

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2022-2023

Name of Institution: Bowling Green State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Joe B. Whitehead

Name of Unit: School of Media & Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Alberto Gonzalez

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: January 29-February 1 2023

Date of the previous accrediting visit: October 18-21, 2015; Revisit, October 15-17, 2017

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Provisional Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Provisional Reaccreditation, 2015; Reaccreditation, 2017

Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Provisional

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: Battino Batts, Dean

Organization/School: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Arizona State University

Signature _____

Team Member

Name and Title: Helen Katz, Executive Vice President, Research

Organization/School: Publicis Media

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Team Member

Name and Title: Deborah Potter

Organization/School: Broadcast News Consultant and International Trainer

Signature _____

Part I: General Information

Name of Institution: Bowling Green State University

Name of Unit: School of Media and Communication

Year of Visit: 2023

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

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.

Ohio Revised Code, Sections 3341.01(A) and 3341.04

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:

October 18-21, 2015; revisit October 15-17, 2017

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

1979

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

The School’s mission statement was last revised in spring 2020. It is aligned with BGSU’s Strategic Plan, *Forward*, which seeks to “embrace our role as a 21st-century public university for the public good.” The strategic and foundational objectives of *Forward* are:

- I. Driving Public Good Through Redefining Student Success
- II. Creating Public Good Through Research, Creative Activities, Partnerships and Engagement
- III. Powering Public Good Through Our People and Community
- IV. Supporting Public Good Through Efficient and Effective Processes, Structures and Technologies

School Vision

Members of the School of Media and Communication strive to develop individuals who contribute meaningfully to society, support civic engagement, and shape the future as global professionals.

School Mission

The School of Media and Communication brings together three distinct, synergistic intellectual disciplines, through research, teaching, and service, to be a leader in developing the knowledge, skills, and values critical to civic and global engagement. The School connects and enhances undergraduate and graduate educational experiences to prepare students for lifelong growth and leadership. Its mission is to offer quality education--enriched by co-curricular opportunities and evolving communication technologies--that prepares students to achieve professional success, communicate effectively, contribute to their communities, and engage globally in relationships with individuals, governments, businesses, and non-profit and civic organizations.

Serving Public Good

The School of Media and Communication is committed to the public good. As indicated in our vision statement above, we strive to aid in the development of individuals who contribute meaningfully to society and support civic engagement. This is seen throughout the school’s programs. Our Communication program strives to develop individuals who are effective, ethical communicators across context and cultures. Our Media program is committed to promoting students’ abilities to engage in critical thought concerning critical societal issues such as unequal access to media technologies, bias and inclusivity in media representations, freedoms of speech and press among international institutions and political economic systems, and media literacy more broadly to build a more deliberative and democratic community. Our Journalism and Public Relations program contributes to students’ understanding of the origins and importance of free speech and press to informed citizenry in the United States. Students are grounded in ethical professional practices and commitments

to issues of diversity. Students are prepared to take part in the journalistic “watchdog” role in a democratic society.

The School’s Falcon Media is also an important contribution to the public good, as it provides students from all majors across campus the opportunities to learn, develop and practice skills beyond the classroom that are fundamental to a healthy society beyond college.

Journalism and Public Relations’ mission statement was last revised in 2014:

The Journalism and Public Relations program helps students prepare to enter the larger world as responsible professionals, active and concerned citizens, and thoughtful human beings. Their research, writing and media production skills increase our students’ media literacy. Their study of the history and challenges facing media in the United States and throughout the world will make them critical news producers and consumers. Journalism graduates will have the personal and professional skills and the broad educational foundations necessary for effective life-long learning in a technologically changing, multi-cultural society. To accomplish this, the department provides its majors with a program that balances skills training and courses about the media and society, which are embedded in a liberal arts education. Journalism minors and undergraduates in other University programs receive exposure to media issues and professional skills training that will produce savvy media consumers.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 16 weeks

Summer sessions of 6 and 8 weeks

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

Bachelor’s degree

Master’s degree

Ph.D. degree

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

Bachelor’s degree in Journalism (BSJ): specialization in Journalism

Bachelor’s degree in Journalism (BSJ): specialization in Public Relations

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

122 Semester-hours

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

2 semester-hours required; students may receive credit for up to 3 semester-hours

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

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Person in Charge |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Journalism | Dr. Terry Rentner |
| Public Relations | Dr. Terry Rentner |

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 13,918 (Fall 2022)

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/academic year represented.

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Semester/AY Undergrad majors |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Communication | 228* |
| Media Production and Studies | 147* |
| Journalism | 56 |
| Public Relations | 34 |
| Total | 465 |

* These sequences are not being reviewed by ACEJMC.

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. 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.)

| Course | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| JOUR 1500 - Student Media Participation | | | |
| Section 1 | 24 | 16 | 17 |
| Section 2 | 24 | 13 | Not offered |
| JOUR 2000 Introduction to Journalistic Writing | | | |
| Section 1 | 21 | 17 | 20 |
| JOUR 2500 Reporting | | | |
| Section 1 | 17 | 12 | 12 |
| JOUR 2550 Multimedia Reporting | | | |
| Section 1 | 16 | 18 | 12 |
| JOUR 3150 Visual Editing | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Section 1 | 10 | 9 | Not offered |
| JOUR 3200 Feature Writing | | | |
| Section 1 | Not offered | 9 | Not offered |
| JOUR 3300 Broadcast News | | | |
| Section 1 | Not offered | 8 | Not offered |
| JOUR 3440 Strategic PR Writing and Social Media Strategies | | | |
| Section 1 | Not offered | 12 | Not offered |
| JOUR 3450 Media Publication and Design | | | |
| Section 1 | Not offered | 17 | Not offered |
| JOUR 3550 Online Journalism | | | |
| Section 1 | 15 | Not offered | 13 |
| JOUR 4200 Public Affairs Reporting | | | |
| Section 1 | 6 | Not offered | 4 |
| JOUR 4300 Advanced Broadcast News | | | |
| Section 1 | 10 | Not offered | 7 |
| JOUR 4400 Public Relations Campaigns | | | |
| Section 1 | 10 | Not offered | 12 |

SOURCE: SMC Records

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2022–2023 academic year:

\$3,841,235 (See Table 10)

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

+1.5%

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

\$2,497,753

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.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.

| Name | Rank | Notes |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Joshua Atkinson | Professor | FIL, Spring 2023 |
| Jasmine Crighton | Assistant Teaching Professor | |
| Bailey Dick | Assistant Professor | |
| Jim Foust | Professor | |
| Julie Hagenbuch | Teaching Professor | |
| Terry Rentner | Professor | |
| Ewart Skinner | Associate Professor | |
| Sean Williams | Assistant Teaching Professor | |

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.)

