One department faculty member serves on the University Senate, which through its Academic Policies Committee makes all major decisions about curriculum at the institution. Members of the faculty and the department chair are well-represented on committees and participating in activities across campus.

**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.**

Professor Jan Larson, the department chair, is a long-time senior faculty member who first served as

interim chair in 2006-2007, became interim chair again in 2016 and chair in 2018. She has provided consistent, thoughtful leadership and is widely respected across campus and in academe nationally. Because the faculty has had to increase its stewardship of the department since the last accreditation visit (and in challenging times), it has embraced her servant leadership style. The chair reports to the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, the dean reports to the provost and associate vice chancellor, and the provost reports to the university chancellor.

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

The *FASRP Handbook* provides the formal structure for selecting and evaluating administrators. Faculty members discuss the needs of the department and write the position announcement. It is approved through the College and affirmative action channels. A faculty search committee screens candidates and full-time faculty and instructional academic staff vote for their preferred candidate. The faculty's recommendation is forwarded to the dean and provost for approval. The unit administrator is evaluated within three years of initial appointment; subsequent reviews occur concurrently with their normally scheduled faculty post-tenure review (i.e., one review every five years).

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

Formal faculty and staff grievances and complaints are detailed in the *FASRP Handbook*, while student grievances and complaints are explained on the university's Dean of Students web page. Timely and equitable resolution is the goal for handling any of these issues: resolving the complaint immediately or as soon as possible and in such a way that the student receives fair consideration and explanation for viable solutions.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Communication and Journalism is committed to strategic academic planning and adheres to university procedures and policies. Faculty members are engaged in governance at the department, college, and university level. Faculty and staff take great pride in the respect the Department maintains across the University. During this COVID-19 pandemic, they have worked tirelessly to meet the challenges to ensure the integrity of the degree offerings in the department and to continue to provide their voice across campus.

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

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

*The unit provides curriculum and instruction, whether on site or online, that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(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 these requirements.**

A trio of checks and balances ensure each student meets the 72-hour rule: advising in the department, through the university's Advising, Retention and Career Center (ARCC) and the online degree audit, which highlights the rule.

The unit is in full compliance with the 72-hour rule for the two academic years preceding the site team visit.

**(b) The unit provides a balance among 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 unit offers five majors, five minors and four certificates, of which three majors are evaluated through ACEJMC accreditation: Journalism, Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising, Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations. The unit provides students with a liberal arts education integrated with a curriculum that develops theoretically grounded applied learning experiences and multimedia knowledge and skills. In 2017, the faculty voted to modify the accredited sequences to better meet the future needs of the profession. Among modifications is a requirement for all students to select at least one of three courses focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The core courses required of all students are a multimedia journalism course, fundamentals of speech or fundamentals of human communication, a 300-level research methods course and an upper-level media law and ethics course. Students in accredited tracks then add an additional core related to that disciplinary area. Since the last accreditation visit, the addition of the "EDI Elective Requirement" is ostensibly the most significant addition to the curriculum. This requirement moves from a course infusion model to a complete course with an EDI focus.

All students complete a 12-hour set of core courses:

CJ 184: Multimedia Communication

CJ 202: Fundamentals of Speech or CJ 203: Fundamentals of Human Communication

CJ 300: Research Methods

CJ 413: Media Law and Ethics

Additional core courses are centralized by major area:

### **Journalism**

CJ 222: Beginning Journalism

CJ 321: Intermediate Journalism

CJ 427: Advanced Reporting and Editing

CJ 429: Digital Newsroom

**Integrated Strategic Communication (Advertising)**

CJ 260: Introduction to Integrated Strategic Communication

CJ 362: Strategic Media Planning

CJ 373: Writing for ISC

CJ 464: Advertising in Contemporary Society

CJ 479: ISE Management (Capstone)

**Integrated Strategic Communication (Public Relations)**

CJ 260: Introduction to Integrated Strategic Communication

CJ 362: Writing for ISC

CJ 374: ISC Campaign Design and Evaluation

CJ 479: ISC Management (Capstone)

Each sequence includes a list of elective courses. Students in Public Relations and Journalism have two blocks from which to select an elective related to the track/sequence area and one course from a diversity block (EDI Elective Requirement) that includes CJ 301: Intercultural Communication, CJ 317: Diversity & Communication: Organizational & Media Contexts, and CJ 464: Advertising in Contemporary Society. The ISC: Advertising major requires CJ 464, as its EDI requirement.

Students majoring in all unit areas must complete 36 hours within the unit to graduate. In addition, students are required to complete a secondary program that can be either a 24-credit minor or 12-18 credit certificate. College policy dictates student majors and second programs reside in different departments, although a student majoring in the unit may complete an interdisciplinary multimedia minor or self-designed interdisciplinary topical minor.

The unit demonstrates intentionality and awareness of ACEMC values and competencies across majors. Professional Values/Competencies related to law and freedom of speech, ethics, critical and creative thinking and numeracy are met through the central core, while other values and competencies are specific to each major. The EDI requirement substantially addresses concerns noted in the unit's last accreditation visit, and the unit has secured a needed full-time, tenure-track faculty member in integrated strategic communication to meet the needs of the unit's largest program of study in public relations.

Unit syllabi contain evidence of three different standard areas: UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education (LE) Core curriculum, program-level SLOs and ACEJMC values and competencies. There is an unevenness to syllabi treatment of values and competencies. Most syllabi lead with unit and LE learning outcomes, and some specify ACEJMC values. A few syllabi did not include any course objectives or outcomes.

