

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2022-2023

Name of Institution: California State University, Chico

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Debra S. Larson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism & Public Relations

Name and Title of Administrator: Janell Bauer, Chair

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: Dec. 4-7, 2022

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Feb. 14-17, 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

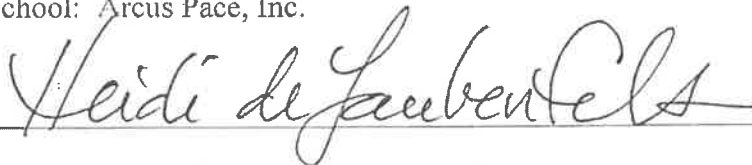
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Heidi de Laubenfels, Founder & CEO
Organization/School: Arcus Pace, Inc.

Signature 

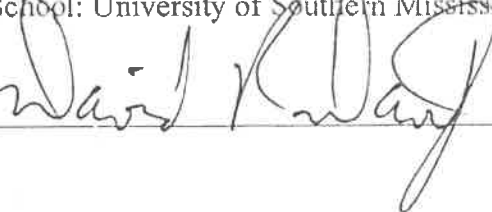
Team Member

Name and Title: Amy Struthers Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Advertising and Public Relations
Organization/School: University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: David R. Davies Ph.D., Professor of Journalism
Organization/School: University of Southern Mississippi

Signature 

PART I: General information

Name of Institution: California State University, Chico

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism & Public Relations

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

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.

The California State University is the world's largest comprehensive higher education system, with 23 campuses serving more than 485,000 students and employing 56,000 people statewide. The individual universities were brought together as a system by the Donohoe Higher Education Act of 1960.

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:

Feb. 15-17, 2016

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

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

Our Vision

To be one of the most recognized and cutting-edge journalistic writing programs in the California State University system and to provide students with the communication and media technology skills they need for success in a wide range of fields.

Our Mission

Preparing Chico State students to be ethical, knowledgeable, responsible, versatile and engaged communicators.

Our Values

- Innovation & adaptation
- Diversity & inclusion
- Ethics & equity
- Free speech & democratic ideals
- Collaboration & Leadership

What We Teach

- Critical, creative and independent thinking.
- Professional standards and ethical practice of journalism and public relations.
- Leadership.
- Working with and conveying information to diverse communities.
- Appreciation for the history, purpose and relevance of the First Amendment and media law, including privacy, libel, copyright, intellectual property and freedom of information.
- Creating audience-appropriate content by conducting research via digital channels, interviewing, fact checking, writing across multiple platforms and engaging audiences with visual tools.
- The evolution of digital information and media technologies.
- Journalistic style, grammar and spelling, while editing with accuracy and consistency.
- Numeracy.
- Working in multidisciplinary teams to professionally package and transmit information via current and emerging technologies.

Last revised spring 2022

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 16

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 3-12

Number of weeks in intersessions: 3

(**Note:** J&PR rarely offers summer or intersession classes. These classes must be self-supporting at Chico State and departments do not receive funding to offer them or budget credit for students enrolled in them.)

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.

The Bachelor of Arts in Journalism with options in News and Public Relations

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

120 semester hours

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

Up to three credit hours per semester for formal onsite internships. Total number of internship units in degree cannot exceed six units. These internships are approved and supervised by the department chair.

Note: All students are required to complete internship-level work in option-capstone labs.

- Students in the News option must spend at least one semester working on the program's award-winning, student-run news organization, The Orion. They may earn up to nine units overall for work across multiple semesters for The Orion (two semesters as three-unit practicum; one semester as three-unit newsroom leadership/management). The Orion is supervised by the News option professional-in-residence.
- Students in the PR option must spend at least one semester in a supervised onsite internship for a non-profit organization in Butte County or one semester working for the program's student-managed PR agency, Tehama Group Communications. They may earn up to six units overall. Onsite PR internships and TGC are supervised by PR option faculty.
- Students in News are encouraged to apply for non-management jobs with Tehama Group Communications and students in PR are encouraged to apply for non-management jobs with The Orion.

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.

<i>Name of Sequence or Specialty</i>	<i>Person in Charge</i>
News Option	Chair Janell Bauer, in consultation with faculty & News professional-in-residence
PR Option	Chair Janell Bauer, in consultation with faculty & PR professional-in-residence
Journalism Minor	Chair Janell Bauer

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

12,895 (spring 2022, full-time equivalent). For comparison, full-time enrollment during our last self-study was 15,412, a decrease of 16.3 percent.
 12,869 (fall 2022, full-time equivalent).