Spring 2022

Brittany Barhite
Kerry Christopher

Fall 2022

Karl Smith
Jared Meade
Jeevan Sammeta

Spring 2023

Karl Smith

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

| | 2020-21 academic year | 2021-22 academic year | December 2022 |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Communication | 83 | 83 | N/A |
| Media Production and Studies | 53 | 40 | N/A |
| Journalism | 12 | 13 | 1 |
| Public Relations | 11 | 10 | 2 |
| Advertising | 9 | 15 | N/A |
| | | | |
| Total | 168 | 161 | |

SOURCE: BGSU Institutional Research

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Journalism has been a major at Bowling Green since 1946. When the program was first accredited in 1979, it was part of the College of Business Administration. It moved back into Arts and Sciences in 1985 and became, along with Radio Television & Film, the School of Mass Communication. During the last accreditation cycle, the Department of Journalism and Public Relations was a department within the School of Media and Communication along with two other departments. In 2019, the School faculty voted to eliminate departments. Thus, this visit is the first that journalism and public relations and its Bachelor of Science in Journalism major is not a department within the larger School. The School's director is the administrator over the program, but the elected curricular representative from the major plays a significant role in the day-to-day administration of the journalism/PR area. The faculty are unionized and all journalism and public relations faculty are part of the bargaining unit. The only administrator outside the bargaining unit is the School's director. For purposes of this report, the "School" and the "unit" refers to the School of Media and Communications. The "major" or "program" refers to the journalism and public relations major, which is being reviewed for accreditation.

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 School strategic plan was written in 2019 and revised in 2021. The plan has clear goals and benchmarks for achieving them. It appears that the Covid-19 disruption has stalled progress in several areas of the plan. The most concrete element pertaining to journalism is under the Add Programs in High Demand initiative and proposes that the School "develop a sports journalism/sport media major. We will rebuild the journalism major to respond to industry needs and trends with faculty and curricular expertise in sports and new media technologies."

The School's mission statement is a broad one covering all four areas of the School. It promotes a broad liberal arts education and a mission "to offer quality education—enriched by co-curricular opportunities and evolving communication technologies—that prepares students to achieve professional success, communicate effectively, contribute to their communities and engage globally in relations with individuals, governments, businesses and non-profit and civic organizations."

A major part of the university's strategic plan and vision is to do good in the world; "A public university for the public good" is its tagline. Part of the University's keen interest in journalism education emanates from journalism's role in promoting democracy and serving the public good. In meetings with administrators, this theme kept recurring.

The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The team could not find the School's mission statement or strategic plan on its website.

Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented, plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?

The director of the School and the School's advisory body are responsible for keeping the strategic plan current and enumerating the progress towards the plan's goals. The current strategic plan is scheduled to expire in 2023. In the case of journalism and public relations, the provost initiated a special internal review of journalism and public relations responding to concerns from journalism alumni. In a May 2021, memo the provost cited the specific concerns of one alumnus:

- 1) Students do not have the necessary knowledge or training required to work in a fast-paced newsroom.
- 2) Students are hovering in the area of opinion instead of in the field of journalism. That is, the infiltration of opinion into journalistic work products.
- 3) The internship experiences by and large are not the type of internships to ensure the highest competitiveness of program graduates.

This initiative prompted responses from both the dean of arts and sciences, the director of the School and a detailed review document written by the faculty in journalism and public relations in October 2021. This document could be considered a de facto strategic plan for answering the provost's concerns and moving the major forward. It may be mentioned frequently in the site team report.

(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.

The School of Media and Communication is currently led by an interim director who comes from the communication sector of the School. The previous permanent director also came from communication. The interim director is affable and supportive of journalism's interests. Faculty like his "mellow" demeanor and his ability to bring people together collegially. The interim director as well as the Dean of Arts & Sciences are very hopeful that the upcoming search for a permanent director for the School will produce a leader with direct journalism experience and a firm, first-hand knowledge of the field, both academically and professionally. The job description, however, is much more generic than either the interim director or the dean implied. It will take a concerted action to select the kind of leader that the faculty, interim director and dean aspire to hire. In addition to having a director with a strong journalism connection, the faculty and alumni would like to upgrade the program's representative to the School curriculum

committee, their highest level voice, into an endowed leadership position that can speak with greater authority and have more power in this decentralized leadership system.

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).

The program has updated all data for the ACEJMEC database.

(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.

BGSU places a high priority on tracking retention and graduation rates and supplies ample data to individual units. Media and Communication prominently posts current retention and graduation data on its website

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

Most faculty governance tenets come through the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that lays out specific prerogatives given to faculty to guarantee them a voice in the major and the School. The CBA provides a grievance process if faculty members feel that the Bowling Green administration has violated any of the points of governance, including merit or reappointment, promotion and tenure. The faculty meets frequently as a journalism and public relations collective and as faculty in the larger School of Media and Communication..

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

The collective bargaining agreement recognizes faculty participation in the selection and evaluation of the university president, provost, deans, chairs and directors. The dean chooses the School director; as required in the CBA, each unit may have only one faculty administrator who is outside the CBA. The dean decides if the director will be appointed internally or there will be an external search. Currently, an external search for a director is underway.

