

**Report of ACEJMC Evaluation**

**Undergraduate program**

**2022–2023**

Name of Institution: Ball State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Geoffrey S. Mearns

Name of Unit: School of Journalism and Strategic Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Johnny Sparks

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: November 13-16, 2022

Date of the previous accrediting visit: January 31-February 3, 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

**Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation**

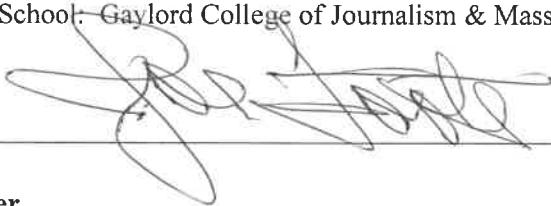
*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: Joe Foote, Dean Emeritus

Organization/School: Gaylord College of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Oklahoma

**Signature**



---

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Joel Kaplan, Associate Dean, Professor

Organization/School: Newhouse School of Public Communication, Syracuse University

**Signature**



---

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Matthew J. Haught, Assistant Chair, Associate Professor

Organization/School: Department of Journalism & Strategic Media, University of Memphis

*Signature*



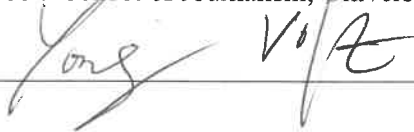
---

**Team Member**

Name and Title: Yong Volz, Chair, Journalism Studies

Organization/School: School of Journalism, University of Missouri

*Signature*



---

## Part I: General Information

**Name of Institution:** Ball State University

**Name of Unit:** School of Journalism and Strategic Communication (October 2021-present)  
Department of Journalism (prior to October 2021)

**Year of Visit:** 2022

### 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. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.**

Please see [IC 21-19 ARTICLE 19. BALL STATE UNIVERSITY.](#)

### 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 full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:** January 31-February 3, 2016

### 5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1979

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

**Mission:** Stories better told. Lives better lived.

*Established 08/19/16; Affirmed 09/19/22*

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

Number of weeks in a semester: 16 weeks (includes 5-week, 8-week, and 10-week courses)

Number of weeks in a quarter: Not applicable

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 5- and 10-week sessions

Number of weeks in intersessions: Not applicable

**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.**

Journalism B.A. or B.S. (Concentrations: News Writing, Photographic Storytelling, Magazine Media, and Mass Communication)

Media Design and Development B.A. or B.S.

Strategic Communication: Advertising B.A. or B.S.

Strategic Communication: Public Relations B.A. or B.S.

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

A bachelor's degree at Ball State requires a minimum of 120 semester-hour credits.

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

All majors are required to complete 3 semester-hour credits but may complete an additional 9 semester-hour credits as an elective (JOUR 369: Internship).

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

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>
Journalism B.A. or B.S.	
Concentrations:	
News Writing and Reporting	Adam Kuban
Photographic Storytelling	Martin Smith-Rodden
Magazine Media	Kate Elliott
Mass Communication	Brian Hayes
Media Design and Development B.A. or B.S. (replaced Graphics concentration in fall 2022)	Jennifer Palilonis
Strategic Communication: Advertising B.A. or B.S.	YoungAh Lee
Strategic Communication: Public Relations B.A. or B.S.	YoungAh Lee

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

18,739 total (13,567 undergraduate degree seeking) in fall 2021

**14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed.**

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Spring 2022 UG majors</u>
<b>Journalism B.A. or B.S.</b>	
Concentrations:	
News	135
Photographic Storytelling	33
Magazine Media	42
Mass Communication	16
Graphics*	42
<b>Strategic Communication: Advertising B.A. or B.S.</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Strategic Communication: Public Relations B.A. or B.S.</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Teaching Major in Journalism (not ACEJMC accredited)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>

*NOTE: Graphics concentration converted to Media Design and Development major in fall 2022.*

**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 for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2023 visits. 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 2022**

	CRN		Course Title	Enrolled
1	43616	EMDD	211 Interactivity Design	12
2	43617	EMDD	212 Introduction to Photographic Storytelling	10
4	43618	EMDD	212 Introduction to Photographic Storytelling	12
5	23942	JOUR	103 Introduction to Media Design	14
6	23945	JOUR	103 Introduction to Media Design	10
7	23949	JOUR	103 Introduction to Media Design	19
8	25566	JOUR	103 Introduction to Media Design	15
9	36908	JOUR	103 Introduction to Media Design	20
10	29510	JOUR	234 Information Design I	21
11	43632	JOUR	234 Information Design I	21
12	33710	JOUR	235 Introduction to Photojournalism	7
13	43753	JOUR	235 Introduction to Photojournalism	5
14	38337	JOUR	241 Information Design II	15
15	43752	JOUR	242 Programming for Interactive Media	8
16	24052	JOUR	265 Public Relations Writing and Publicity Techniques	11
17	24055	JOUR	280 Writing for Magazines	16

18	24056	JOUR	311	Feature Writing	14
19	24060	JOUR	323	Media Design and Branding	19
20	24063	JOUR	354	Advertising Copy & Layout 1	21
21	24065	JOUR	368	Strategic Communications Design	19
22	32787	JOUR	385	Public Relations Advanced Writing	25
23	43636	JOUR	413	Advanced Writing and Reporting	17
24	24073	JOUR	437	Advanced Photographic Storytelling	16
25	26009	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	16
26	26008	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
27	26011	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	19
28	29354	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	19
29	35270	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
30	42111	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
33	24461	NEWS	120	Newsgathering: Sourcing	20
34	24462	NEWS	120	Newsgathering: Sourcing	11
35	24591	NEWS	131	Multimedia: Stills	14
36	24593	NEWS	131	Multimedia: Stills	18
37	43645	NEWS	132	Multimedia: Audio	18
38	24632	NEWS	133	Multimedia: Video	11
39	24596	NEWS	133	Multimedia: Video	14
40	35268	NEWS	215	News Editing	20
41	35273	NEWS	215	News Editing	21

42	24123	NEWS	221	Journalistic Storytelling: Covering Issues	22
43	24105	NEWS	233	Specialized Story Form Strategy	21
44	29995	NEWS	397	News Immersion	8
45	27362	NEWS	397	Match Point USA Volleyball	10
46	41478	NEWS	397	Immers: Technique Immers Photo	10

**Fall 2022**

	<b>CRN</b>			<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>
1	34577	EMDD	103	Introduction to Media Design	20
2	34578	EMDD	103	Introduction to Media Design	20
3	34579	EMDD	103	Introduction to Media Design	20
4	34580	EMDD	103	Introduction to Media Design	20
5	33340	EMDD	211	Interactivity Design	12
6	34153	EMDD	212	Introduction to Photographic Storytelling	18
7	34582	EMDD	234	Information Design I	13
8	34583	EMDD	234	Information Design I	16
9	34584	EMDD	323	Media Design and Branding	8
10	27731	JOUR	311	Feature Writing	20
11	29074	JOUR	322	Sportswriting and Reporting	14
12	14277	JOUR	332	Photojournalism Managing and Editing	12
13	14282	JOUR	354	Advertising Copy & Layout 1	19
14	14289	JOUR	385	Public Relations Advanced Writing	20



15	14291	JOUR	413	Advanced Writing and Reporting	12
16	14388	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
17	14390	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
18	14393	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	19
19	30258	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
20	33319	NEWS	105	Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction	20
21	14448	NEWS	132	Multimedia: Audio	20
22	26676	NEWS	132	Multimedia: Audio	20
23	14457	NEWS	133	Multimedia: Video	20
24	24640	NEWS	215	News Editing	20
25	26394	NEWS	215	News Editing	20
26	30175	NEWS	221	Journalistic Storytelling: Covering Issues	20
27	31284	NEWS	221	Journalistic Storytelling: Covering Issues	16
28	14475	NEWS	233	Specialized Story Form Strategy	21
29	26434	NEWS	397	News Immersion	14
30	26613	NEWS	397	Immersion: Inform Muncie	7

**16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2022–2023 academic year:  
Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

Graduate assistants	\$114,750	20% increase
Student wages	\$31,311	41% increase
Supplies and expenses	\$33,000	9% decrease
Travel	\$12,000	7% decrease

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

The unit expects to spend \$1,158,237.90 in FY 2022-23 on the combined salaries of all full-time faculty members. That is a 40% decrease in three years from what the unit spent on all full-time faculty members in FY 2019-20 (\$1,919,029.21).