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. Give the semester and academic year represented.

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate Majors (post-census fall 2021)	Undergraduate (post-census fall 2022)	Undergraduate Minors (post-census fall 2022)
News	57	39	
Public Relations	67	60	
Total	124	99	28

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses. List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term.

Class	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022
JOUR 260W-01, Writing for Mass Media	10	22	9
JOUR 260W-02, Writing for Mass Media	24	Not offered	21
JOUR 301, Data Journalism	5	Not offered	9
JOUR 321W, Public Affairs Reporting	Not offered	17	Not offered
JOUR 325W, Magazine Writing	19	11	13
JOUR 327, News Editing	9	15	Not offered
JOUR 329 & 331, News Lab / The Orion	21	14	20
JOUR 341W, Writing for PR	15	10	21
JOUR 344, PR Strategy	10	6	9
JOUR 351, PR Publications	8	11	16
JOUR 354, Multiplatform Storytelling	14	Not offered	Not offered
JOUR 355, Online Presentation	Not offered	19	Not offered
JOUR 445, PR Lab / Tehama Group Com	15	13	9
JOUR 458, Applied Emerging Technologies*	4	7	Not offered

**JOUR 458 is part of Chico State's Media, Entertainment & Technology Experience, which brings together students in J&PR, Media Arts, Design, & Technology and Computer Animation & Game Development. They work in industry-standard teams on projects for community-based clients. Project partnerships have included work for Sierra Nevada Brewing and Lundberg Family Farms.*

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

2021-2022: \$805,702
 2020-2021: \$863,041
 2019-2020: \$761,100

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

2021-2022: \$805,702 (-6.6% from 2020-2021; +5.9% from 2019-2020)
 2020-2021: \$863,041 (+13.4%)
 2019-2020: \$761,100

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

\$614,752 (\$82,570 for part-time salaries)

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.

- Samara Anarbaeva, associate professor (on sabbatical academic year 2022-2023)
- Janell Bauer, associate professor, department chair
- Stephen Caldes, assistant professor
- Forrest Hartman, lecturer
- Debra Johnson, professional-in-residence, lecturer
- Aaron Quinn, professor
- Susan Wiesinger, 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.

Fall 2022

- Martin Frigaard (JOUR 301, “Data Journalism”)
- Michael Griffin (JOUR 130W, “Writing for Public Audiences” x 5)
- Bernard Richter (JOUR 130W, “Writing for Public Audiences” x 2)

Spring 2022

- Mandy Feder Sawyer (JOUR 260W, “Writing for Mass Media”)
- Michael Griffin (JOUR 130W, “Writing for Public Audiences”)

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

2021-22 academic year: 31 (15 News, 16 PR)

2020-21 academic year: 30 (14 News, 16 PR)

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Background

California State University, Chico, is one of 23 campuses in the CSU system. The nearest neighboring university is in Sacramento, 90 miles away. In contrast to the University of California system, which places a greater emphasis on research, the CSU system emphasizes teaching and learning. For faculty, that usually translates into a heavy teaching load each semester. Each faculty member also has the responsibility of advising 20-30 students.

The Journalism & PR department has been an independent department in the College of Communication and Education for more than 30 years. It is a small, focused undergraduate program, with seven full-time faculty members and 134 majors and minors.

Cal State Chico is a residential campus, with only about one-fifth of its students commuting. Three-quarters of its students receive financial aid, and many of the university's students also are the first in their families to attend a four-year university. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution, 36.3 percent of its students identify as Hispanic / Latinx. Average high school GPA for enrolled first-year students is 3.38. About 98 percent of the students are California citizens. About 56 percent of faculty members are full time.

Challenges identified in the last site team report have been compounded over the past six years by continued financial stresses and declines in state funding, university enrollment that has dropped from 16,140 to 12,895, the COVID-19 pandemic and devastating nearby fires and floods.

The Camp Fire in November 2018 decimated the nearby town of Paradise in a matter of hours, destroying more than 18,000 homes and businesses, claiming 85 lives, and leaving 26,000 people evacuated and in need of shelter. Twenty percent of the campus' faculty and students lost their homes, and the fire forced a two-week closure of the campus.

As a result of the Camp Fire, rental and home sale prices skyrocketed in Chico, making it hard for students and faculty to secure affordable housing. Parents expressed concern about sending their students to fire-prone Northern California. By spring of 2020, the effects of the Camp Fire on Chico were starting to ease. Then the pandemic struck, spurring Cal State Chico to close its campus for three semesters and deliver online-only instruction during that time.