The dean evaluates the director annually. Results of the evaluation are shared with faculty, the director and the dean.

The position of Journalism/Public Relations Coordinator, an important one in this School's structure, is elected by the faculty. They are not formally evaluated.

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

The director is the first line of contact for all faculty, staff and student concerns except for grade complaints, which students should first discuss with the class instructor and contact the School's grade mediator. Serious faculty concerns are covered by the CBA. The process begins with the aggrieved party notifying the Grievance Officer of the University faculty association and submitting a written complaint to the provost. If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily,

there is an appeal process that may include arbitration and mediation. The program has quick access to forms and procedures for reporting academic dishonesty violations, student conduct issues, hazing incidents, Title IX and sexual harassment violations, bias incidents, harassment and discrimination issues and campus free speech complaints. On virtually every page of the university website is a “See it. Hear it. Report it” tab to encourage student response to possible rules violation.

SUMMARY:

The Collective Bargaining Agreement has matured to the point where faculty governance is clearly understood and practiced. The elimination of departments has opened the door to cross-program cooperation but has left the journalism/PR program stranded administratively with only a representative on the School curriculum committee as a titular leader and advocate. The School has been led by people with no background in journalism/PR and little interest in accreditation. Fortunately, the new Arts and Sciences dean has taken a special interest in supporting journalism and advocating for it to upper administration.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(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 has two accredited programs: a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations. A total of 122 credit hours are required for graduation. For Journalism students, the requirement is 63 hours, while for Public Relations it is 66 hours.

All students complete a set of core courses (18 hours). Journalism students must then complete 6 hours of Reporting classes, 6 hours in Technology, and 3 hours of a Capstone class.

The following courses are offered:

Reporting (6 hours required)

- JOUR 3200 Intermediate Writing and Reporting (3 hours)
- JOUR 3250 News Editing and Production (3 hours)
- JOUR 3300 Video Reporting (3 hours)

Technology (6 hours required)

- JOUR 3150 Visual Editing (3 hours)
- JOUR 3450 Public Relations Publication Design (3 hours)
- JOUR 3550 Emerging Platforms, Emerging Journalism (3 hours)
- MDIA 1995 Post-Production (3 hours)
- MDIA 2610 Television and Video Production (3 hours)
- MDIA 2620 Audio Production (3 hours)
- VCT 2660 Introduction to Interactive Media (3 hours)

Capstone (3 hours required)

- JOUR 4200 Public Affairs Reporting (3 hours)
- JOUR 4300 Advanced Broadcast News (3 hours)

The PR students are required to take 18 hours specific to that specialization, which includes the PR Capstone course, Public Relations Campaigns. The following courses are offered:

PR Requirements (18 hours required)

- JOUR 1400 Introduction to Strategic Public Relations (3 hours)
- JOUR 3440 Strategic PR writing and Social Media Strategies (3 hours)
- JOUR 3450 Public Relations Publication Design (3 hours)
- JOUR 4400 Public Relations Campaigns (3 hours)
- MKT 3000 Principles of Marketing (3 hours)
- COMM 3040 Leadership in Communications (3 hours)

Both groups of students must then also complete 6 hours on Issues and 24 hours outside of the accredited unit. The following courses are offered:

Issues Courses (6 hours required)

- JOUR 3850 Journalism in the Movies (3 hours)
- JOUR 4550 Diversity Issues in the Media (3 hours)
- JOUR 4650 American Journalism History (3 hours)

- JOUR 4750 Global Journalism (3 hours)
- JOUR 4850 Media and Society (3 hours)
- JOUR 4950 Specialized Journalism Issues (3 hours)
- MDIA 3000 America's Documentary Story to 1968 (3 hours)
- MDIA 3100 Documenting Human-Global Challenges After 1968 (3 hours)
- MDIA 3520 Social Media (3 hours)

Required Courses offered to both Journalism and PR students that are outside of the unit (24 hours required) include:

- COMM 1020 or 2050; THFM 1410 or 2020 (3 hours)
- CS/IS Course (3 hours)
- ECON (3 hours)
- General Science (3 hours)
- Literature (3 hours)
- Philosophy (3 hours)
- Political Science (3 hours)
- U.S. History (3 hours)

Bowling Green requires all students to complete foundation courses that are designed to provide students with classes requiring active learning strategies, critical thinking, and communication skills. This program, called BG Perspective: 21st Century Liberal Studies, requires at least 36 hours across English Composition and Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Humanities and the Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences. BGSU also has requirements for all students to take courses on Cultural Diversity in the U.S. and International Perspective.

All Journalism and Public Relations students are required to have a minor (21 hours). This can be one of the existing subjects in the BGSU Course Catalog (a Structured Minor) or it can be created by the student across more than one discipline (Interdepartmental Minor). The minor must have at least 12 hours of higher-level (3000-4000) coursework.

Students are kept on track through the use of checklists of the courses taken, hours completed, and what is needed for graduation.

(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 curriculum for Journalism works hard to provide a good balance between theory and practice, with all classes mapped to the ACEJMC values and competencies. The small faculty size leads to a reliance on graduate students, who may not have a primary focus in this area, to teach some of the core classes. In meeting with Journalism students, the site visit team heard concerns that there is “a lack of creativity taught in the classroom”, and that more learning is done in student media organizations. There was a general feeling that students want to get into their core classes sooner and start having hands-on experience earlier, too. For example, students feel that JOUR 2000 (Journalism & Public Relations Writing) does not include enough on broadcast writing, which is not fully covered until JOUR 3300 (Video Writing); this is seen as an impediment for students interested in pursuing Sophomore or Junior internships that require that skill. As one Public Relations student noted, “we do not start PR until it's too late.”