**17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.)**

Robin Blom	Associate Professor (Tenured)
Leo Caldwell	Assistant Lecturer
Sungwon Chung	Assistant Professor
Katherine Elliott	Assistant Lecturer
Joshua Fisher	Assistant Professor
Brian Hayes	Senior Lecturer (half-time, Assistant Dean)
Brooke Himes	Assistant Lecturer
Adam Kuban	Professor (Tenured)
YoungAh Lee	Associate Professor (Tenured)
Tong Li	Assistant Professor
Alex Lukens	Assistant Lecturer
Curtis Matthews	Assistant Professor
Megan McNames	Assistant Lecturer
Kevin Moloney	Assistant Professor
Jennifer Palilonis	Distinguished Professor (Tenured)
Grace Park	Assistant Professor
Natalee Seely	Associate Professor (Tenured)
Martin Smith-Rodden	Assistant Professor
Johnny Sparks	Professor and Director (Tenured)
Gabriel Tait	Associate Professor and Distinguished Faculty Fellow of Inclusive Excellence (Tenured)
Dan Waechter	Senior Lecturer (half-time, Assistant Dean)
Weiwu Zhang	Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Tenured)

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2022. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2022. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2023, also provide the spring 2023 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

**Part-time faculty (fall 2022)**

Rebecca Berfanger  
Ingrid “Jill” Cummings  
Elina Erzikova  
Tom Gayda  
Sena Lim  
Haley Ludwick  
Betsy Meyer  
Henry “Hank” Nuwer  
Lisa Renze-Rhodes  
Betsy Ross  
Casey Smith  
Cody Voga  
Robert Zinkan

**Part-time faculty (spring 2022)**

Rebecca Berfanger  
Ingrid “Jill” Cummings  
Domenic Centofanti  
Tom Gayda  
Melodie Griffin  
Brooke Himes  
Megan McNames  
Betsy Meyer  
Lisa Renze-Rhodes  
Betsy Ross

**Department of Media faculty members who teach News courses (fall and spring 2022)**

Terry Heifetz  
Jason Phillips  
Suzy Smith  
Tim Underhill

**19. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates from the unit.**

2021-22 academic year: 135  
2020-21 academic year: 159

## 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 long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, meaningful short-term measurements, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit. The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.**

Ball State University began teaching journalism classes in 1924 and formed the Department of Journalism in 1973, which became the School of Journalism and Strategic Communication (SJSC) in 2021. The unit has been part of the College of Communication, Information, and Media (CCIM) since the college was created in 1996. Other units are the Department of Communication Studies, the Department of Media and the Center for Information and Communication Sciences (graduate only).

The unit's mission statement is a succinct "Better Stories, Better Lives." It interprets this mission broadly over many of the ACEJMC competencies, including diversity. The school has a strategic plan that it ratified just before the 2016 visit. Since that time, it aligned the plan with the college and university's most recent strategic plans and fine-tuned the plan in 2022 just before the current site visit. The plan is comprehensive and straight-forward. Primary goals expressed in the plan are to counter the severe enrollment decline the school has faced since the last site visit through more expansive and better publicized recruitment, further diversify the student body and faculty, enhancing course access for non-majors, including promoting SJSC courses in the general education curriculum and deepening the level of community engagement through higher impact experiential learning. There was evidence that the school involved several faculty from different sub-disciplines in the major 2019 revision.

The strategic plan is displayed on the unit's website, but it is almost impossible to read without enlarging the type. The retention and graduation data are displayed and easy to read.

**(b) 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.**

Journalism and Strategic Communication has benefitted from having consistent leadership since the last review, where the team cited leadership turnover as a major weakness. The director came in 2016 after the site visit, the president in 2017, the provost and dean in 2018. Thus, the unit

has had stable leadership at all levels for the majority of this accreditation cycle. This stability alone has had a significant, positive effect on the school and its operations.

During this period, the College of Information, Communication and Media has also matured into a stronger, more cohesive unit under a dean who is entering her fifth year. The stability and energy of both the director and the dean have benefitted their units and the whole. The college is poised to become a high-profile recruitment hub that can benefit all of its units. It has already taken ownership of the school's J-Day activities, begun a collegewide career fair, consolidated several student media activities within the college and is envisioning at least one or two college core courses. The college's associate dean and two assistant deans have their academic home in Journalism and Strategic Communication.

Clearly a catalyst for innovation, the current SJSC director arrived in Muncie in 2016 with an aggressive, visionary agenda for curricular change, some of which was painful to long-term faculty and alumni. Thus, his first two years were a rocky trial by fire. The director had to make difficult decisions about faculty resources, faced two particularly challenging faculty evaluations, and a dramatic reorganization of student media and agencies, which resulted in the substantial reduction and absorption of Cardinal Communications into another agency to relieve a student media budget deficit.

By making the curriculum more flexible, affecting participation in the general education curriculum and establishing minors, the director's leadership has made the faculty more productive as enrollment has diminished. As the director entered his third year, the new curricular revision became more comfortable, and new faculty arrived and confidence in the director's leadership rose. The current site team found universal faculty support for the director's leadership and the direction he is taking the school (although some former faculty protested the direction the school had taken). Students related specific examples of how the director had listened to them and solved their problems.

Obviously sensitized by the unit being out of compliance on diversity for the past two accreditation cycles, the director made improving diversity his primary goal. Since he arrived, the school has adopted a required diversity and inclusion course and recruited a high-profile faculty member to teach the course and lead the school's diversity efforts. The director has also sought opportunities to invite more diverse speakers to campus and to push for a more inclusive culture in the school.

During the director's tenure, he has tried hard to recruit faculty who have strong research potential in addition to professional experience. While the school's tenure and promotion requirements have not changed, the school's maintenance of standards has increased, resulting in

terminations and voluntary departures of faculty making unsatisfactory progress toward promotion and tenure probationary years. On the positive side, scholarly productivity of newly hired faculty is high.

The director is a highly social collaborator who is respected within the college and university. He seeks out partnerships. The director's seniority is becoming an asset. He is sometimes sought to participate in the adjudication of sensitive personnel matters and academic conduct cases across the university. The director is working hard to enlarge alumni and professional participation with the school. While there is some alumni discontent with changes that have been made, the director has strong support from most alumni.

**(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website**

The school is current in its data on the ACEJMC website with graduation, retention and programmatic data.

**(d) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts them annually in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its websites.**

The unit displays its retention and graduation data in clear tables on its website under the "About Us" tab.

**On indicators (e), (f) and (g) the site team should make sure the unit operates within accepted academic norms and need only report in detail on extraordinary situations, cases or variances from policy.**

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

The unit has five active committees that meet regularly and have been productive. Three faculty members serve as either associate or assistant deans and several have had major committee responsibility at the university level. There is little question that the director has been a prime motivational force for the curricular change adopted over the past six years, but there is evidence that faculty participated in that process.