**(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological, and multimedia competencies. The unit has an ongoing process in place to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.**

The curriculum adequately scaffolds rigor and coursework around a model promoting theoretically grounded applied learning experiences. Students report close relationships with faculty across the unit, who provide mentoring, support, and encouragement. Students similarly praise the quality of the classroom experience in the unit, with several noting CJ courses are engaging and faculty are responsive to student concerns.

To reflect the dynamics of the changing mass communications landscape, the department has made numerous curricular revisions, including the addition of CJ 184: Multimedia Communication into the

curriculum in 2017. This course has helped address a perceived weakness of a central course to develop digital competencies and provides students with skills and concepts to produce content across platforms. An elective course, CJ 272: Social Media augments CJ 184, along with the major-specific core curriculum. For example, all ISC students take CJ 260, an introductory course, that includes three lab projects and practice with photography, video production, editing and graphic design.

Other curricular modifications by major are largely driven by the 2017 curriculum revision. The self-study captures ACEJMC values and competencies by major area. Among other evidence of quality by major:

### **Journalism**

Course syllabi and materials reflect a dynamic major with students producing high-quality, multi-platform work in the journalism realm. The curriculum is rigorous but there are too few faculty members in the sequence to offer a broad range of course offerings in areas such as political or sports journalism. Similarly, the major provides solid baseline training in broadcast, print journalism, and visual journalism. Except for the capstone course and select projects, students are not able to gain depth in one area of journalism.

### **Integrated Strategic Communication (Advertising)**

Faculty updated and renamed the “Writing for Public Relations” (CJ 373) since the last site team visit. The course was changed to “Writing for ISC” (SJ 373) and revised to include more advertising writing. Previously, the course concentrated disproportionately on public relations writing. The new skills-based course better represents the integrated strategic communication as a shared discipline between public relations and advertising. The curriculum closely follows the public relations sequence except for CJ 362, Strategic Media Planning, and CJ 464: Advertising in Contemporary Society, which is not a skill-based course. Instead, the course focuses on the role and function of advertising in contemporary society and culture. As such, students in this major receive additional skills through electives and in the CJ 479: ISC Management course.

### **Integrated Strategic Communication (Public Relations)**

An upper-level course in crisis communication was added as an elective to provide students with breadth in the discipline. The curriculum is appropriately sequenced to balance theory with practice, and provides students with solid grounding to effectively communicate in a global society. Faculty in the sequence expressed satisfaction in the curriculum and confidence students graduate with a strong skill set.

The curriculum in both public relations and advertising conclude with a capstone course (CJ 479) where students work directly with clients and burnish their multimedia, writing and research skills.

A broad range of student media clubs and organizations support the academic mission of the unit, including *The Spectator* campus newspaper, Blugold Radio Sunday (WUEC-FM), a PRSSA Chapter and TV-10. Anecdotal evidence suggests these organizations are doing a sufficient job complementing the classroom experience but have not yet embraced multiple platforms for delivery.

A limited sample of advisory board members extolled students in the unit, noting they are well-prepared for their disciplines and have acquired the basic skills to succeed in the workplace.

**(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 courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

Courses follow a typical lecture/lab format, with labs typically enrolling 15-25 students. CJ 184: Multimedia Communication, skews average class size with some sections enrolling more than 50 students. The unit strategic plan indicates average class size is 27 students.

**(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. Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter credit hours). Students may take up to two semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.**

**Students may take up to three semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at a professional media outlet owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.**

Internships are not required of majors in the unit although many students obtain internships prior to graduation. Faculty and on-campus networks such as the Advising, Retention and Career and Handshake provide announcements and information pertaining to internships. Students can earn up to six credits toward the major with an internship and enroll in an internship course (CJ 498). Students in the course are expected to complete a professional resume, provide work samples from the internship, maintain a journal about their internship and show evidence of connecting their internship work to their coursework. The internship supervisor, who teaches the course, evaluates the students twice during the semester and requires students to complete a reflection at the end of the semester.

For internship eligibility, students must receive approval from the internship supervisor and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75. Moreover, eligible students must have completed the major core sequence and have completed at least 90 credits to ensure students are prepared for an internship.

There is no formal mechanism for capturing internships that are not for academic credit, and the site team encountered some students who had secured internships outside the unit structure. Faculty noted some students work jobs to support their tuition and cannot afford to pay for a credit-bearing course in the summer. Nonetheless, this informal structure supports student needs and provides ample opportunity for those students who are willing to take initiative.

Recent internship sites include Mayo Healthcare System, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, ESPN Milwaukee, and Wisconsin Public Radio. The unit is well represented in the greater Eau Claire area, with students securing internships with media and communications employers on campus and across the city.

The formal internship program is cohesive and provides ample measures to ensure both students and employers are benefiting.

#### **SUMMARY:**

A diverse and robust student media supports classroom instruction across the unit. Curricular adjustments in the past few years are carefully measured to meet student needs and stay abreast of industry developments. The addition of the EDI Elective Requirement underscores the unit's commitment to diversity. An ongoing challenge for the unit is to maintain its curricular and extracurricular offerings with a modest unit size that belies the energy and talent of its faculty.

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.**

Diversity is a strategic priority at UWEC. It has a university-wide diversity statement and faculty senate-approved Chancellor's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) goals and actions. The department has been a leader on campus aligning its goals with those of the campus. The department has a thorough diversity plan that extends for multiple years, with specific action required for equity, diversity, and inclusion. It conducts an annual assessment of progress and maintains a database of EDI-related contributions. The database includes diverse guest speakers, immersion experiences, EDI course updates, EDI extracurricular partnerships, faculty EDI awards and honors, EDI posts and publicity and EDI professional development.