Public Relations offers a solid mix of professional skills and conceptual coursework, though with the same constraint of insufficient faculty to provide enough courses or ability to offer classes each semester rather than only once a year. The two highly experienced faculty members are well respected by their

faculty colleagues and the students. PR students lamented their late entry into pure public relations classes.

(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.

The unit has made efforts to respond to changes in the professions that require updating courses. Multimedia Reporting (JOUR 2550) is one such example, where instruction in HTML and CSS was introduced, along with how to use CMS systems. Principles of technology are taught, and then applied, through a mix of lectures and hands-on labs. Student response to this course (as evidenced in Exit Interviews) appears positive.

Another example is JOUR 3550: Emerging Platforms, Emerging Journalism is offered as an elective. It is focused on digital storytelling, and includes teaching how various technologies (Javascript, Bootstrap) help to create interactive content.

One of the challenges in this area is the low number of younger faculty who are more familiar with contemporary practical needs. As one student commented to the Site Team, “sometimes we get taught the 1990s journalism style”. While social media is covered in all classes, students who wish to focus specifically on this topic would need to take MDIA 3520 as one of their electives. Alumni of the journalism program have advocated strongly for an updated curriculum and are working through a newly formed Alumni Advisory Board to achieve this.

There has been ongoing discussion among public relations faculty for the last three years to create a PR minor and/or a separate PR major. It is expected that this would help attract students from other parts of the School or university, as well as offer additional opportunities to reinvigorate and bolster the curriculum. The proposal for a minor is moving through university administration.

(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.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to remain current with and involved in professional organizations. The self-study noted that three faculty members have leadership positions in professional organizations. Two are actively involved with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), with the latter as the on-campus advisor. This includes twice-monthly on-campus meetings that bring in industry guest speakers, conduct student workshops and take student groups to events or conferences in other cities. One faculty member uses her ongoing communications with PR professionals to ensure that courses are aligned with the primary needs of the industry, including a focus on writing, ethical principles, and leadership skills.

Students noted that the more recent arrivals of younger faculty and staff have been particularly helpful in ensuring they have the necessary current skills when they graduate.

(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.

All standard classes meet the student-faculty ratio of no more than 20-1. The one exception is JOUR 1500, Student Media Participation, where students are required to be involved in one of the student media organizations as part of their graduation requirement. It exceeded 20 students in Spring 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).

Both journalism and public relations students must complete two internships, as part of JOUR 4000. One of these must be completed on-campus. That is often through Falcon Media, which encompasses an FM radio station, a streaming station, a weekly TV newscast, a media sports network, and two print publications. The unit has made significant enhancements to its internship program since the last accreditation visit. It used to be that individual faculty members were responsible for oversight of their student advisees. That created latitude in how internships were evaluated. Starting in Spring 2018, all internships are managed by one full-time faculty member, allowing for consistency in objectives, outcomes, and evaluations.

There is a process in place to assist students in securing their internships, and in setting expectations for students that this is a course taken for academic credit. The process includes a formal application that each student must complete, and they must receive approval from the faculty member in charge. At the time of the site team visit, there were nearly 200 internship opportunities available. Students are also encouraged to apply for internships outside of Bowling Green/northwest Ohio. The records show considerable success in this area, with students interning across the country, from California to New York. Some PR students noted that the internship list was not kept sufficiently updated, forcing them to go out on their own to secure a position.

One beneficial addition to the internship program is the Portfolio Session and Mock Interview, which occurs near the end of each semester. Each student prepares a five-minute presentation, followed by mock interviews. In addition, students must complete a Video Report, a 1-2 minute overview of their internships, and a Final Report, which includes a Summary of the internship and a Reflection of the student's experience.

All students are evaluated by a survey completed by the student's internship supervisor at the end of the program (see Standard 3 for more on this).

Students were generally very happy with the internship opportunities they had experienced, not only for the learning but also for the connections made. Several said they wished they had been encouraged to start internships sooner (prior to junior year), while others noted the challenge of fitting in an on-campus internship (usually at Falcon Media and unpaid) with paid employment and their courses. PR students commented that the on-campus internship seemed less relevant to their needs. PR students also said that they felt they didn't have enough practical experience to be competitive for more selective internships.

SUMMARY:

For its size, the program provides a basic curriculum to both journalism and public relations students. While they do offer a balance of conceptual and skills courses, it is increasingly challenging to do so given the size of the faculty. They work hard to keep courses current, but again, the lack of enough full-time faculty makes this problematic. The internship program is well organized and considered of significant benefit to students.

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 posts its assessment plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The program's assessment plan is readily available on the University's website (<https://www.bgsu.edu/academics/journalism/assessment-plan.html>). There, it clearly lays out the ACEJMC Learning Outcomes, as well as the direct and indirect measures that are used for assessment. There is a clear process in place to manage assessment, which includes having the assessment coordinator create a preliminary report of findings for the past (rolling) two-year period, which the faculty then discuss at an offsite or other special meeting designed to focus on this topic.

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)

Learning outcomes are included in every course syllabus, and all courses have been mapped to the ACEJMC Values and Competencies. For each value or competency, the School identifies which one of four levels it maps to for each class (Introduced, Emphasized, Reinforced, or Advanced), with most classes referencing at least seven of the values or competencies. It is recommended that the Values and Competencies are included in course syllabi.

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

There are four key measures used to assess student learning. Two of these are considered direct (internship supervisor evaluations and professional assessment of capstone coursework). Two are considered indirect measures (student exit surveys and student exit interviews). Most of these measures do appear to have been implemented since the last accreditation, where two weaknesses in this area had been identified: inconsistent collection and reporting of data, and data collected did not always match learning outcomes. While COVID-19 did prevent some data collection during the current assessment period, the program has done a much better job in its efforts to consistently collect and report the data, trying to use the findings to enhance learning outcomes.