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

The college has a process for hiring and evaluating administrators that involves faculty input. A major change since the last review is that non-tenure-line faculty can now have an official voice in the process by voting on the prospective chair after the tenure-track faculty has voted. This enfranchisement issue was a point of contention during the last review. The term faculty resented not having a voice in the process, but were granted a vote in 2018.

Chairs and directors in the college are reviewed by the dean during their first five years and can be reappointed for three-year terms. The faculty have a stated role in the process.

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

The unit has a prescribed process for dealing with concerns and grievances. The process begins, and usually ends, with the director, but procedures are in place for referrals and escalations for issues that can't be resolved at the school level. The team found no evidence of noteworthy concerns that had arisen.

**SUMMARY:**

Coming off several years of leadership instability chronicled in the previous site team report, the school has enjoyed seven years of stable, visionary leadership during the current accreditation period. The chair has led efforts to make the curriculum more flexible for students, pushed for a course in the general education curriculum, established minors, made diversity a priority, increased the scholarly productivity of the unit and established himself as a campus leader. Paralleling the strength of SJSC's leadership has been an activist college dean who is carving a broader college role in recruiting, student outreach, alumni recognition and student media.

**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 f should describe and evaluate individual academic sequences in the unit.

**(a) Students in the unit complete academic requirements for a baccalaureate degree that meet the liberal arts and sciences/general education requirements of the institution. Programs may identify classes within the unit that contribute to a liberal arts and social sciences perspective for graduates from the unit.**

The unit offers Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in four majors: Journalism, Media Design and Development, Strategic Communication: Advertising, and Strategic Communication: Public Relations. The B.A. requires the completion of four semesters of a foreign language (students are allowed to test out of some of this requirement), in addition to the 36-credit hour University Core Curriculum. The B.S. degree removes the foreign language component and only requires the 36-credit hour University Core Curriculum. The UCC requires 6 hours in written communication from English, 3 hours of public speaking, 3-4 hours of mathematics, 3-6 hours of history, 2 hours of physical education, 3 hours of fine arts, 3-5 hours of humanities (for which JOUR 101 is an option), 3-5 hours of natural science, 2-3 hours of social science, one course from a set of electives in fine arts/design/humanities one course from a set of electives in physical/social science, one experience-driven course (satisfied by the required internship), and one writing course (satisfied by NEWS 105 Journalistic Storytelling: Introduction, and NEWS 221 Journalistic Storytelling: Covering Issues). Ultimately, the core curriculum can be satisfied by 12 courses outside the unit for the B.S. degree and 15 courses in the B.A. degree.

The unit identifies five courses in its curriculum that also serve a broader liberal arts education: JOUR 101: Media and Society, JOUR 302: Diversity and Media, and NEWS 449: Legal and Ethical Issues, which are required of all majors, and JOUR 382: Strategic Communication Theory and JOUR 485: Strategic Communication Processes, which are required of strategic communication majors.

**(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 values and competencies listed by the Council.**

The SJSC blends theoretical and conceptual knowledge within courses and addresses professional skills in practical courses and experiences throughout its curriculum to address all 10 ACEJMC professional values and competencies.



The self-study references a conversation where the director of the school called the curriculum a soda fountain, akin to the Coca-Cola Freestyle machine, where users can customize sodas with different flavors. The metaphorical expression is manifest in a school with four majors and 30 concentrations, as well as four new minors open to the entire campus. A journalism education major is in the unit but sits outside the accreditation footprint. However, this flexibility doesn't present as confusion to students, as the concentrations are often small on requirements and often optional. Students are able to customize programs of study with a quick adjustment, and academic advisers are responsive in answering questions. Though the size of options might seem overwhelming, Diet Cherry Coke with a boost of lime flavor isn't all that complicated of a choice to make for students who want a degree as unique as they are.

The four minors, Digital Media, Journalistic Storytelling, Sports Studies, and Strategic Communication, attract students from across campus. At the last visit, all courses in the unit were limited to its majors and students from Telecommunication (now Media). Now, the SJSC is integrating itself with the rest of the university.

The Department of Media, which sits outside accreditation but is also in the college, has programs that intersect and cohabitate with programs in the SJSC, some to the extent that the site team and some faculty wondered if a merger of units was forecast, or at least, the inclusion of Media in the accreditation space.

As the SJSC has grown its research faculty, coursework has grown in its theoretical approach. A mandatory course in diversity was added, as well as courses addressing data analytics. The refocused faculty has shifted some of the strong professional training synonymous with Ball State's brand to be a bit more well rounded in the Why, opposed to being mostly focused on the How, as the program was at the time of the last visit. This shift has frustrated some alumni, but the current faculty and administration see the change as necessary to respond to student needs. The shift does not mean that Ball State has lost its "Ball State Way." Students there learn by doing — to strong outcomes. Just now, along the way, they are becoming a bit more knowledgeable about the theoretical side of journalism and strategic communication and their role in society.

### **Looking specifically at the majors:**

#### **Journalism**

The Journalism major requires 46-49 credit hours of courses and includes a core of 19 hours of professional development, intro to media design, media and society, diversity and media, internship, journalistic storytelling: introduction, and legal and ethical issues. Then, students must select one of four concentrations: magazine media (27 credits), mass communication (30 credits), news writing and reporting (29 credits) or photographic storytelling (27 credits). These

four concentrations are listed in Part 1 as the primary concentrations in the major. Then, depending on their primary concentration, students can add optional, 12-credit concentrations in cultural and entertainment reporting, entrepreneurship, media analytics, nonprofit storytelling, public media or student media. These options act as minors or amplifiers, often blending classes from other parts of the SJSC or CCIM, fine arts, or business.

### **Media Design and Development**

The Media Design and Development major requires 46 credit hours of courses and includes a core of 34 hours of professional development, intro to media design, web design, intro to photographic storytelling, information design 1, data analysis and visualization, media and society, diversity and media, internship, journalistic storytelling: introduction, news editing, and legal and ethical issues. Then, students must select one of three 12-credit concentrations: information design and prototyping, interaction design and development, and media development and analytics, with the last leaning on three courses from strategic communication.

### **Strategic Communication: Advertising**

The Strategic Communication: Advertising major requires 49 credit hours of courses: professional development, intro to media design, media and society, intro to advertising, principles of public relations, diversity and media, media planning 1, advertising copy & layout 1, branding for advertising, internship, strategic communication theory and research, advertising topics, advertising campaigns, strategic communication processes, journalistic storytelling: introduction, legal and ethical issues, and an elective from the SJSC. Students can double major in public relations with a 15-hour group of public relations specific courses. Students have the option of selecting from eight optional concentrations that blend courses inside and outside the unit as well as concentrations entirely outside the unit, and can take multiple optional concentrations so long as they take 9 unique hours to that concentration. Optional concentrations are advertising sales (15 hours, outside the unit), communication studies (12 hours, outside the unit), emerging media (12 hours, inside the unit), event planning and management (12 hours, outside the unit), journalistic narrative writing (inside the unit), media analytics (9 hours, inside the unit), media presentation and design (15 hours, inside the unit), photographic storytelling (12 hours, inside the unit), and sports public relations (12 hours, inside and outside the unit). Noteworthy is the fact that the campaigns course is shared with public relations.