**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.**

All accredited sequences now require one of three diversity-focused courses. In 2016, the unit adapted the curriculum in the Journalism sequence and Integrated Strategic Communication: Public Relations to require a semester-long course on diversity; Students in Integrated Strategic Communication: Advertising had already been required to take a semester-long diversity course. Additionally, with the requirement of a diversity elective, faculty members who teach the diversity-focused communication courses revised their courses to include explicit instruction on domestic and international diversity in mass communication and journalism. The unit also includes contributions to EDI in its criteria for promotion and tenure review, which faculty can demonstrate through teaching and curricular development.

While three specific EDI courses aim to foster understanding of issues and perspectives inclusive of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, content focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion is embedded in many courses the students take across their programs.

Curricular changes have included creating CJ 322: Immersion in Journalism, which is an advanced reporting class where students travel either domestically or abroad to report on social issues in underrepresented communities. Faculty have led domestic immersion experiences like the University's Civil Rights Pilgrimage and produced high-profile events, like the EAU Queer Film Festival, that celebrates the diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) communities through the powerful medium of film.

**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.**

There are 14 full-time faculty members in the department. Of those, seven teach in the accredited

specializations. Four of the seven identify as minority faculty (57 percent). The diversity of the faculty is higher than the diversity of the unit's geographic service area which is 69.23 percent White, 15.6 percent Asian, 7.8 Hispanic/Latino, and 7.8 percent Two or More Races. The department has demonstrated a focus on EDI in the many search and screen processes it has undertaken since the last site visit. It consistently solicits a diverse pool that includes women candidates, candidates from historically underrepresented groups, and international candidates. While the unit has a history of making offers to individuals from diverse backgrounds, those offers are frequently declined. The most recent hire (2021) is an Asian woman.

**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.**

Wisconsin and Minnesota share a tuition reciprocity agreement which potentially gives the department an opportunity to expand its reach to students of color. However, the area population in Wisconsin is 87 percent white versus 83.8 percent in Minnesota. Other categories (Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander or Two or More Races) are in the low single digits (ranging from a high of 7.1 to a low of 0.1 percent). Both areas are 50.2 percent female.

The department works closely with the admissions office and strives to develop stronger relationships with Hmong, Native American, Latinx, Black and other communities through "Blugold Beginnings," experiences on campus where middle and high school students visit UWEC to learn about college. It also hosts the Chippewa Valley School Journalism Association for students from the Chippewa Valley to learn about journalism and professional standards.

**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.**

Beyond the policies established by the University, the department uses multiple strategies to establish and maintain a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity. It collaborates with its student organizations to build community among majors and minors. It has purchased equipment to enable hard of hearing students to fully participate in classes and ensures that all online content is ADA compliant to enable access to all course material. It encourages department members to attend university-sponsored EDI workshops and recognizes those who have achieved Tier III EDI certification. It offers department-specific workshops for faculty and in its most recent strategic plan, the department's goal is to have 100 percent of faculty earning their EDI certificate.

Students, faculty, and staff work to maintain a supportive environment that always responds to their needs, but they especially appreciate that support during more challenging times (like COVID-19).



**SUMMARY:**

The Communications/Journalism Department has a strong, actionable plan aligned with the campus EDI initiatives. In comparison with the geographic region it serves, it has a diverse faculty working in an environment where matters of diversity and inclusion are discussed fully and frequently. The curriculum reflects evidence of commitment to EDI. It is working to further diversify the faculty when positions and funding are available and continues to seek additional ways to recruit a more diverse student population.

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

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

**Academic year: 2021 – 2022 Full-time faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African-American	0	0%	0	0%
White	5	35.7%	4	28.5%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	2	14.2%	1	7.1%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	7.1%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	1	7.1%	0	0%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	0	0%

**Academic year: 2021 – 2022 Part-time/adjunct faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African-American	0	0%	0	0%
White	2	40%	2	40%
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	1	20%	0	0%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	0	0%

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

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

In selecting faculty, the unit follows the university's written procedures in the *FASRP Handbook (Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures)*, which specify that the chair consults with the unit's Department Personnel Committee (DPC) to prepare recommendations for filling vacancies. The DPC and other interested faculty members identify responsibilities, following expectations for faculty member laid out in the criteria for annual review specified in faculty handbook and the unit's Department Evaluation Plan (DEP).

Similarly, the evaluation process for faculty and instructional staff follows the mandates set by the faculty handbook. Each department must establish a personnel committee (the DPC) to periodically review faculty performance and make recommendations on reappointment and tenure. The department is also required to prepare a written Department Evaluation Plan (DEP) to direct the evaluation process. The university faculty handbook requires that criteria for review include teaching effectiveness, scholarship and service to the university, profession and public.

The DPC and the unit chair use the Department Evaluation Plan as the basis for their work in assessing faculty performance. The DPC forwards its recommendations to the unit chair, who also does reviews and then passes recommendations to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The department's evaluation plan states that all faculty, academic staff and part-time lecturers will be reviewed periodically for the DPC and by the department chair. Probationary faculty and instructors are reviewed annually; tenured faculty are reviewed every five years.