The university's president, who has served since 2016 and brought leadership stability through this turbulent period, announced her intention to retire shortly before the site team arrived in Chico. Given her tenure came on the heels of considerable institutional leadership turmoil (the previous site team report also noted the university president at the time had announced his retirement), this surprise news is creating some anxiety on campus.

Despite these challenges and more, the site team encountered a department and college full of dedicated, passionate, resourceful faculty, staff, alumni and students who are continuing to innovate and advance their mission.

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 current mission statement was adopted in 2017, and faculty have worked together – in collaboration

with the Professional Advisory Board – to modify it more than once in recent years:

Preparing Chico State students to be ethical, knowledgeable, responsible, versatile and engaged communicators.

The department's vision is "to be one of the most recognized and cutting-edge journalistic writing programs in the California State University system and to provide students with the communication and media technology skills they need for success in a wide range of fields."

J&PR's written 2019-2024 strategic plan, which is [on the mission page on the department's website](#), includes relevant goals, objectives and indicators. Contributions from alumni and the advisory board shaped the goals, and the plan was also crafted to align with the [institutional strategic plan](#). The department chair updates and monitors the plan, bringing any concerns or goals in need of update to the faculty for discussion and action.

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

The mission statement is on the website, although it isn't terribly easy to find when navigating from the Cal State home page. The site team had to specifically search for the Journalism home page to find it on the university site.

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?

Faculty members say they do regularly refer to and discuss the strategic plan. In the spring of 2022, the program faculty reviewed and slightly revised the plan to reflect enrollment trends and need for increased visibility on campus. One faculty member pointed to several examples of recent initiatives driven by the strategic plan:

- a major overhaul of curriculum
- pursuit of the collaboration among the three programs participating in Chico State's Media, Entertainment and Technology Experience (METX)
- collaboration with Computer Science's computer animation and game development program
- partnering on the Agriculture Leadership and Communication major
- participation in the [Health and Human Services](#) majors collaborative

As in the institutional plan, measurements of success in the department's plan are largely non-specific with regard to target outcomes and timing. The department leans on the assessment process to ensure it's in line with its stated strategy.

(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.

Characterize in depth the leadership of the unit as an agent for progress, advocate for the unit's

fields of study within the university and aggressive connector with alumni. What significant achievements can be attributed to the leader? Has the leader built partnerships within the university? Is the leader seen as a strong advocate on matters of diversity, inclusion and equity? Is faculty and student diversity improving? Do scholars and professionals work collaboratively? Is creativity in curriculum, teaching and research sought and rewarded? Is the leader driving forward the curriculum (while respecting faculty governance and required process) to keep up with a rapidly changing media world?

While the current chair is in her first semester in the role, she has been a part of the faculty throughout the period under review and contributed to what many, both inside and outside the department, describe as considerable success building relationships within the university and with students and alumni. The two preceding chairs, both of whom led during the review period, remain on the faculty, which comes across as genuinely caring and collegial.

Despite considerable fiscal and environmental challenges, in recent years the faculty have developed several innovative partnerships that are benefiting students, the university and the community.

One example is the METX (Media, Entertainment & Technology Experience) program, which brings together students and faculty from three programs across two colleges to enable student teams to produce video, virtual reality, mixed reality and web content for a local client once each academic year. Teams have developed work for Sierra Nevada Brewing Company and Lundberg Family Farms, among other regional organizations. Their work has been highlighted in the president's "State of the University" address and has been celebrated as one of the most innovative programs in the CSU system.

Other noteworthy collaborations include partnerships with the College of Agriculture (on a new Ag Communication & Leadership major) and with the Health & Human Services Majors collaborative (which encourages pre-nursing students to choose a second major in the event they don't get into the highly competitive nursing program). The College of Agriculture is among the few on campus where enrollment is growing, and many individuals spoke enthusiastically about the potential for growth associated with the new major.

J&PR's strong connections with alumni lead to extensive alumni presence in classes, job pipelines for students, an active Professional Advisory Board and alumni giving that boosts support for student activities.

The dean and associate dean both spoke highly of the current chair, noting she is a great advocate for her people and is willing and able to have hard conversations. "She's strong," they said, a comment echoed by a faculty member who called her "a real go-getter."

The chair's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion permeates her work as a teacher, leader and scholar. Shortly before the site team's visit, the National Communication Association honored a book she co-authored on gender, race and society with a Distinguished Edited Book award. The dean made a point of calling out the chair's personal investment in inclusion and the fact that faculty throughout the department are committed to making sure the curriculum incorporates a DEI perspective.