### **Strategic Communication: Public Relations**

The Strategic Communication: Public Relations major requires 49 credit hours of courses: professional development, intro to media design, media and society, intro to advertising, principles of public relations, diversity and media, social media management and practice, internship, strategic communication theory and research, public relations advanced writing, public relations topics, public relations case studies, public relations campaigns, strategic communication processes, journalistic storytelling: introduction, legal and ethical issues, and an elective from the SJSC. Students can double major in advertising with a 15-hour group of

advertising specific courses. Students have the option of selecting from eight optional concentrations that blend courses inside and outside the unit as well as concentrations entirely outside the unit, and can take multiple optional concentrations so long as they take 9 unique hours to that concentration. Optional concentrations are communication studies (12 hours, outside the unit), emerging media (12 hours, inside the unit), event planning and management (12 hours, outside the unit), journalistic narrative writing (inside the unit), media analytics (9 hours, inside the unit), media presentation and design (15 hours, inside the unit), photographic storytelling (12 hours, inside the unit), and sports public relations (12 hours, inside and outside the unit). Noteworthy is the fact that the campaigns course is shared with advertising.

In sum, the curriculum is robust and tailored to student needs.

**(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, synchronous or asynchronous, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital and technological media competencies.**

Teaching is robust and current across the school. Students overall were positive about their courses, and the site team found no issues in the classes observed. Some senior-level students in the Media Design and Development major noted that they would like to see more challenging coursework that pushes their limits at the senior level of the program, but said overall they were pleased with the major. For courses with multiple sections, instructors either used common syllabi (if part-time faculty were some of the instructors) or had meetings to align content. Ultimately, the curriculum map shows that students, regardless of major, will build knowledge and skills in all 10 ACEJMC professional values and competencies.

**Journalism:** The curriculum in journalism focuses primarily on news for print and online platforms. The broadcast journalism curriculum operates outside the accredited unit in the Department of Media; however, those students take many classes alongside SJSC students, and some Media professors teach classes for journalism students in the SJSC. Ultimately, this two-paths approach to journalism education is broken down by the end-goal of working for a specific type of media platform: students who want to be broadcast media go through the Media program, students who want to write go through the SJSC. Before the recent curriculum revision, journalism majors were required to also major in Media; now that requirement has been removed, giving students greater flexibility. Many students interested in broadcasting still complete the double major in journalism and media. Students have an extreme level of flexibility with 10 official, optional, concentrations listed as part of the journalism major.

**Media Design and Development:** The curriculum in MDD includes key skills in data visualization, coding, usability and branding. The MDD major is newly converted to a major from a previous concentration in journalism graphics. This upgrade was sorely needed as the name journalism graphics did not accurately reflect the robust, broad scope of the program.

Students in MDD spend as much time learning skills for strategic communication as they do for journalism. The three concentrations in MDD also allow for flexibility in the program, though two concentrations are identical except for one course. MDD students are required to select one concentration.

**Strategic Communication: Advertising:** The major was renamed from Advertising to reflect a new push toward the strategic communication approach. The program builds knowledge and skills in advertising and public relations broadly, with a deeper dive in advertising media planning, branding, copywriting, and layout. The push toward strategic communication has driven innovation in the ad curriculum. The major includes nine optional concentrations, some of which exist totally outside the unit, such as advertising sales, communication studies, and event planning and management.

**Strategic Communication: Public Relations:** Like its advertising counterpart, the major was renamed from Public Relations to reflect a new push toward the strategic communication approach. With the new strategic communication focus, the SJSC is evaluating its PRSA Certification in Education for Public Relations, which lapses next year. Regardless, the courses in the major reflect the breadth of public relations and includes depth in writing and social media. Like advertising, the major includes eight optional concentrations, some of which exist totally outside the unit, such as communication studies, and event planning and management.

**(d) The unit demonstrates efforts 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 faculty and administrators engage with the professions in a variety of ways, from informal interactions with guest speakers to serving on the boards of major professional media organizations, such as the Society for News Design. The program maintains close ties with the professional community in nearby Indianapolis, with several alumni working at agencies there, as well as *The Indianapolis Star*. The school also runs an Editor-Educator exchange, where SJSC faculty and media editors shadow each other on their jobs to offer critique and gain perspectives. A robust alumni board also advises the school on curricular changes.

**(e) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses. Except for campaigns courses, the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.**

Class sizes in the program are generally small, allowing for effective interaction between faculty and students. However, during calendar 2022, enrollment in eight skills classes exceeded the 20-1 rule, with one course having 25 students. Seven of these courses were in Spring 2022 and one in Fall 2022.

**(f) 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. Units 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 hours).**

**When students take courses for internship credit at appropriate professional organizations, the unit must show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.**

**Students may take up to nine semester credits (or their equivalent) at professional media outlets 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.**

In all four majors, students are required to complete one internship for credit. Internships are supervised by the site supervisor and a faculty internship supervisor in the SJSC. Students are expected to find their own internship and are required to complete a 1-0hour professional development workshop course to help them prepare for internships. The SJSC internship coordinator operates a resource page, CCIM Career Resources, through Canvas, the learning management system at Ball State, with information about internships. The page is open to all students in the college, and the coordinator expects internship management to soon be centralized at the college level. The internship coordinator and the site supervisors have a rigorous evaluation tool; the SJSC internship coordinator issues a pass-fail grade.

Practicum credit is available through student media, as discussed below. Practicum credit is available for elective credit only and cannot be used to satisfy the internship requirement.

**Journalism:** Students can work in the Unified Media Lab (UML) at the Ball State Daily News (newspaper/website), Ball Bearings (magazine), and Byte (digital magazine). Through the Department of Media, which sits outside accreditation, students can also get involved in television media, including NewsLink Indiana, which also operates in the Unified Media Lab. However, the SportsLink program is major-restricted to students in the Department of Media.

**Media Design and Development:** Because of the range of creative media output being produced by students, MDD students can work in any student media doing creative work for credit.

**Strategic Communication: Advertising:** Students can work for McKinley Avenue Agency, a campus agency that serves internal and external clients. The agency serves as the sales department for student media, providing about half the operations budget for the media in the UML. Students working there sell and create print and digital ads for the student media, as well as coupon books, event marketing, and other advertising needs for its clients. During the previous site visit, Cardinal Communications was a bustling hub for nonprofit PR campaign

work, but that has given way to a more advertising sales and creative execution operation in McKinley Avenue.

**Strategic Communication: Public Relations:** Students can work for McKinley Avenue Agency, a campus agency that serves internal and external clients. MAA's division of Cardinal Communications completes pro bono work for Muncie-area clients. Cardinal was a much larger operation at the last site visit, but was reduced because of budget constraints and the need to focus efforts to support the student news media. Clients tend to focus on single projects rather than ongoing campaigns.

The unit requires students to take 3 hours of internship credit, which counts toward the major. However, students are allowed to take up to 12 hours of internship credit that counts toward their total degree. In addition, students are eligible to take up to 12 credits of media practicum credit. ACEJMC policy limits internship credit to 6 hours and practicum credit to 9 hours.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The school has a robust curriculum that is responsive to today's industry and student needs. The journalism major, particularly, is built around a superior student media operation. Curricular innovation in Media Design and Development and Strategic Communication has those programs poised to innovate for the next generation of students. The addition of minors and the inclusion of courses in the Ball State University Core Curriculum opens the unit to students from other parts of the college and university — access that previously was not granted. However, eight classes in calendar 2022 exceeded the 20-1 skill-class ratio, and the curriculum allows students to complete internship and practicum credit beyond the limits set by ACEJMC. In addition, the goal of curricular balance with a nod toward liberal arts and social science is threatened when, with the bachelor of science degree, students could have as few as 12 courses outside the unit.

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

## PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a written assessment plan that has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media world.**

The unit has a two-page written assessment plan, approved in September 2021 and expected to run through 2023. The plan simply states 10 student learning outcomes, which align with ACEJMC's professional values and competencies. The plan also simply lists which direct and indirect measures of student learning outcomes will be assessed.