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

Full-time tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty and fixed-term instructors teach the vast majority of courses. In the three years before the site team visit, for example, they taught 89.7 percent, 77 percent and 90.3 percent. In 2019-20, the percentage fell to 77 percent because a new full-time hire was relieved of duties early that fall. There are several part-time instructors to supplement when needed.

Faculty are evaluated on teaching effectiveness, scholarly and creative activities, and their service. Teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the university, profession and community are all core expectations of the faculty. The self-study notes that contributions to equity, diversity and inclusion are also expected of faculty.

The full-time faculty carry a very heavy teaching load, the equivalent of 12 credit hours a semester. However, the chair tries to limit the load to three course preparations a semester, though this is not always possible, and tries to meet faculty requests to allow blocks of time for scholarly and creative activity. The instructors' teaching loads are 15 credit hours a semester. Throughout the pandemic, the workload has been intensified by the necessity to switch to remote instruction or a hybrid model. During the review period, the unit had difficulty filling a tenure-track position. First one candidate, then a second were hired only to take other, better paying positions at the last moment. Faculty members universally commented to the site team about the heavy load, and some noted that the disruption brought by the pandemic has led to exhaustion.

Finding time for research, creative work, and service is challenging amidst the heavy teaching load. The unit does not have specific requirements related to scholarship and creative activities, but in evaluating scholarly work, the chair and DCP look for a progression of scholarly work from data gathering, to writing and submission. Often faculty weave their research and service into classroom experiences that enhance learning and benefit students. For example, faculty members and students have developed research on learning in immersion environments such as the bi-annual Civil Conversations course in which students travel to southern cities to report on foot soldiers of the Civil Rights movement.

In terms of service, all faculty members are expected to serve on several departmental committees or projects each year, and tenured faculty also are encouraged to broaden their service to the university, the local community and the profession. Service includes participation in various committees and advisory boards from the department level to the university level, academic advising, participation in professional organizations, and engagement in community organization

**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 department's faculty is comprised of 11 professors at various ranks, three non-tenure track instructors, and one professor shared with the sociology department. Together, they bring a rich mix of backgrounds, both in terms of professional and academic experience, as well as areas of research interest. About half of the faculty and instructors have professional experience, ranging from three years to 17 years.

Seven of the 11 tenure track and tenured faculty members in the department teach exclusively in the three accredited sequences. Some have a great deal of professional background—this is true particularly of faculty in the journalism sequence. Faculty members in the integrated strategic communication sequences (public relations and advertising) have less extensive or more limited professional experience.

All faculty in the unit, except the newest faculty member, have a decade or more of experience in college teaching. Their longevity at UWEC ranges from less than 1 year to 30 years. Although the unit has limited funds for travel to association meetings, faculty members are active in professional and scholarly associations, both nationally and regionally.

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

The Department Personnel Committee and the Unit Chair regularly evaluate instruction using processes laid out in the Department Evaluation Plan (DEP). Teaching by probationary faculty and instructors is reviewed annually by the DPC and the chair; tenured faculty are reviewed every five years. The DEP says that the personnel committee “considers teaching effectiveness to be the primary criterion emphasized in the periodic review and in consideration for promotion and tenure.” Factors considered by DPC and the unit chair in the evaluation process are course design, ability to motivate students, communication management and student assessment effectiveness.

Evaluation of instruction is based on multiple measures: student evaluations, peer observation reports by DPC members, and course materials submitted by the faculty member or instructor. The chair may also observe one class of each teaching staff member being reviewed. The university has required student teaching evaluations for 47 years for the purposes of improving instruction and providing information

used in consideration of promotion, retention, and tenure, as well as salary increase. Student evaluations are collected in all courses in the unit and shared with faculty members.

To assist faculty, especially those new to teaching, the university offers professional development programs through its Center for Excellence in Teaching (CETL). At the beginning of each academic year, the center offers its Teaching Academy for new faculty, a weeklong orientation to teaching and learning on campus. New faculty are paid to attend. CETL also offers a mentoring program in which new faculty members during their first year are paired with an experienced faculty member from another unit. Other CETL programs throughout the year emphasize development of instructional skills, from use of technology in instruction to the latest research on teaching.

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

The faculty is very well-regarded on campus, the site team was told, especially senior faculty members who have long served the university. The chair is a highly regarded campus-wide leader. Her leadership of a university-wide task force on equity, diversity and inclusion drew praise and gratitude of the university senior leadership. Another faculty member from the unit now serves as an associate vice chancellor. Also held in high esteem for its independence and quality is the student newspaper, *The Spectator*.

**SUMMARY:**

The faculty represent a wide range of experience and skills and bring a commitment to teaching, research and service. Full-time faculty members teach most courses, carrying a very heavy load.

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 university, as part of its mission statement “foster (s) in one another creativity, critical insight, empathy, and intellectual courage, the hallmarks of a transformative liberal education and the foundation for active citizenship and lifelong inquiry.” In alignment with that mission, the unit’s Department Evaluation Plan includes scholarly activity as one of three main criteria for evaluating faculty performance in the Plan. The unit contributes funding to encourage and support travel, research, creative and professional activities. It also has a policy allowing faculty to a reduced teaching load to pursue research interests. The College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs offer grant funds to support faculty and staff members’ travel, scholarship, research, creative and professional activities. The Center of Excellence for Faculty/Student Research Collaboration Programs offers grant and travel fund opportunities ranging from Summer Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to Diversity Mentoring Grants to an International Fellows Program, to name just a few.