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

The site team did not find Cal State Chico in the ACEJMC 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.

Yes. <https://www.csuchico.edu/jour/academics/accountability/index.shtml>

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.

Faculty members initiate policy and curriculum changes. Any changes begin with discussions among faculty members, with written proposals prepared for consideration by the appropriate college and university committees.

J&PR faculty members regularly serve on several college and university committees, including:

- curriculum, which initiates new courses and reviews existing curricula
- scholarship, which identifies deserving students for monetary or honorary recognition
- internships, which reviews requirements and supervision of internships
- leaves, which approves sabbaticals and leaves without pay

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

Departments at Cal State Chico are required to meet and select a nominating committee of three or more department members when it is time to select a new chair. That committee reviews the position description and – together with the dean – sets selection criteria. Candidates may be nominated by the committee or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the department faculty.

The committee assesses candidates based on its criteria and submits all qualified candidates with its recommendations to the department, where faculty members vote by secret ballot. The results of the vote are forwarded to the dean, who sends her recommendation – together with the nominee who received the majority of faculty votes cast – to the provost. The provost then appoints the department chair, who serves at the pleasure of the university president. Terms are a maximum of three years, with a minimum of two years.

The faculty may initiate an administrative recall action of the department chair by petition to the dean. The petition must be signed by 25 percent of the full-time faculty members serving at or above the rank of instructor or equivalent.

The dean of the college evaluates the chair's performance based on fiscal management, department leadership and representation of the department, college and university, along with "other duties as assigned."

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

Students and faculty told site team members that, while they experience minimal concerns, they are comfortable bringing them to the department chair and/or anyone on the faculty. Depending on the nature of a concern shared with the chair, she will raise it in a faculty meeting or sit down with relevant faculty members separately to discuss it and co-create solutions.

If necessary, concerns can be reported to other campus offices, such as Title IX.

Personnel issues are handled by the department's Personnel Committee, often in consultation with the college dean. Concerns at any point throughout the faculty-evaluation process can be brought to the dean or to union representatives.

Chico State faculty are represented by Bargaining Unit 3 of the Service Employees International Union, Local 1000, also known as the California Faculty Association. That means faculty labor relations are largely governed by the [Unit 3 Collective Bargaining Agreement](#).

SUMMARY:

This is a “small but mighty” program that enjoys enthusiastic support from alumni, peers across campus, and college leadership. Faculty and staff demonstrate genuine regard for one another and clearly work hard to overcome fiscal and environmental challenges. Their deep commitment to students is palpable. This is clearly a department with fair, effective faculty and leadership that are innovating and serving students well.

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.

Students at all universities in the California State University system are required to complete a 48-hour general education core. J&PR contributes five courses to the Cal State Chico core, and these courses count toward both the core and toward students' requirements in their major. The five courses are

- JOUR130W, Writing for public audiences, core area A2, Written communication.
- JOUR210, Pop culture & media innovation, core area D, Social sciences.
- JOUR211, Gender & sexuality in media, core area D, Social sciences.
- JOUR255, Digital literacy & media technologies, area E, Learning for life.
- JOUR460W, Ethical problems in mass media, area upper-division C, Arts & humanities.

(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.

Students in the journalism major choose one of two sequences, news or public relations, for a total of 48 hours, with 21-24 hours of skills-based coursework and 21-24 hours (seven or eight three-semester-hour courses) of theoretical and conceptual courses. Many of the theoretical/conceptual courses include some elements of skills-related instruction.

Of the 48 required hours, the program includes 24 hours of required major core courses, 12 hours of electives (six in theory electives and six in applied and visual storytelling) and 12 hours in news or public relations, depending upon the student's track. Coursework is as follows:

Core courses for all students (24 hours)

- JOUR 255, Digital literacy & media technologies
- JOUR 260W, Writing for mass media
- JOUR 265, Survey of PR & media relations
- JOUR 300, Crisis communication
- JOUR 320, Mass communication law
- JOUR 327, Media editing, proofreading & entry-level layout
- JOUR 411, Race & diversity in media
- JOUR 460W, Ethical problems in mass media

Elective courses (12 hours)

Theory electives (6 hours required)

- JOUR 210, Pop culture & media innovation
- JOUR 211, Gender & sexuality in media
- JOUR 424, Public opinion & propaganda (cross-listed with CMST & POLS)
- JOUR 428, Politics & media (cross-listed with CMST & POLS)