Nothing in the assessment plan lists the goals of the unit; a curriculum map; a timeline and only a general statement of how the information will be used in the future. Much of this information does appear elsewhere, including in the self-study appendices, it does not appear in the unit's assessment plan.

As a result, the plan offers no indication about how the unit expects to implement and address contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media landscape.

The unit's assessment plan is prominently posted on its website alongside its graduation and retention data, but because the plan, as written, is so bare bones, it does little to educate those who view it.

**(b) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the professional Values and Competencies” of the Council. (See Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.)**

The unit's assessment program focuses on measuring student learning outcomes which parallel ACEJMC's 10 professional values and competencies. Students can achieve all 10 professional values and competencies through required courses but it is unclear how well that is being assessed.

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

The assessment plan has four direct measures including external capstone evaluations; exit exams and internship evaluations. The assessment plan also has four indirect measures including senior surveys, portfolios, external awards and alumni surveys.

**(d) At least one direct and/or indirect measure should include journalism and mass communication professionals engaged in assessment data collection.**

One direct measure, External Capstone Evaluation, includes journalism and mass communication professionals. The unit's graduating students must create capstone course projects, which are evaluated by working professionals, some of whom are alumni, separate and above the grades they receive in the class beyond faculty evaluation and grades.

Each major/concentration in the unit has different evaluation criteria for its capstone work but are connected to ACEJMC's professional values and competencies. For example, news and magazine students are evaluated on stories written in advanced writing classes while public relations and strategic communications projects stem from group work in campaigns classes.

However, these outside evaluations, performed on a random sampling of capstone projects, use a simple 5-point Likert scale with 1 as excellent and 5 as poor to analyze how well each student's project aligns with professional values and competencies. The result is that there is almost no qualitative analysis of what specifically is good and bad about the portfolios, making it nearly impossible to close the loop or adjust the curriculum based on these evaluations.

**(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction. There is substantial, concrete evidence of "closing the loop," generally and specifically. Multiple examples of "closing the loop" are evident.**

The unit collects and reports a great deal of data, much of it high quality, longitudinal and useful, from its various assessment activities, but there is a mixed response as to whether these activities have been used directly to improve curriculum and instruction.

For example, the unit's former director of assessment, who retired in May as part of a university-wide buyout program, is convinced that the unit closed the loop through curriculum updates based on assessment results including the capstone evaluations and senior exit exams as well as exit interviews and portfolio reviews by journalism coordinators and alumni and internship surveys.

But as mentioned above, the capstone evaluations are closed ended and the senior exit exams are only beginning to be required this year. Although there have been significant curriculum changes, it is unclear how they were directly tied to assessment. In addition, the portfolio reviews by faculty also only used a Likert scale without qualitative comments and exit interviews with students focused almost entirely on whether students obtained jobs. There is no indication that



the faculty found value in either the portfolio reviews or the capstone evaluations. In fact, many faculty members were unaware of them.

Furthermore, the self-study itself said that the unit's failure to implement an assessment reporting software solutions meant that unit administrators "found it challenging to provide robust evidence of the direct connection between assessment and action." It goes on to say that the unit "was challenged to link specific assessment results with specific curricular changes."

Both the unit director and the dean acknowledged that they currently don't have the tools and systems in place to be able to demonstrate closing the loop. They also said it was a high priority to address that issue in the near future.

### **SUMMARY:**

The unit understands the importance of assessment and conducts a number of direct and indirect measures to evaluate student learning outcomes. However, its Assessment Plan as posted fails to go beyond a brief recitation of values and competencies and the measurements it uses to assess them, nor does the annual assessment report contain enough specific findings to inform curricula revisions. Furthermore, there is no indication of how the unit uses these assessment measures to close the loop by revising its curriculum. The unit says that such evidence was organized and maintained by the recently retired longtime assessment coordinator and to reduce the unit's dependence on one individual, it would like to obtain an assessment reporting software solution to promote greater accessibility going forward.

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

## PART II — Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a written diversity plan that has been implemented and discussed annually, for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse, culturally proficient faculty, staff 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, identify under-represented groups and articulate key performance indicators upon which the unit intends to focus and improve.**

**The unit posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.**

The School of Journalism and Strategic Communication has a “Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Policy” that was initially adopted in 2009 and revised four times since with the most recent update on May 26, 2022. The policy is posted on the school’s website in a prominent place under “About Us.”

The policy is part of the school’s strategic plan, which was updated in 2020 to align with the college’s Inclusive Excellence Action Plan and the university’s Inclusive Excellence Plan. In addition, under its new leadership in 2016, the school drafted a diversity-focused version of its mission statement, aimed at “more diverse journalists and strategic communicators telling more representative, equitable and inclusive stories that promote more lives better lived.”

The school’s DEI policy defines diversity broadly as “all the differences that exist within people, with the recognition that some elements of diversity are linked to the disenfranchisement of people.” It further defines “domestic minorities” as “citizens of the unit’s nation who are from a racial or ethnic group whose population is not the majority in the nation or who have less economic or political power than the majority.”

Aligning with the key performance indicators specified in ACEJMC’s Standard 4, five main goals are established in the school’s DEI policy: 1) To attract, retain and recruit diverse faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and student employees in the school. 2) The unit’s curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit’s curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society. 3) Recruit, retain, and graduate students from underrepresented populations. 4) To increase the exposure to issues related to diversity among all students and faculty in the school. 5) To annually review the school’s progress toward the above-mentioned goals.

Specific strategies are identified in the policy, and multiple measures are included in the school's Strategic Plan that is evaluated and reported annually to the associate provost. Faculty members are required to report activities toward DEI objectives, and the school's DEI committee meets regularly to assess the progress. The assessment is multi-faceted, including student media audits, climate surveys, curricular assessment of student learning, diversity audits of course curricula, and professional development opportunities.

During the 2016-22 review period, the school hired and tenured Gabriel Tait, an African American scholar and diversity expert, to lead the DEI efforts at the unit level, who also serves as distinguished fellow for the University's Office of Inclusive Excellence. The school's DEI Committee has been active, leading DEI training and assessing the unit's implementation and progress toward DEI objectives.

**(b) The unit's curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit's curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

The self-study report notes two different approaches to fulfill the school's commitment to DEI. The first approach is to create dedicated courses to address DEI issues. At the beginning of this review period, the school established JOUR 302: Diversity and Media as a required course for all majors. All majors are also required to complete an immersive learning or high-impact-practice course to meet the university's imperative to complete two cross-cultural, intercultural, and/or diversity engagements in learning. At the school level, several specific topics and study abroad courses have been offered that focus on knowledge and skill sets that prepare students for the diverse cultures in a global society. These include an immersive learning course titled "Match Point," JOUR 495-7: Rio Olympics PR Immersion, NEWS 397-1: Brazilian & Olympics Culture, and JOUR 495-5: Seoul 2018 Olympics Immersion, among others. In addition, JOUR 495: Discussing Race & Empowerment in Society was offered to address race issues in America in the aftermath of the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement.

The second approach is to embed instruction about DEI perspectives and issues across curricula. The school's curricula were mapped for each major to identify the key assessments and practices in line with ACEJMC's Professional Values and Competencies on issues of DEI. Mandatory statements, including links to the school's diversity statement, the university's statements on the importance of diversity and inclusion, and ACEJMC's statements related to diversity and inclusion, are included in all syllabi. During the faculty and student interviews, it was clear that diversity issues are regularly addressed and discussed through readings, lectures, class discussions, case selections, and assignments. In addition, the school has brought speakers of various backgrounds to bring diversity awareness to the school. Based on the self-report, during

the review period, the school hosted 128 guest speakers, with 42% being “members of an underrepresented group” and 30% of presentations focusing on diversity-related issues. These efforts demonstrate the school’s commitment to providing a diversity-infused curriculum for students.