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

The Department’s Evaluation Plan outlines expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity for hiring, promotion, and tenure. It supports the *FASRP Handbook’s* definition of scholarly activity and clearly defines into which four ranked activity categories each type of publication or presentation falls and gives equal weight to creative activities and peer-reviewed articles.

UWEC is a teaching-intensive institution where teaching effectiveness and academic advising are weighted more heavily than scholarship. Thus, the unit’s and the university’s definition of scholarship and creative activity is quite broad with student-faculty collaborative scholarly activity especially valued.

#### **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 department’s evaluation for promotion, tenure, and merit recognizes the importance of faculty members engaging in scholarly activity, “which may include research, creative and/or professional activities.”

Creative activities, like photography exhibits, videos presented at respected juried competitions and/or other media publications are included in the unit’s top tier category along with scholarly books and peer-reviewed articles in major journals.

#### **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.**

Despite a heavy teaching and service load, during the accrediting cycle faculty members published or presented their work widely: 1 book, 5 book chapters, 13 articles in refereed journals, 37 refereed conference papers, 2 invited academic papers, 5 book reviews, 14 articles in non-refereed publications, 8 juried creative works, and 39 other categories to include book talks, library travel grants, magazine column, and special events planning. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of internal

grants received and a dramatic increase in grants that support students and department majors to present their research at the UWEC Student Research Day and the University of Wisconsin System Symposium. All of those contributions serve to enhance the mission and visibility of the unit and the institution.

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

The accredited sequences under review are part of a robust Department of Communication and Journalism in which freedom of expression and intellectual curiosity are valued. Those opinions often become the basis for scholarly and creative activity that serve both the public and more specialized audiences. Some of those works are included in Wisconsin Public Radio, *Media International Australia*, A Smith Gallery, the SRCC Global Millennium Dubai Summit, the Central States Communication Association, the Eastern Communication Association, EAU Queer Film Festival, and AEJMC.

**SUMMARY:**

Despite its heavy emphasis on teaching, the CJ faculty have made important contributions in scholarship, research, creative and professional activities.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (10)
		Full Professors (2)	Associate Professors (7)	Assistant Professors (1)	Other Faculty** (0)	
Awards and Honors	18	8	9	1		18
Grants Received Internal	64	30	32	2		64
Grants Received External	3	2	1			3
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored						
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored			1			
Books Edited						
Book Chapters	5	2	3			5
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	13	7	5	1		13
Refereed Conference Papers	37	11	25	1		37
Invited Academic Papers	2		2			2
Encyclopedia Entries						
Book Reviews	5	1	4			5
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	14	9	5			14
Juried Creative Works	8	1	7			8
Non-juried Creative Works						
Other (please specify): Invited presentations, Refereed conference panel, Paper on a refereed conference panel, Book talks, Library travel grants, Educator's column, Eau Queer Film Festival	39	16	22	1		39

## 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.**

Academic advising has undergone structural change since the last accreditation review period. Beginning in 2016-17, the university switched to professional advisors for academic advising on course selection. Previously faculty in each department had the responsibility for academic advising. The self-study notes that the department is “more detached from advising” than it has been in the past. Students now get their registration codes from the professional advisors based in the university-wide Advising, Retention and Career Center (ARCC). They are also assigned a faculty mentor.

The change came after a university-wide study about how to increase the efficiency of advising, improve retention and graduation rates and relieve some of faculty workload. The University had undergone reductions in faculty and staff position. The goals of the new model are accountability, timely registration and improving metrics for completion.

The cluster of ARCC advisors who work with CJ majors meets annually with the unit faculty members to keep current with curriculum offerings and discuss questions and concerns, especially getting off sequence, an issue for some journalism majors. The unit provides ARCC advisors with materials including four-years plans for each major. Students are required to meet with an AARC advisor until they have earned 60 semester credits. The department complies with the 72-credit rule outside the major by including it on the degree audit, which is required for graduation.

While faculty no longer act as academic advisors, they are expected to act as mentors about electives, internships, service-learning opportunities, and professional networking. Faculty members are assigned advisees and they are asked to reach out to their advisees at least once a semester. The self-study, however, says that faculty members feel their advising responsibilities are not well-defined, that most students don't know the difference between their academic advisors and their faculty mentors, that some don't know they have a faculty mentor, and that despite messages, few students come to see their faculty mentors.

Conversations with faculty members underscored the uneasiness about their role in the new advising system, as well as some concern that AARC advisors weren't always fully aware of the need to sequence courses in the major. On the other hand, several students told the site team they were very satisfied with the ARCC advising on courses they receive and appreciated the expertise of their ARCC advisors, although they acknowledged that they don't often consult their assigned departmental mentors.

The university is currently undertaking an evaluation of the AARC advising system. It will examine whether the new system has realized the goals of improving retention and graduation rates, as well the role of faculty members as mentors.

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

All faculty are required by the unit to have four hours of office time for students weekly. Many maintain more office hours. Faculty post their schedules and availability on their office doors. They also include their office hours, locations, and phone numbers in syllabi for their classes.

Throughout the pandemic, faculty have also been available to students by email or phone. The faculty has also been proactive reaching out to students who are struggling academically or psychologically because of the pandemic stress.

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

The CJ Insider is the go-to place for students seeking information about requirements and policies. It also includes a host of links to other information, such as employment opportunities, internships, scholarships, the Forensics program, the CJ Blog, the unit's Facebook page, and student media. In terms of registration and academic schedules, students can access e-forms for waiver or substitution requests, download the single sheets that detail the courses and sequence of courses for all our majors, minors, and certificates, and learn about other department processes.