Indeed, it is encouraging to see that the data are not simply collected but they are also analyzed, with internship evaluations summarized for each of 41 elements included in the survey (including skill proficiency, writing and editing). The assessment report then identifies, over time, which elements fell outside of the desired range. This information is discussed by the faculty and used to enhance student learning where it was shown to be weaker; for example, in JOUR 2550, Multimedia Reporting Skills added more writing assignments to help students gain more experience in writing on deadline.

The second direct measure, professional feedback, covers three (subsequently, two) capstone classes: Broadcast Capstone Projects and Multiplatform Capstone Projects (which became Journalism 4200), and Public Relations Capstone Projects (Journalism 4400). Reviewers are asked to evaluate student work using a five-point scale (1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent) across a range of 11 competencies. The number of professionals included was low initially (just one or two), but more recently, there appears to be more success in including a greater number of professionals (three or four). Faculty said that they do have input into capstone portfolios, but it was not clear how this assessment is done or the impact it makes.

With indirect measures, the student exit surveys are assessed to see what percentage of students graduating from the program rate their knowledge in 11 different knowledge areas at least eight out of 10 (80% or higher). The feedback from student exit interviews was included in the self-study, but no summary analysis was provided.

While the program notes the *high scores* from the students' self-evaluations, this assessment could benefit from being combined with a direct measure of student learning. For example, the deployment of an evaluation of student knowledge levels that is conducted during sophomore and senior years would demonstrate the extent to which students have fully mastered knowledge on topics such as ethics, critical thinking, or numbers, beyond (or in addition to) how they themselves feel.

The second indirect measure of student exit interviews can provide valuable qualitative feedback on how students feel about their experience, but it does not seem like the program is doing much more than collecting the data. The self-study did not provide details on how this information is used, or whether the comments align with findings from the other measures.

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

As noted above, the one direct measure which includes professional input is for capstone class assessment. The program recognizes the value of including both alumni and non-alumni professionals to help in these assessments.

(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 program holds annual faculty meetings that are focused on the assessment findings. As part of these sessions, faculty decide collectively what actions are needed to improve upon areas found to be weaker. The self-study showed numerous examples of this kind of activity, from smaller changes to increase the amount of writing and multiplatform opportunities for students to larger ones, such as the consolidation of courses into a singular journalism concentration. The assessment findings also resulted in moving two 3000-level classes to 1000-level to expose freshmen to more journalism and public relations course work. Both JOUR 3000, Student Media Participation, and JOUR 3400, Introduction to Strategic Public Relations, have been switched to 1000-level and are now open to freshmen. Response to student feedback resulted in changes to

JOUR 4300, Advanced Video Reporting, creating reporter beats and technical jobs such as Technical Director and Audio services, so that students could gain more hands-on experience within the classroom.

SUMMARY

The program demonstrates a clear understanding of what assessment is and how to implement it, in terms of both direct and indirect measures. Their written plan and matrix are both solid, and there is evidence that the information is being analyzed and applied to improve curriculum and instruction. It is recommended that these efforts be considered a foundation on which to build, adding more measures and ensuring that all measures are evaluated holistically as well as individually.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

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 journalism and public relations program has a diversity plan that it adopted in 2015. The program is updating this plan, which is not available on its website. It was made available in the self-study, and lists recruiting and retaining diverse faculty as its top two priorities.

Separately, the School of Media and Communication is developing a new diversity plan, and formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee in March 2022. The goal is to create a new mission statement and DEI plan, evaluate the current situation, and create a new action plan for the School. The committee first met in Fall 2022 and has undertaken a survey of faculty, staff, and students as part of their evaluation.

(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 program offers JOUR 4550: Diversity Issues in the Media as an elective, but there is no required class focused on diversity. This particular course does address traditionally underrepresented groups’ participation and representation in journalism. Enrollment in JOUR 4550 appears steady:

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Spring 2023- | 25 students enrolled |
| Spring 2022- | 15 students enrolled |
| Spring 2021- | 29 students enrolled |

The self-study cited examples of diversity content in courses such as JOUR 1400 (Introduction to Public Relations) through diverse guest speakers, JOUR 3550 (Emerging Platforms), with coverage of issues of accessibility to digital content, and JOUR 3440 (Public Relations Writing), where each student works with a non-profit to provide PR support. However, in meetings with both journalism and PR students, they noted that although several classes did mention some issues of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality into the curriculum, it too often was an afterthought.

(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.

Faculty are aware of the importance of DEI and complete an annual online training, “Preventing Discrimination and Harassment and Preventing Sexual Violence Together.” They also complete Title IX training. Some faculty have participated in Safe Zone Training workshops on LGBTQ+ people, as well as inclusive pedagogy and implicit bias.

In addition, individual faculty members have participated in diversity initiatives both on and off campus. One faculty member was a co-investigator for a \$4,187 Ithaca College Center for Faculty Excellence Grant in summer 2021. The project was focused on the NFL, racial norming, and the concussion settlement. Two faculty members were involved with We Are One Team (WA1T), a BGSU initiative to promote social justice through sport (one faculty member served as advisor and one is a board member). The program attempts to bring in a variety of guest speakers of diverse backgrounds.

However, in terms of recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff, the program’s efforts in this area have been ineffective at best. Minorities make up fewer than 15 percent of the full-time faculty, with only one full-time faculty member who is a person of color. Further, there doesn’t appear to be much documented effort toward reversing that trend. Despite reporting a total of five faculty openings since 2019-2020, none of the searches included minorities in the hiring pool.

Faculty and administrators have suggested that the location of the university in semi-rural northwestern Ohio is an impediment to its diversity recruitment efforts. That may be so, but students say they want a faculty that is more representative of the community and the student body.

Recruitment of more adjunct faculty could be one path toward improving the diversity of the faculty.

(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.

The program’s minority student enrollment is in line with that of the overall university, representing roughly 23 percent of its student population. This is slightly above the most recent census figures for Ohio, which has a minority population of about 19 percent. There was an attempt to create a chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), but it did not succeed.