**(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to enhance all faculty members’ understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and ability to develop culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit also demonstrates intentional efforts to recruit and retain faculty and professional staff who are from demographics that are historically, domestically marginalized.**

Since the last site team review, the school has made excellent improvements on hiring and retaining minority faculty. In 2014-15, there was one Asian, and no African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians/Alaskan natives on the faculty. In 2021-22, based on the self-study report, the full-time faculty is 78.3% White, 13.0% Asian, 4.3% Black/African-American, and 4.3% Hispanic/Latino. In fall, 2022, with additional hires, non-white faculty represent 38% of tenured and 54% of all tenure-line faculty. In addition, one openly transgender man was hired in 2021 as an assistant lecturer, who “advocates for digital storytelling as a way to promote inclusion of all genders.”

The improvement is a result of intentional efforts by the school’s leadership and faculty to attract, recruit and retain diverse faculty. Search committee members go through mandatory training offered through the university, and search committee chairs are required to complete a checklist for inclusive searches. Positions are widely advertised in diversity-related publications and websites. In addition, all candidates are required to submit an inclusive excellence and diversity statement, which is used by search committees to identify candidates who “align with and potential for expansion of the unit’s DEI vision and perspective.” The school also provides funding through the Michael P. Smith Faculty and Student Development and the Marilyn Weaver Faculty Fellowships to support retention and progress of women and minority faculty.

There has been effort made to enhance faculty members’ commitment and understanding of DEI objectives. The school’s DEI committee led training to guide the faculty to complete a plan related to DEI. A diversity audit was implemented for faculty members to review and reflect on DEI-related materials in their instruction.

**(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit, retain and graduate a student population reflecting the diversity of the population the institution aims to serve.**

Based on the self-study report, of the undergraduate student population, 71.6% is female. On race and ethnicity, 78.4% White, 9.7% Black/African-American, 5.4% Hispanic/Latino. This shows an increase in the percentage of Hispanic majors from the last review period. The

percentage of Black/African American majors has declined slightly from 10.1%, but remains close to the institutional enrollment of 8.76%. Notedly, the geographic service area is 13.73% Black/African American.

Through the years under this review period, there has been considerable efforts at the school level to recruit students of underrepresented groups through its high school outreach programs, especially reaching out to middle school and high school students from dominantly Black/African American school populations. Since 2016, the school has also raised funds to support DEI-focused scholarships for incoming students, such as Bona Cress Press and Lawrence Press Scholarship, Holmes-McFadden Journalism Scholarship. The school's average retention rate for the Black/African American student cohorts was 80% for 2016-20, higher than the university's retention rate of 71%.

**(e) The unit demonstrates that it has an inclusive climate, 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.**

During the site team visit, the team observed a climate free of harassment and discrimination. Student interviewees expressed a feeling of belonging and welcome in the school. The physical design features and aesthetic decoration of the facilities, including the Unified Media Lab, the McKinley Avenue Agency, the offices, classrooms and other spaces, align with and reinforce the school's inclusive culture. The school's DEI Committee organized a town hall climate roundtable, discussing topics on LGBTQ issues, religion, mental health, and politics.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The school's leadership and faculty are highly invested in creating an inclusive community and promoting DEI goals through their teaching, research, and service. Students understand and value diversity. The school's goal of hiring a diverse faculty has not been fully realized, but SJSC is in a far stronger position than seven years ago. With the university and college's support, the unit is expected to continue to achieve and enhance its DEI goals.

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

**Table 6: Faculty Population, Full-Time and Part-time**

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty. (Report international faculty the same way the university reports them.) (data collected from self-report).

**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>
<b>Black/African-American</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.34</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34.78</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.47</b>
<b>American Indian/Alaskan native</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.34</b>
<b>Hispanic/Latino (any race)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.34</b>
<b>Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Two or more races</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other race</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>International (any race)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**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>
<b>Black/African-American</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35.29</b>
<b>American Indian/Alaskan native</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Hispanic/Latino (any race)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Two or more races</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other race</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>International (any race)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity and service.**

The school has a clearly defined workload policy and process, which aligns with that of the college and the university. Full-time faculty members are expected to teach a 4/4 teaching load with a total of 24 credit hours for the academic year. Tenure and tenure-track faculty are expected to support the school's mission through instruction, scholarship, and service, and those who demonstrate current and ongoing scholarly and/or creative productivity are assigned three credit hours for research each semester. Faculty members with administrative duties also receive credit hours of load reassignment. Main responsibilities are teaching and service for non-tenure line faculty.

Full-time faculty are actively involved with curriculum review and revision and oversee course design. In 2021-2022, the school has 23 full-time faculty and 17 part-time/adjunct faculty, and the percentage of core and required courses taught by full-time faculty is as high as 86%.

The faculty is much smaller in 2022-2023 because of the significant reduction of non-tenure line faculty. Among the 19 faculty, 13 are tenure-line and 6 non-tenure line. This change has shifted the faculty from a professional to a scholarly orientation, which leads to considerably improved research productivity.

**(b) The unit's faculty (full- and part-time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.**

A review of the faculty CVs shows a varied combination of professional and academic backgrounds of the faculty. Among the 19 faculty, 13 have Ph.D. degrees. Professional experience, however, is still an important factor in faculty hiring practice. During interviews, students reported their appreciation of the professional experience that their instructors brought to the classroom.

The self-study report documents a range of professional development opportunities provided by the university and undertaken by faculty members, such as New Faculty Academy and various workshops and programs provided by the university's Office of Online and Strategic Learning. The school provided funding for faculty to complete the Project Management Professional Exam Prep course, to support the school's strategic instructional goals. Formal mentorship programs, however, are lacking at the school level.

**(c) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear.**

Expectations and criteria for promotion, tenure and reappointment are clearly described in the school's faculty documents for both tenure-line faculty and non-tenure line faculty. The school also has a salary policy that establishes the process for merit review.

The school evaluates tenure-track faculty biannually during the fall P&T and the spring salary merit review. Tenured and non-tenure-line faculty are evaluated annually during the spring salary merit review. Student course evaluations, as well as peer-teaching evaluations, are required as evidence of teaching performance during annual reviews and P&T reviews. Full-time faculty may choose a single-course session peer review, or use a peer teaching portfolio review, which represents a more holistic approach to teaching evaluation.

The school allocates up to \$1,000 for tenure-track and \$750 for tenured faculty each year to support conference travel and professional development. This is a reduction from \$1,500. In addition, two foundation funds are available for faculty professional development. Sixteen faculty members have also received funding for their research through research incentive accounts, supported by the university, college and school. In addition, two faculty members during the review period have received the university's special assigned leave with pay to conduct research.

**(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.**

During the review period, full-time faculty members have received 65 awards, and a total of 78 internal and external grants. Three sole or co-authored scholarly books, one textbook, and five edited books have been published. In addition, faculty have published 107 articles in refereed journals, which represents a significant increase compared with that of the last review period (39 articles). In addition, faculty have published 110 articles in non-refereed publications and presented 174 refereed conference papers. A total of 71 creative works are reported for this review period, also a considerable improvement from 11 works during the last review.

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

Leadership and faculty representatives at the campus level as well as alumni reported that the school has an excellent reputation for offering high quality instruction with ample opportunities for hands-on, immersive experiences. Faculty members participate in a wide range of university initiatives, some of which are highly visible and well respected on campus.