The unit's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UWEC-Communication-Journalism-Department-335826399846466> provides a lively mix of events, both social and academic, reminders, achievers profiles, campus job openings, links to academic information, and motivational messages (on Monday). The unit also uses other social media to communicate, as well as the bulletins boards that line the hallways in the department's area.

During the pandemic last year, the chair sent out a regular chair's memo updating students about institutional and department policies as well as how to seek help. Often included was an inspirational moment with photos. This semester, the chair has sent several memos to students reminding them to be diligent about wearing masks in class and encouraging vaccination.

**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 unit supports a range of co-curricular opportunities for students. In its strategic plan, the unit made a commitment to provide all students with at least two applied learning experiences, and to expand that to three such experiences for 60 percent of students. Student media and other student organizations play a key role in meeting this goal.

The unit provides an advisor for *The Spectator*, the student-run news publication, updated daily online and published in print twice a month, and for WUEC89.7 FM, the campus radio station, with local news and current events and other campus-based content, as well as local music. In addition, the university's high-performing forensics team is based in the unit and coached by a faculty member. The unit also offers a range of professional student organizations: The Communication & Journalism Organization, the Public Relations Student Society of America, the Society of Professional Journalists, two national scholastic honor societies.

The university sponsors TV10, a student-run cable television station in which many majors participate. Managed by the Department of Housing and Residence Life, TV10 offers a variety of content including a weekly news show, live broadcasts of university athletic events, a sports news and analysis show, and several entertainment shows. Students also participate in *The Flip Side*, an independent student-run biweekly magazine. Top student managers for TV10, as well as *The Spectator*, are paid by the university.



**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 university gathers enrollment, retention and graduation data for the department annually. Before the beginning of each academic year, the unit uses these data to update the department's Public Accountability page on the university's website. The data published are for the Communication and Journalism Department (all sequences) and do not break out the three accredited sequences.

The university's Career Center annually creates a "First Destination Report," which includes first-year career placement statistics for students by major across the university. The Career Center's report provides a breakout of the Integrated Strategic Communication and Journalism majors but does not provide a breakout of the two sequences in the ISC major—public relations and advertising.

**SUMMARY:**

The Communications and Journalism Department is centered on its students. Teaching and service to students are the core mission of the unit. This commitment is reflected in accessibility of faculty, the rich offering of student media, the passion for mentoring and advising students, and the emphasis on communication with students.

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

## PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

*The unit plans for, seeks and receives adequate resources to fulfill and sustain its mission.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit is continually hampered by budgetary restrictions, with limited state funds further diluted by university priorities and needs. Funding issues are exacerbated by an ongoing tuition freeze, COVID-19 and a projected structural deficit at the state level. Despite a somewhat bleak budgetary picture, the unit has creatively managed to support its strategic plan, deliver its curriculum, and support satisfactory scholarly and creative activity.

Three primary sources provide the unit funding stream: Funds assigned by the institution, funds applied for by the unit and allocated by the institution, and funds earned by the unit. The latter category includes revenue generated from summer and winter term courses and from the Strategic Assessment Matrix (SAM), which rewards academic units on campus based on unit and faculty innovation. The unit has fared well in this area and bolstered its finances through SAM, but that program was suspended due to COVID-19 budgetary uncertainties and does not appear likely to return.

The annual unit budget is lean but meets the needs of the unit as currently configured. The two areas in the budget meriting attention are the supplies and travel lines. For supplies, a nearly \$15,000 decrease from 2018-2019 to the self-study year was observed, along with a drop in travel allowances which has been declining for several years. While some of the decline is undoubtedly due to the pandemic halting much professional activity, it aligns with some concerns that funds are scant to support faculty travel.

An allocated financial pool – the Blugold Commitment Fund – provides an additional financial reserve for equipment purchases, including 10 Mac laptops with a charging cart, software, a printer, and cameras.

The unit has demonstrated impressive fiscal responsibility and creativity to meet the teaching needs of its faculty and support student experiences.

**(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 unit expressed general satisfaction with the support of upper administration. Some tension expressed related to retaining lines when faculty departed the unit and adding lines during the budgetary downturn affecting the university and its system. In both scenarios, faculty lines are pooled across the university and University deans collaborate to prioritize requests working with the provost. Funding and budgets follow enrollment and retention patterns across the campus. The declining numbers in journalism portend concerns about whether the unit can retain a budget line from a faculty member retiring at the end of the 2021 semester.

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

The unit is housed in Hibbard Hall and has priority over three classrooms on the lower floors of the building. Most faculty are able to teach courses in the building but are increasingly teaching in other buildings on campus based on pedagogical needs and class sizes. Hibbard is equipped with multiple

labs, faculty offices, TV and radio studios, a photo studio, conference room, faculty research room and student reading room. Equipment is available for students to check out.

Facilities are commensurate with the needs of the unit.

**(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.**

Faculty have private offices and computers. All computers are updated every four years. The university Senate Technology committee is determining the feasibility of a laptop campus, and if that initiative passes, it will diminish the need for lab space.

The unit has expressed a strong desire for mobile classroom seating to better promote engaged learning and promote interactivity. Likewise, several faculty members recommended a dedicated laboratory staff support position to maintain and repair equipment and monitor evolving technological needs. These concerns were also raised in the last site team visit.

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

No concerns were raised regarding the library or access to information resources. Faculty are able to access information at the Madison campus to broaden the scope of offerings to support research.