In conversations with higher administration, the site team heard that the University does recognize the need to attract and retain more black students. The program could benefit from reinstating its outreach to high schools with larger minority populations, which was previously undertaken by a now-retired faculty member.

(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.

The climate within the program is an area of concern. One long-time faculty member of color described a somewhat hostile environment and brought an unsuccessful suit, as a result. This professor said he would not recommend that any Black professor consider joining the faculty. It is difficult to determine if this is the opinion of a disgruntled faculty member or a pervasive issue. No other faculty interviewed expressed a similar sentiment. However, this perceived climate could hamper efforts to recruit diverse faculty.

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.

SUMMARY:

Diversity is an area of major concern for the program. While minority student enrollment and retention, and guest speakers and events appear adequate, the lack of diversity on the faculty and the anemic diversity emphasis in courses are concerning. Further, the program may need to address issues among its existing faculty as it pertains to morale and being a welcoming place for faculty members of color. The program is still in the process of updating its diversity plan. A concrete course of action with key performance indicators is necessary to address these issues.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

NON-COMPLIANCE

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

Academic year: 2021–2022 Full-time faculty

| Group | Male | % of total Faculty | Female | % of total Faculty |
|--|------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Black/African American | 1 | 3.7% | 0 | 0% |
| White | 10 | 37% | 8 | 29.6% |
| American Indian/Alaskan native | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Asian | 1 | 3.7% | 3 | 11.1% |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race) | 2 | 7.4% | 0 | 0% |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Two or more races | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Other race/Not Specified | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| International students (any race) | 1 | 3.7% | 0 | 0% |

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

| Group | Male | % of total Faculty | Female | % of total Faculty |
|--|------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Black/African American | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| White | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3.7% |
| American Indian/Alaskan native | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Asian | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race) | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Two or more races | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Other race/Not Specified | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| International students (any race) | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |

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.

Full-time faculty are responsible for curriculum development and oversight, as well as research and service. In recent years, many of the program's courses have been taught by graduate students; a point of concern for undergraduate students and for industry leaders. The self-study shows that the percentage of core courses in the program taught by full-time faculty decreased from 94 percent in 2020-21 to 59 percent in 2021-22. Program leadership noted that this is due to faculty departures and the inability to fill positions. The number of faculty members has decreased by roughly 50 percent since the last accreditation (2015). The program has addressed this exodus to some degree by having graduate students teach courses. The program employs few adjuncts.

One faculty member noted that pay may be an impediment to recruiting adjunct faculty; people who are connected to industry in surrounding and nearby markets and can bring much-needed diversity and current perspectives to the program. The faculty member described the example of one diverse adjunct faculty who had to depart because the cost of commuting to BGSU surpassed the value of the compensation for teaching.

(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.

The program's faculty is composed of a group of dedicated individuals who care about the needs of students. However, some long-time faculty members have not maintained meaningful connections to industry necessary to help keep the program current. Two newer faculty hires have strong relationships with professional associations in both journalism and public relations.

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

The structure for evaluation of faculty in terms of Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure is established in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The School's Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure document spells out specific expectations and procedures. For faculty in journalism and public relations, requirements for promotion and tenure are slightly different from the rest of the School faculty. They are allowed to count journalism published for a general audience as well as required publications in peer-reviewed journals. Two faculty have recently been promoted.

(d) Faculty members communicate the results of research, creative and/or professional activity to other scholars, educators and practitioners through presentations, productions, exhibitions, workshops and publications appropriate to the activity and to the mission of the unit and institution.

The faculty output of research and creative activity is significantly higher than during the previous accreditation cycle. New faculty have been productive. Current faculty have increased activity. The retirement of several faculty solved a previously-cited problem of faculty not being able to retain their graduate status. The faculty regularly attend professional development sessions at national and regional conferences. Funding for this travel is provided by the Florence and Jessie Currier foundation account. Several current faculty members also have taken advantage of teaching development activities, on and off campus.

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

The program is highly regarded on campus, and the university administration appears committed to its future. Numerous administrators articulated the importance of journalism in a healthy democracy and stated that the program offers an educational experience that should be a vital part of the entire university experience.

SUMMARY:

The faculty are more productive than during the 2015 review when this standard was out of compliance. Some faculty have retired, new hires are productive and current faculty have increased scholarly output. Faculty are being promoted.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

| Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities | Total from Unit* | Individuals | | | | Totals (8) |
|---|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| | | Full Professors (3) | Associate Professors (1) | Assistant Professors (1) | Other Faculty** (3) | |
| Awards and Honors | 8 | 6 | | | 2 | 8 |
| Grants Received Internal | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Grants Received External | 3 | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored | 2 | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Books Edited | 5 | 4 | | | 1 | 5 |
| Book Chapters | 14 | 12 | | | 2 | 14 |
| Monographs | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Articles in Refereed Journals | 17 | 17 | | | | 17 |
| Refereed Conference Papers | 35 | 35 | | | | 35 |
| Invited Academic Papers | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Encyclopedia Entries | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Book Reviews | 9 | 6 | | | 3 | 9 |
| Articles in Non-refereed Publications | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Juried Creative Works | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Non-juried Creative Works | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Other (please specify) proceedings (See Appendix 5-5) | 6 | 3 | | | 3 | 6 |

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

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Multiple systems are in place to keep students informed about program and graduation requirements. The university has an online degree audit system (DARS) that tracks what requirements have been met and what remain to be fulfilled, which is accessible to students and their advisers. A printed check sheet, revised in 2022, also helps students see their progress at a glance.

Graduation checks for seniors are conducted at the College level.

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

Each student entering the University is assigned two advisers. For journalism and public relations students, a professional adviser based in the College of Arts and Sciences does most of the advising on class selection and scheduling for the first two years. During that period, a faculty mentor in the student's program of study focuses on such issues as career goals. The faculty mentor then takes over most of the advising for the third and fourth year. Both advisers and mentors have access to an online tracking system (Navigate) so they can monitor progress.