Applied & visual storytelling skills electives (6 hours required)

- JOUR 325W, Magazine writing (creative nonfiction)
- JOUR 329 / 331, The Orion, second semester or management
- JOUR 351, PR publications
- JOUR 353, Photojournalism
- JOUR 354, Multiplatform storytelling
- JOUR 355, Online presentation of news & PR (web design)
- JOUR 445, Tehama Group Communications, second semester
- JOUR 458, Applied emerging technologies for media & entertainment

Track/sequence courses (12 hours)

News option

- JOUR301, Data journalism
- JOUR 321W, Public affairs reporting
- JOUR 322, History of American journalism
- JOUR 329, News laboratory / The Orion

PR option

- JOUR 341W, Writing for PR
- JOUR 342, PR research
- JOUR 344, PR strategy
- JOUR 444 PR laboratory / Tehama Group Communications

The self-study provides a course matrix quantifying how the teaching of the ACEJMC values and competencies are covered in curriculum courses. The matrix shows that most values and competencies are covered in multiple courses.

(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.

In its assessment plan, the unit makes extensive use of biannual meetings of the Advisory Board, which reviews the curriculum and conducts focus groups of students to ensure that course content is matched to industry needs. Faculty report that they regularly update their course content to reflect skills demanded by students' future employers. The curriculum was updated in the 2021-2022 school year to reflect improvements recommended by the faculty with input from the Advisory Board, and updates to the current curriculum are in the planning stages for potential adoption as early as 2023-2024.

The current curriculum is demanding and robust. J&PR has nine courses that provide hands-on experience with multimedia storytelling and digital competencies. These include four courses that are required of students in either their major core or their sequence core. Students have access to a drone, photo and audio studio equipment, portable audio and video equipment, digital cameras, and the like. The vast majority of the equipment was purchased in the past five years during the current accreditation cycle thanks to alumni donations or grants.

News option

Students in the news sequence take multiple courses that require them to learn a wide range of digital skills, including JOUR255, Digital literacy & media technologies, and JOUR301, Data journalism. In addition, students must select two courses in applied visual and storytelling skills, all of which include digital competencies. News students must take JOUR329, News laboratory, in which they work for the student newspaper, The Orion, for which they are expected to put the digital skills they have learned into practice.

Faculty also build on students' instruction with frequent trips to news organizations in the region, often to larger markets such as Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Jose. In addition, students are active in national conferences. For example, The Orion adviser accompanied 10 student reporters to the Associated College Press national conference in Long Beach, Calif., in March 2022.

Public relations option

Like their peers in the news option, students in the public relations option take multiple courses that require them to master a wide range of digital and multimedia skills. In addition, they must take two courses in applied visual and storytelling, all of which include digital skills.

Public relations faculty facilitate site visits to public relations agencies, giving students access to working professionals, and PR practitioners are frequent guest speakers in J&PR classes.

In meetings with the site team, students were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of instruction they had received – in both the public relations and news options – and reported that they had been well-prepared for their first internships. Moreover, site team members' interviews with members of the J&PR Advisory Board found high satisfaction among employers with the skills levels that the department's graduates brought to their first jobs.

From all information gathered by the site team, instruction in J&PR appeared robust, demanding, and reflective of the needs of the industries the department serves. "If our curriculum doesn't match what we say we're doing," one faculty member observed, "we're doing something not right."

(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 department consistently works with its J&PR Advisory Board of Professionals to ensure that the curriculum and programs reflect the skills and competencies that employers need. These efforts seem to be bearing fruit, as Advisory Board members express great satisfaction with the unit's graduates.

Cal State Chico alumni are regular visitors to J&PR classrooms, so much so that students commented on the number of regular visits from alumni to their classes.

(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.

J&PR keeps almost all skills courses below the required 20-1 ratio for skills courses. However, of the 23 skills courses offered in the 2021-2022 academic year, three sections exceeded the 20-1 ratio: JOUR260W, Writing for the mass media (24-1 in one section, 22-1 in another), and JOUR329/331 (News lab/the Orion). The unit reports that it is under pressure from university administrators to exceed the ratios for efficiency purposes – and indeed to raise course caps to 30 – but will need to resist such pressures to remain in compliance with this accreditation requirement.

(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).

All J&PR students have ample opportunities for internships thanks to the unit's robust internship program. Public relations students are required to complete an internship, either an external internship outside of the department or one with the student-managed public relations agency, Tehama Group Communications. News students are not required to complete an internship but are encouraged to do so. However, news students are required to work for The Orion for at least one semester as a part of their coursework.