**SUMMARY:**

The department is scrappy with its resources and provides the resources and equipment to support its academic mission. The unit home in Hibbard Hall provides adequate space for faculty offices, classrooms, and student media. Support from university administration is generally positive, although limited finances complicate the unit's vision for faculty stability.

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 stays in touch with its alumni in both formal and informal ways. The unit sponsors a Communication and Journalism Advisory Board, currently made up of four professionals, all alumni. The board previously had six members and now it is undergoing re-visioning and strategic planning with the intention of growing again. The goal, according to the current chair, is to become more involved in mentoring current students and connecting them to professionals, as well as strengthening relations with the unit's alumni and continuing to act as a sounding board for department chair and faculty regarding curriculum and other department matter.

Before the pandemic, the advisory board met twice during the academic year and advised the unit on issues such as the strategic plan, diversity and the curriculum. During one of its two annual meetings, board members observed or participated in classes and attended career-related events where they interacted with students. During the other meeting, the board participated in assessment of student work, highlighting strengths and pointing out areas that need improvement.

The unit does not have a formal alumni communication publication or website, but it stays in touch through various digital platforms: its website, a department blog that features current students, alumni and faculty, departmental social media platforms. Faculty also informally maintain relations with alumni, often through social media.

Students are also exposed to alumni and other professionals through guest speakers in their courses. Topics often focus on current industry trends and life in the profession. Alumni and other professionals often speak and lead workshops at events sponsored by the Chippewa Valley School Journalism Association and at meetings of student organizations such as the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and the Communication Journalism Organization.

Alumni also share internship opportunities with the unit and some alumni stay connected with student media outlets such as *The Spectator*, TV-10, and Blugold Radio, sharing their knowledge and professional opportunities with students.

**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 in a range of professional organizations, connecting with professionals and building relationships. The organizations include the Public Relations Society of America, the Northwest Broadcast News Association, the Midwest Broadcast Journalists Association, and the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research.

Faculty members also serve on boards of regional professional groups and have participated in continuing education on the media and spoken on issues surrounding media and society. For example,

one faculty member moderated a community panel entitled “Is there News Beyond Social Media?” as part of national News Engagement Day and also served as keynote speaker on “The Media” for Chippewa Valley Learning in Retirement.

Each year the unit sponsors the Devroy Forum, in which a well-respected Washington D.C. correspondent speaks on campus. The Forum is named in memory of UWEC alumna Anna Devroy, who covered the White House for *The Washington Post*. The unit also names one student as an Anna Devroy Fellow, who spends three weeks learning and working at *The Washington Post*.

**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 university and the unit encourage engagement in academic associations. Faculty members participate actively in a wide variety of organizations aimed at setting high standards for the profession, such as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the National Communication Association.

Faculty members act as reviewers, board members and committee members for a wide range of national and regional academic associations and journals. For example, one faculty member is on the Board of the *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*. Another serves as a frequent reviewer for the various interest group of the National Communication Association, and a third served on the conference selection committee of the International Environmental Communication Association.

The unit has limited funds to support travel by faculty members to academic associations or other professional meetings. Typically, priority is given to tenure track faculty, as well as those presenting papers or serving on panels. Limits are put on travel support—\$900 for domestic travel, \$1,000 for international. Tenured faculty note the difficulty in obtaining travel funds. Over time, extra travel funds from the College of Arts and Sciences have dried up.

**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.**

Service learning is a hallmark of the unit’s curriculum. All UWEC students are required to complete 30 hours of service-learning to graduate. Many upper-level courses in the three sequences under review are taught through service projects in the community. Faculty and instructional staff regularly construct courses around classroom projects that call on students to use their communication skills to serve community organizations. In addition to class-based projects, faculty also oversee and supervise individual student projects that benefit community organizations.

The self-study includes the names of two dozen community organizations that have benefitted from the service-learning model of instruction including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the LGBT Resource Center of the Chippewa Valley, the Eau Claire County Humane Association, the Ice Age Trail of Wisconsin, and Chippewa County Public Health.

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

The unit has hosted annual day-long conferences for high school students in cooperation with Chippewa Valley School Journalism Association. Organized by a CJ faculty member with assistance from students enrolled in Strategic Event Planning, the event attracts about 100 regional high school students. CJ

faculty and local professionals provide instruction and coaching about how students can improve their high school publications, as well as information about careers in journalism and communications.

**SUMMARY:**

Service to its community, its alumni and the profession are core values of the unit. Though limited in funds, the unit finds creative and meaningful ways to serve community organizations, build strong relations with its alumni, and participate in professional and academic organizations.

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

## PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

*The unit regularly assesses student learning and applies results to improve curriculum and instruction.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council. (See 2. Curriculum and Instruction.)**

The unit’s five-year strategic plan was revised in 2019-2020 and codified by faculty in 2020. The plan explicitly mentions ACEJMC values and competencies as “informing” its mission, vision, and values. The self-study indicates faculty turnover has resulted in institutional memory loss and a sizable gap beginning with the 2016-2017 period where the unit did not collect survey data from recent graduates and alumni who are 3-year post graduation. These deficiencies aside, the university requires units to develop assessment plans.

All faculty participate in assessment by discussing and reviewing direct and indirect measures from the previous year at a late summer meeting. Each sequence has its own assessment plan, which translates to separate assessment plans for journalism, ISC-Advertising, and ISC-Public Relations.