Some former and current students across the five areas of the School have expressed unhappiness with the advising system. A spring 2022 survey of students in the School as a whole found one in four describing themselves as "dissatisfied or very dissatisfied." Journalism students who met with the accrediting team had mixed reviews of their advising experience. Some said their advisers rarely reached out to them but were generally responsive to requests.

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

University policies are generally disseminated to students in syllabi, including policies addressing academic integrity and conduct. Faculty use the University's learning management system, Canvas, to send messages to students about activities, such as guest speakers or meetings of campus chapters of professional associations. The School's administrative secretary also contacts students by email to share information.

(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.

The program maintains a robust selection of student media outlets under the umbrella of Falcon Media, including the campus newspaper, which publishes in print once a week. All students on campus can work for any of the Falcon Media outlets beginning as early as freshman year.

A TV news outlet produces a 15-minute weekly newscast, live to tape, which is posted on YouTube and the web. At the time of the previous accreditation visit, the newscast aired five days a week. Falcon Media includes both an FM radio station that broadcasts to the community

(WBGU) and a separate online-only station. A sports broadcasting organization provides radio play-by-play of games and programs for radio and the web. A student-run public relations firm creates marketing and promotional materials for Falcon Media. A previous association between the School and the University-licensed public television station-- has lapsed.

Students are required to take a 1-credit course, "Student Media Participation," which is an introduction to all of the media outlets, but they need not have completed it to volunteer. BG24, the student media TV outlet, is run as a capstone class for credit in the Spring semester but is all-volunteer in the Fall. Falcon Media is a primary source of the required on-campus internships for students in the program.

Students maintain editorial control over the content of Falcon Media and up to a dozen student leaders are paid stipends. All of the student media outlets operate out of the same "convergence lab," and all of the outlets contribute to the main student media website, BGFalconMedia.com.

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

The program has no formal system for evaluating its advising services. The self-study states that the current advising system works well, as evidenced by graduation rates, which match or exceed those of the University as a whole through 2017, the last year for which rates were provided to the accreditation team. However, the results of the student survey mentioned above led the School's retention committee to recommend that all advising be done within the School, dropping the current system of having a College-appointed adviser work with students for their first two years. The proposal would have likely required a course release for faculty involved in advising. No action has yet been taken.

SUMMARY:

A real strength of the program is the wide range of student media opportunities on offer. Students can participate beginning in their first semester, can get credit for fulfilling an on-campus internship requirement in student media, and can earn stipends if they become student media managers. All of these aspects of student media make it an attractive option and a useful recruiting tool. The program's advising process is working adequately, despite student complaints. A proposal to revamp the process is currently under review.

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 has a comprehensive budget assembled by a School budget coordinator and the director. Because the journalism and public relations department was converted to a major within the larger School of Media and Communication since the last review, the budget presented in the self-study was for the entire School making it difficult to compare budgets from one accreditation cycle to the next. Clearly, there has been a major reduction of faculty lines (five or six depending on what time period is selected). The central administration has been committed to providing more lines, but the progress has been slow. Thus, the program has struggled to teach its classes with full-time faculty, to advise students adequately, and to perform its previous range of public service activities. In all conversations up and down the line, inadequate full-time faculty emerged as the critical need. The administration also realizes that the program has suffered a 50 percent enrollment decline since the last full-scale site visit and that any restoration of lines will not approach five full-time positions.

The lack of faculty became enmeshed in the dialogue begun in 2021 by the president and provost that illuminated alumni frustration and a general perception that the program had been in decline. The provost's memo mandated a program review to be conducted by the journalism and PR faculty. The provost's memo was followed by written responses from the acting arts and sciences dean and the School director. Since the internal review, the program has hired a new tenure-track assistant professor and is searching for a professionally-oriented non-tenure-track faculty member. Also, a faculty member from the Media Production and Studies major with journalism experience has begun to teach some journalism classes.

The lack of permanent faculty has meant that the program has had to rely heavily on graduate students to teach courses, some of whom have no background in journalism or PR. The program would rather have adjuncts from the profession to fill the gap until permanent faculty can be hired. The low, standardized adjunct pay across the university has been a disincentive for professionals to teach a class.

(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 precipitous drop in faculty lines resulting from retirements struck a severe blow to the program. While budgets throughout the university were in flux during this period, the perception is that journalism and public relations suffered more damage than most. Even within the School of Media and Communication, which has seen its budget rise over the past four years, there appears to be inequity.

The program does have a journalism endowment from the Currier Foundation that produces around \$50,000 annually. But the funds can only be used for guest lecturers, student scholarships and faculty development, not for hiring much-needed adjuncts. There is another fund that supports an annual lecture.

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

Journalism and Public Relations' move into the intensively remodeled Kuhlin Center transformed the program's technology and space portfolio. It features a convergence lab, a dual-station radio suite, an audio recording studio, a television production studio, a television control room, an equipment checkout facility, an audio-visual editing lab and two computer laboratories (PC & Mac), a forensics suite and a focus group space. For the accredited program, the convergence lab housing Falcon Media, the computer labs and the field checkout provide the greatest value for the curriculum. Yet, all of the production areas are open to journalism students. The Kuhlin Center benefits from the work of two experienced, dedicated engineers who maintain a wide range of technology. A sophisticated series of servers and switching panels adds maximum flexibility and room to grow.

Journalism and PR received a boost with the hiring of a full time director for Falcon Media last year. This badly needed hire has given new life to student media, provided significantly more real-world experience and improved the quality of output for student publications

The School maintains a centralized equipment check-out center that ensures student equipment is functioning and accounted for. Students appreciate the range of equipment available for checkout but are frustrated with the limited hours for checkout, the 24-hour limit on use of equipment, and the requirement that students be enrolled in a particular class to obtain equipment.