**SUMMARY:**

The school’s full-time faculty are highly engaged in teaching, research and service. The faculty, as a whole, has strong academic qualifications and a range of professional experiences. The school has clear policies and procedures to recruit faculty and evaluate faculty for tenure, promotion and reappointment. It is lacking a structured, defined process for mentoring faculty. The school’s culture is collegial. Students appreciate the quality of faculty instruction and advising. The school’s strong reputation is evident across campus.

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

**Scholarship Table (provided by unit):**

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (45)
		Full Professors (4)	Associate Professors (9)	Assistant Professors (13)	Other Faculty** (19)	
Awards/ Honors	65	23	15	6	21	65
Grants Received Internal	45	17	14	12	6	49
Grants Received External	29	6	6	10	7	29
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	2	0	1	2	0	3
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	1	1	0	0	0	1
Books Edited	4	1	2	1	1	5
Book Chapters	17	5	12	8	4	29
Monographs	1	0	1	0	0	1
Articles in Refereed Journals	105	23	46	26	2	107
Refereed Conference Papers	144	61	78	29	6	174
Invited Academic Papers	10	0	0	6	2	8
Encyclopedia Entries	0	0	0	0	0	0
Book Reviews	7	0	7	0	0	7
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	67	4	4	2	100	110
Juried Creative Works	11	25	0	1	0	26
Non-juried Creative Works	31	0	0	0	45	45
Other (please specify)	54	3	15	23	16	57

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

#### **(a) The unit and institution ensure that students are aware of graduation requirements.**

BSU is in the process of creating a new student success management system designed to improve student recruitment, retention and graduation. The process began with a Student Success and Retention Task Force in the spring 2021. Last spring, the university launched, on a trial basis, EAB Navigate Faculty Support. This new system initially was only used by advisers. This fall, Navigate was fully implemented for faculty to use as well. The system is designed to provide early alerts and progress reports for all students and to intervene with at-risk students.

In addition, the unit maintains a two-tiered advising approach. Freshmen (those with less than 30 hours of credit) are advised through a centralized advising center made up of 15 professional advisers who meet with each student at least three times during their freshman year. During these initial meetings, the advisers assist their students to develop a curriculum plan, choose their major and minor and discuss degree completion strategies. The advisers also provide each student with a program map.

Once a student reaches sophomore status, they are assigned an upper division professional adviser who resides in the school's administrative office suite. These advisers are specific to SJSC so have a working knowledge about faculty, procedures and curriculum. Each of these advisers have a caseload of approximately 300 students. These advisers frequently update four-year degree plans for their advisees and closely monitor those students who are at risk of academic probation (those students who fall below a 2.3 GPA are enrolled in a credit/no credit student success course).

Students were unanimous that the advising system meets their needs and they are kept abreast of graduation requirements and can graduate on time.

#### **(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.**

The two-tiered professional advising system assures that students are provided with academic advice. Faculty, though not formally responsible for academic advising, often connect with the professional advisers to stay up to date on policies and procedures.

In terms of career advice, all students are required to take a five-week professional development course between their second and third years. Because all first-year students live on campus, the College of Communication Information and Media has its own learning community in a

residence hall. As a result, a number of media-related activities, from professional mentoring to guest speakers and workshops, are given at the students' residence hall. Other activities include field trips to journalism, media and communications companies in Indianapolis and Ft. Wayne.

While Ball State's career center provides career advice, its most used tool is the Cardinal Career Link, which provides students' access to job listings and internships.

Students say faculty often reach out to them to talk about not just their courses but career opportunities, internships and life in general. As one student said about their professors: "they still check in on me even though I had them three years ago."

**(c) The unit keeps students informed about its policies, activities and requirements.**

As noted above, the unit's academic advisers meet regularly — several times per semester — with students to keep them updated of any changes in policies and requirements. Students say faculty also reach out to them unprompted and frequently to find out how they are doing and make sure that they are aware of requirements.

**(d) The unit and institution provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities relevant to the curriculum and that help develop the students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.**

From their freshman years, students in SJSC are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities including student-led organizations, media outlets and agencies. There are seven platforms that the unit, in conjunction with the Department of Media, offers its students: Ball State Daily News; Ball Bearings Magazine; Byte; NewsLink Indiana; WRCD; Cardinal Metrics and McKinley Avenue Agency. Some of these outlets are now under the umbrella of the college. There was some criticism of the unit for contracting the student-run PR agency and reducing the print circulation of the school newspaper to once a week.

Beyond extracurricular activities, students in the unit are encouraged to take credit-based immersive learning opportunities that involve student-led interdisciplinary teams to solve real-world problems for various entities including companies, nonprofits and news outlets. These courses are elective-based with faculty mentors. Students say their experiences with student and professional media are a highlight of their Ball State experience. As one student said of the faculty: "They really want you to get involved and really want you to succeed."

**(e) The unit uses retention and graduation data to improve student services, such as advising, and to reduce barriers to student success.**

The university annually provides official university data about enrollment, graduation and retention rates to the unit and posts that information on the unit's accountability page. The unit also uses Tableau to regularly track and report enrollment trends to faculty and administration in support of decisions to make the curriculum more efficient.

In the most recent data, the unit posted declining retention and graduation rates since 2017 but those figures have been much better than for the university as a whole. For example, the unit's four-year graduation rate was, on average, 10% greater than that of the entire university.

**SUMMARY:**

Student services and advising have long been a strength of the unit and continues to be despite the shift from a department to a school. The professional advisers are lauded for their accessibility and quick responses to problems and faculty advisers are applauded for their student-centric involvement in all aspects of their students' lives.

**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 School of Journalism and Strategic Communication's salary budget has decreased 40 percent during the past four years from \$1,919,029.21 to \$1,158,237.90 in FY 22-23. The line for administrative salaries has also declined. The decrease corresponds to a steep 45 percent decrease in majors and the university's introduction of an incentive-based budget model in FY 2021. The overall school budget decreased 14 percent from FY 20 to FY 22.

By opening most of its classes to non-majors, the unit was able to stem what would have been an even larger budget reduction. The university's budgeting formula allocates 75 percent of tuition revenue to the unit that teaches a class and the remaining 25 percent to the student's major home. While the number of majors decreased by 27 percent from AY 2017 to AY 2021, the number of credit hours dropped only two percent during that period. A major goal for the school is to increase the number of non-majors taking its classes. As the number of full-time faculty decreased from 28 to 21, the average student credit hour equivalency was +47.3 compared to -8.4 for the college.

The budget cuts have also affected faculty enrichment. For example, the annual travel allocation has been cut in half from \$1,500 to \$750, although other funds are available for limited additional support. The unit collected \$137,047 in FY 2019 fundraising activities, the latest year contained in the self-study.

The unit benefits from two fees. The school collects a \$175 program/course fee per student each semester and a technology fee that is allocated to the college and distributed to the units. The consistent technology support through the fee has enabled the unit to maintain and upgrade its technology on a regular schedule. The dean has prided herself on developing a 10-year rolling technology plan to predict and satisfy needs within the college, but notes that this kind of planning works only when the units submit plans that account for potential emergencies and new curricular directions.

**(b) Resources provided by the institution are adequate to achieve the unit's mission and are fair in relation to those provided to other units.**

The school believes the university's new incentive-based budgeting model is a fair and equitable system where it can thrive eventually. It is less confident that the college's allocations to individual departments have been equitable. The SJSC has been more proactive than its sister

units in reducing its faculty lines and expenditures to match the university's formula. Thus, an inefficiency in budget allocation at the college level has emerged.