In the period between provisional accreditation in 2014-2015 and full accreditation in 2016-2017, the unit had not yet modified its assessment plans to assess student learning on all 12 outcomes at least once a year. In 2017-2018 the unit formally adopted ACEJMC’s 12 Professional Values and Competencies as its SLOs. Despite these resolutions, there are various gaps during the period of review:

For SLO 2, “Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications,” data was not collected in the 2018-2019 AY nor in spring 2020.

For SLO3, “Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications,” data was not collected during the pandemic year.

For SLO4, “Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society,” data has not been collected in CJ 464: Advertising in Contemporary Society.

For SLO6, “Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity,” data is only available for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years.

The area of greatest weakness for assessment data is SLO9, “writing correctly and clearly” where no meaningful data has been collected.

In fall 2021, the unit moves to an online reporting system of assessment data and an assessment dashboard is under development.

The patchwork of assessment plans and data gaps demonstrate the need for sustained and consistent data collection to capture ACEJMC values and competencies, along with demonstrable evidence data is used accordingly to revise the curriculum. Faculty are charged with developing course-level assessment rubrics, and the unit reports lack of stability in this area has hindered ongoing data collection.

The unit employs various methods to cull data based on ACEMC values and competencies, including multiple choice questions in core course exams, extra credit survey questions, and faculty evaluation of student projects and assignments. Assessment reports in the period of review focus almost exclusively on direct measures. Internships and alumni/professional input do not receive adequate consideration in yearly assessment reports.

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

The unit has three assessment plans: ISC-PR, ISC-Ad and Journalism. Each plan is predicated on ACEJMC values and competencies and includes a grid indicating whether a student learning outcome is taught in a course and another if the outcome is assessed in the course.

The assessment plans clearly describe the assessment process, which commences with an August faculty meeting, and the yearly cycle related to assessment collection, analysis, and reporting. Each SLO is assessed twice in the 7-year cycle, with at least a two-year gap between assessment of the same outcome. Plans charge the unit to disseminate assessment findings to the CJ advisory board at its annual meetings and with ACEJMC during the accreditation process. The department needs to fully enact the plan.

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

Uneven and inconsistent data collection have left little room to effect curricular change. The exclusion of indirect measures and sporadic data collection leave sizable gaps in the assessment process.

The 2016-2017 Revisit Team Report encouraged the unit "... to keep its momentum and commitment to assessment." The unit's commitment to assessment is noteworthy. It has an experienced assessment coordinator and an effective assessment structure in place. It reports, however, that faculty turnover, workload and the pandemic have precluded sustained data collection.

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

The self-study process revealed to the unit that it has not sent out alumni surveys for several years. The last alumni employment list provided by the unit was in 2017. The unit assessment committee has indicated it will survey alumni back from AY 2012-2013 through 2017-2018 to address the missing data.

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

The unit's advisory board faced several resignations in summer 2021 and is in a period of transition. It has recently appointed a board president and enacted bylaws. It has traditionally evaluated CJ student portfolios but those activities are suspended as the board reorganizes. It plans to renew its efforts and is also discussing a mentorship program.

**SUMMARY:**

The lacuna for the unit resides between planning and execution. It has a well-articulated and thoughtful assessment process but myriad factors have prevented its plans from reaching fruition.

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



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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

#### **Strengths**

A collegial faculty: faculty who are hard-working and student-centered

Students who are engaged and appreciate the faculty

Robust student media that provides opportunities, training, and development for all department majors

Innovative programs such as the Civil Rights Pilgrimage

Strong and demonstrable emphasis on EDI

A strong, effective, and well-respected department chair

#### **Weaknesses**

An over-worked faculty with heavy course loads struggling during the pandemic

Faculty turnover and retention are on-going concerns

The unit's effective assessment plans must be more rigorously followed and fully enacted to collect data and inform curricular changes

Furniture in classrooms and a lab support staff member are unmet needs from the last site team visit

Decline in department student enrollment, particularly in journalism

Maintaining existing equipment and securing new equipment to stay current

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

Standard 9: Assessment

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

Department needs to follow the assessment plans in place so they have consistent data to help guide curricular decisions. Need to have more direct and indirect measures to build a comprehensive base of evidence.

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

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

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

A revisit team in 2016 reviewed Standard 3 and Standard 9 which had been in non-compliance in 2014-15:

*Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness*

The 2014-15 site team “recommended the unit revise its diversity plan and systematically focus on execution strategies to achieve the desired results.” As a weakness, the site team identified that the plan was only approved in the fall of 2014, just before the site visit. This provided no opportunity for the team to assess its effectiveness, and the team cited the plan as being “unrealistic.” The plan in place (previously approved in 2008) was cited by the team as being unsuccessful in meeting any of its goals.”

*Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes*

The team recommended that the unit revise the system it uses for identifying courses that fit with ACEJMC’s 12-core competencies and values, using a matrix that would make it easier to see which courses are focused on which aspects of the core competencies and values. It did so, but now the unit needs to be certain courses identified as focusing *awareness* (for example) include among the objectives and/or assignments within the syllabi of those course activities that increase awareness. In addition, the unit needs to take steps to analyze the results of its assessment program and adjust its curriculum based on those results, closing the loop.

The program developed an assessment plan for each major, aligned unit SLOs with ACEJMC values and competencies. It also built an effective EDI program that impacts students, faculty, and the curriculum.

**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 team understands the demands placed on faculty during this time. The self-study was prepared for presentation during its regular cycle before the pandemic. To regroup one year later, an overworked, over-stressed faculty did not have the time to adequately update the report. Some items were difficult to locate when links in the document did not work.