

# Accrediting Council

On Education in Journalism and Mass Communications

Patricia Thompson  
Executive Director

May 24, 2022

Kevin Guskiewicz, Chancellor  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dear Chancellor Guskiewicz:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications met April 29 and voted 10-2 that the undergraduate program in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill receive provisional reaccreditation. There were two abstentions, and three Council members recused themselves from the vote because of conflicts of interest.

The provisional reaccreditation vote followed a failed motion to reaccredit, with a vote of 5-7, also with two abstentions and three recusals.

The site team had recommended reaccreditation, and the ACEJMC Committee, at its meeting in March, had voted 12-0, with two recusals, to recommend reaccreditation. The Council discussed in great detail the program's noncompliance with Standard 3 (Diversity and Inclusiveness). Council members expressed concerns about the negative comments by faculty and students during the site team visit, and said some problems appear to be systemic of the culture and not just a reflection of the controversies that happened to be swirling at the time of the visit in October 2021. Council members also noted issues of concern in Standard 1 (Mission, Governance and Administration).

Our policies state that a unit may receive provisional accreditation when the Council has found weaknesses that can be corrected within two years. The site team noted that the school needs to work to match its diversity plan to ongoing initiatives in faculty and student recruitment and retention, and infuse diversity and inclusion throughout its curriculum and teaching. We will be in touch with the dean of the school to schedule a two-person revisit team. Schools have the option to schedule a revisit for one or two years following the initial visit.

Council procedures require that I tell you of your right to appeal this decision. You must notify the ACEJMC office within 30 days of receipt of this letter if you wish to make an appeal.

Grounds for appeal of a decision to award provisional accreditation must be based on one or more of the following: 1) evidence that the Council failed to adhere to applicable adopted procedures; 2) evidence that, based upon the record before the Council, the decision was arbitrary and capricious or not supported by substantial evidence. Appeals must be made in

writing and must be based on concrete evidence that was in the record before the Council at the time of the original decision. All expenses of the appeal, including travel, shall be paid by the institution initiating the appeal.

While an appeal is pending and before a decision on the appeal is made by the Council, there will be no change in the accredited status of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. The status will remain the same as currently listed following the 2015 vote (reaccredited).

Thank you for the opportunity to participate with your faculty and administrators in the assessment of your program. The goal of the Accrediting Council is to improve the quality of education offered to students served by a program through that assessment. Please accept my best wishes for success for the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, its students, faculty and the professional media constituencies it serves.

Sincerely,



Peter Bhatia  
ACEJMC President

cc: Heidi Hennink-Kaminski, interim dean, Hussman School of Journalism and Media  
Marie Hardin, chair, Accrediting Committee  
Patricia Thompson, executive director, ACEJMC