**(c) The unit's facilities and information resources enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.**

Journalism and Strategic Communication is housed in the Art and Journalism Building (AJ), built in 2001 and offering 57,000 square feet of excellent office, classroom and laboratory space. The building is part of a sprawling communication complex that also includes the David Letterman Communication and Media Building and the Ball Communication Building. In the aggregate, this facility is one of the most impressive physical plants in communication education.

Most student media operations including The Ball State Daily News, Ball Bearings, Byte, NewsLink Indiana are located in the impressive Unified Media Lab that is shared by all three college departments and features 8,000 square feet of work space including 56 computers and a video studio. The Holden Strategic Communication Center is located in the AJ building and houses the McKinley Avenue Agency and its PR affiliate, Cardinal Communications. In addition to academic units, the Art and Journalism building houses an atrium food court, the campus bookstore and an art gallery.

There are three general purpose classrooms and an auditorium in the AJ building that are scheduled centrally and four classrooms and four computer labs scheduled by the unit. The laboratories are well-equipped and are on a three or five-year replacement schedule that allows older computers to be cycled to the least advanced labs. As part of its planning, the unit wants to go from four to three labs and use even higher end equipment in the top lab. Part of the reasoning behind this move is that most students have their own laptops and have free access to the Adobe Creative Cloud through a university site license. The "best" lab is stocked with technology focused augmented, virtual and extended reality. The school has a spacious faculty research laboratory where psychophysiological research is done.

**(d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment, or access to equipment, and technical assistance needed to support student learning, curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty**

Ball State has long prided itself on providing students with the latest technology and hands-on experience. A university-wide technology fee and a 10-year technology plan facilitates this. There can also be supplemental support from the provost for special projects. The school believes that it has exactly the technology it needs to provide a quality learning experience.

Technology is maintained by University Media Services, which operates equipment check-out for the three college units. Students say that the abundant technology and student media opportunities were a major reason they chose Ball State.

**SUMMARY:**

Budget cutbacks have hit the School of Journalism and Strategic Communication hard during this accreditation cycle, reflecting a 45 percent drop in majors and the implementation of a responsibility-centered budget system. The SJSC has mitigated the losses by opening its classes to non-majors and driving a high number of credit hours generated per faculty. Still, the full-time faculty has shrunk significantly since the last review.

As has been the case for many years, the college and school offer exceptional facilities and student media opportunities. Students have the technology they need to excel and plenty hands-on experience. The amalgamation of several student media outlets in the Unified Media Lab enhances the unit and college's advantageous position.

**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 actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The SJSC has a robust, active engagement with its alumni, as well as other professionals and professional associations. The SJSC Alumni Society meets three times a year and provides counsel to the school director and a faculty liaison. The director shares strategic initiatives, including outreach and curriculum, with the society board and seeks its input for these changes. Further, the Society plans the SJSC's annual alumni awards.

The SJSC primarily uses social media to engage its alumni, posting news across LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, with strong followings. SJSC students and faculty are also regularly featured in the university's alumni magazine.

Engagement with alumni and professionals helped shape a major curriculum review in 2020 that resulted in a new professional development course. One member of the SJSC Alumni Society said the college often looks to the SJSC for leadership in alumni engagement. Alumni and visiting professionals are invited to speak with classes and attend SJSC lectures and award ceremonies.

Faculty serve or have served on boards of several professional associations including the National Press Photographers Association, the Journalism Education Association, the Indiana High School Press Association, and the Society for News Design.

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

The SJSC gives six awards each year that recognize the work of state and national professionals in journalism and strategic communications. One faculty member used grant funding from the Middle Tennessee State University First Amendment Center to launch "Thank a Journalist Day" in Indiana in 2019, while a former faculty member planned a pop-up training event for journalists in 2018. The unit's engagement with scholastic journalism also includes workshops for high school journalism educators.



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

The SJSC has an extensive portfolio of service projects and service learning. Students and faculty produce *Inform Muncie*, a digital and print publication focused on telling stories about marginalized communities and under-represented demographics. BSU at the Games sends students to cover the Olympics, most recently the 2018 games in South Korea. Stigma Unmasked addressed addiction and recovery in the area.

Other immersion projects have focused on water quality, science education, and men's volleyball. The former student public relations agency, Cardinal Communications, did substantial pro bono work, some of which has continued in the new McKinley Avenue Agency. Students in PRSSA also indicated that the chapter has also begun to do some pro bono work.

**(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.**

Ball State's support of scholastic journalism is noteworthy both throughout Indiana and nationwide. The SJSC's scholastic journalism outreach was moved to the college level to allow the other units in the college to participate. The one-day workshop was rebranded to JDay+/CCIM+ while the former Ball State Summer Journalism Workshops was rebranded to CCIM+ Summer Experience. However, the SJSC remains a leader in both programs, as well as the associated Ball State Student Contests, which recognize outstanding scholastic media.

With the transition to the college level, the journalism workshops office now offers virtual and in-person workshops throughout the year to secondary students and teachers and has hosted more than 100 workshops since 2020.

The SJSC also participates in the Indiana High School Press Association's annual convention and in the national JEA/NSPA national convention.

**SUMMARY:**

The SJSC engages with alumni and professionals for awards and consultation for major changes in the program and its curriculum. It promotes high standards in professional journalism and journalism education. Faculty are engaged in professional and public service at the local, state, and national levels, with some at noteworthy positions on boards. Despite its transition to college-level oversight, the scholastic journalism outreach remains the gold standard for programs.

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

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

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

#### **Strengths**

- World-class facilities that the college and school continue to evolve to meet the needs of students and student media.
- Aggressive overhaul of the curriculum to promote flexibility and invite greater campus-wide participation.
- A highly dedicated faculty invested in the success of their students
- Greatly improved focus on diversity that is changing the culture of the unit for the better.
- Recruitment of stronger research faculty that has greatly improved the unit's scholarly presence and productivity.
- Stable and innovative leadership that had to make difficult forward-thinking decisions after a long period of instability.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Substantial drop in enrollment that threatens the long-term viability of the unit.
- Budgetary headwinds caused by the drop in enrollment that have already caused the loss of valued faculty.
- Failure to close the loop in many of its assessment efforts
- Failure to limit size in skills classes eight times during the self-study year
- Lack of structured mentoring to guide and support untenured faculty

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

Standard 3--Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### **3) In the case of a recommendation for accreditation or reaccreditation, with standard(s) not in compliance, list the deficiencies that need to be addressed before the next site team evaluation.**

Publish a full assessment plan on its website that follows "A Guide to Assessment of Learning Outcomes for ACEJMC Accreditation."

Use mass communication and journalism professionals to more effectively identify learning outcomes to help improve the curriculum.

Close the loop between assessment results and curricular changes

**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 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.**

On the two previous visits, the unit was found in noncompliance on then Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness. Since then, the unit has made progress to add diversity to its faculty, created a required diversity course, invited more speakers from diverse backgrounds to campus and is building a more inclusive culture overall.

**Weaknesses noted in the previous report:**

- Lack of consistent leadership — The unit’s leadership has been consistent for the past seven years. Leadership at all academic positions above the director has also been stable.
- Faculty Turnover — Faculty turnover remains an issue, but most tenure-track faculty are being promoted. Enrollment declines have resulted in layoffs and incentivized retirements.
- Resources for faculty development — Faculty development resources remain an issue, but the new faculty with research to present have found resources for travel. The director lists augmenting faculty development funds as his highest budget priority moving forward.

**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 clear and well-written and the necessary data was readily available. The team particularly appreciated the candor contained in the self-study regarding the unit’s strengths and weaknesses.