(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

There is no question that the impressive Kuhlin Center provides students with every possible access to equipment and technology and opens the doors to a variety of student media activities. It also provides students with an opportunity to work with students from other majors in the department.

The program does not have enough faculty resources to maintain the major at its optimum level or to think about moving into new, attractive curricular areas. The administration at the highest levels is aware of this serious situation, but a way forward has not been found. In the meantime, the program languishes in important areas.

SUMMARY:

The Kuhlin Center has elevated the program's facilities to a new level and provides students with abundant opportunity for hands-on experience. However, the lack of adequate faculty means the facilities are not being used to the best advantage. Students often have to wait to enroll in required hands-on courses because they are offered only once a year. The program cannot maintain its previous public service role. The faculty's limitations keep the program from realizing its potential.

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

Class visits are the primary way in which the program engages with alumni, who are invited to return to campus as guest speakers. There is no formal process of tracking or connecting with alumni, however. The program relies on social media to communicate with them. In the self-study, the program reports that it uses LinkedIn to locate graduates. The student newspaper, BG News, has its own alumni association, for which the School manages a Facebook group.

Since the previous site visit, several prominent alumni were sharply critical of the program in a white paper, which they presented to the University provost and president. One outcome was the creation of a Journalism alumni advisory board in 2022, which has since been pressing for changes in the program. Alumni we spoke to before the site visit said that until recently the faculty was not engaged with professional newsrooms, was “out of touch” and “on an island.” They described the curriculum as outdated and in need of revision.

A member of the alumni advisory board told the site team that the board’s meetings have been productive, that for the first time in a decade members of the faculty and the School director have been directly involved with an alumni group and that progress is being made. The core alumni group told the team that they are optimistic that a School director will be hired with a strong journalism background and that curricular changes will be forthcoming.

Recently-hired faculty are actively involved with national groups, such as SPJ and PRSSA, which both have student chapters on campus. With the help of funding from the Currier Foundation, faculty have been able to take students to both SPJ and PRSSA conferences. In 2022, a student story was named a finalist for in-depth reporting in the regional Mark of Excellence awards from SPJ.

(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 program’s professional service activities mainly involve judging awards competitions, including the Osman Hooper newspaper award through 2021. One faculty member served on the professional development committee of the Ohio Newspaper Association until 2018. A faculty member hired since the last self-study carried most of the load in 2021-2022, serving as a judge for two regional professional awards in addition to several student awards.

Through the sponsorship of public lectures, the program has addressed some recent issues of national concern. In 2019, the program used Currier foundation funds to bring three speakers to campus for a public forum on the Flint water crisis. In 2021, a prominent alumna and author gave a public presentation on the opioid crisis.

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

The department serves the local community in several ways. Some public relations classes take on local nonprofits as clients, giving the students real-world experience and the nonprofits valuable public relations assistance. The campus-based FM station carries programming produced by community members, who come to the studio to host regular programs.

Students are required to take one off-campus internship for credit, which usually places them in nearby newsrooms or public relations agencies.

Several faculty members have leadership positions in professional organizations.

(e) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The program's engagement with scholastic journalism is limited, in part due to recent retirements. A former faculty member was heavily involved with the Ohio Scholastic Media Association. Another former faculty member served for years on a media advisory board at a Toledo high school. Their departures have reduced the program's commitment to scholastic journalism. One new hire did serve as a judge for two regional high school Emmy awards in 2022.

A regular high school summer program conducted by the media production and studies program will for the first time include a journalism session in 2023. The student media director also plans more outreach to local high schools.

SUMMARY:

While engagement with alumni had diminished in recent years, the program now has an active and committed advisory board of journalism alumni. They meet regularly with faculty and others in University leadership and are directly involved in discussions about proposed curriculum changes. Recent retirements have loosened connections between the program and scholastic journalism but those relationships are now being rebuilt.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- A recognition that change is necessary to revitalize the journalism and public relations program.
- Impressive facilities in the Kuhlin Center that can meet any technology or production need students might have.
- Alumni reengagement that is driving positive change.
- University leadership that badly wants the program to succeed and realizes the importance of journalism to democracy.
- An enthusiastic new director of Falcon Media who is reconnecting student media to the curriculum and expanding student media opportunities.
- A self-aware, articulate student body that understands the challenges of the program and wants to effect change.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate number of professionally-oriented faculty to deliver a robust academic program for students and carry out the program's stated mission.
- An overall weakness in diversity efforts that manifests itself in the lack of diverse faculty and student engagement over diversity.
- Slowness in responding to proposals for curricular change and refining the relationship between journalism and public relations.
- Curricular requirements that limit students' abilities to delve into hands-on experiences early enough in their programs.

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

Standard 4—Diversity and Inclusiveness

Standard 7—Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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.

N/A

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

1. Demonstrate a higher priority in diversity efforts that would include attracting more diverse faculty hiring pools and enriching the curricular content delivered to students.
2. Provide faculty resources sufficient to deliver the current curriculum.

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

6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize 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.

Standard One: Mission, Governance and Administration

“The Department and School are working through a series of documents relating to governance. Those documents are mandated by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the various campus units are interpreting various mandates. The Department and School will need to clarify authority and autonomy on various issues for healthy mission, governance and administration of the Department.”

The Collective Bargaining Agreement is now in its third iteration, and all issues mentioned by the previous site team have been resolved.

“Weak and lack of scholarship/creative work from the tenure, tenure-track faculty puts faculty longevity in peril, especially in recruitment and retention of assistant professors. The Department has faculty holding graduate faculty status and others who have lost that status.”

The retirement of some faculty and the hiring of two new highly productive faculty members along with enhanced productivity from existing faculty have elevated the output of creative work to a satisfactory level.

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 succinct. The team appreciated its candor. Some information contained in the appendices should also have been summarized in the self-study. Some information in the self-study was old; some information that should have been in the self-study was missing.