For-credit internships are offered during the regular semesters and require students to work eight to 10 hours per week. Employers are given the option of providing a stipend, scholarship, or hourly pay, but not all do. Internships are coordinated by news and public relations faculty members, who maintain a comprehensive database on internship placement.

Public relations internships

Since public relations students are required to have an internship, they work either external to the university or do an internship with Tehama Group Communications (TGC). Prior to the pandemic, students interested in a Tehama Group internship had to apply for the internship, though generally all students were accepted except those who had not completed pre-requisite courses. During the pandemic years, the application process was modified to allow all students to enroll in TGC. Prospective TGC clients reach out to the department via a website form, and the TGC adviser meets with the clients to establish the scope of work and fees. Agency clients are then selected based on their needs and ability to provide valuable professional public relations experiences to a team of PR and creative students that can be completed with the 15-week time frame of a project.

For all external internships, a faculty member serves as adviser and facilitates paperwork with the internship supervisor after determining suitability of the placement. The faculty supervisor holds progress meetings with the students as well as midterm and final evaluations from the internship supervisors.

The department provided a long list of public relations internships that students had completed during the review period, ranging from public entities such as the Downtown Chico Business Association to local agencies to local businesses such as Upper Park Crossfit and Results Radio.

News internships

While students in the news sequence are not required to complete internships, they are required to work

at least one semester in The Orion. Those who do pursue external internships go through the same application process and the same paperwork requirements as do the public relations students. More often than not, external internships are not taken for university credit, but instead for paid experience.

Recent internships held by J&PR news students include placements by the Chico *Enterprise-Record*, the *Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, CalMatters, and Action News Now.

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.

SUMMARY:

The unit has a robust curriculum with a strong mix of skills and theoretical/conceptual courses. The curriculum is regularly reviewed by faculty with input from its Professional Advisory Board. Students' experiences in classes are augmented by internships at the student newspaper, the student public relations agency, and off-campus internships.

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 indeed has a written assessment plan that is reviewed regularly and reflects the wide range of competencies students need to succeed in today's media marketplace, including competencies required to succeed in the digital delivery of news and information. The plan is posted on the unit's website.

For assessment purposes, the unit has collapsed the 10 ACEJMC competencies into eight skills and competencies:

- Critical thinking – Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Professionalism and ethics – Apply professional standards and ethical practice of journalism and public relations.
- Communication and inclusion – Work with and convey information to diverse communities.
- Knowledge foundations – Understand the history, purpose and relevance of the First Amendment and media law, including privacy, libel, copyright, intellectual property and freedom of information.
- Research and audience engagement – Create audience-appropriate content by conducting research via digital channels, interviewing, fact checking, writing across multiple platforms and engaging audiences with visual tools.
- Numeracy – Demonstrate digital information and number literacy, as well as explain the evolution of media technologies.
- Writing and revision – Demonstrate competency in grammar, spelling and Associated Press style while editing their work and the work of others with accuracy and consistency.
- Multiplatform storytelling – Professionally package and transmit information via current and emerging technologies and work as part of a team in producing such work.

Assessment was conducted regularly in each year of the review period except for two years, 2019-2020 and 2020-21, when faculty were dealing first with the aftermath of the Camp Fire – which precipitated a dramatic drop in enrollment – and then with the Covid-19 pandemic. The faculty member responsible for assessment said that both the university and unit were in crisis mode in those academic years, forcing faculty to focus on the pressing issues of day-to-day teaching and operations at the expense of other concerns. During the pandemic, university classes shifted to all-virtual for three straight semesters. In the month leading up to the Fall 2020 semester, unit administrators were required to change the semester class schedule six times.

(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 goals are clearly outlined in its assessment plan. Moreover, the unit has detailed course matrices – one listing ACEJMC values and competencies and showing which courses teach those competencies, and another listing the eight skills/competencies above and the corresponding courses in which those competencies are taught. In each matrix, the unit has demonstrated that each skill/value/competency is taught in multiple courses in both the students' required and elective courses.

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

The department uses both direct and indirect measures to assess student learning, including, most prominently, input by the Advisory Board on assessments of student learning. Other measures include supervisor evaluations from student capstone internships and pre-test and post-test of student knowledge in foundational courses.

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

Unit faculty say that they especially value the input that they receive from their Advisory Board in assessing their curriculum.

(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 site visit team was impressed with the frankness of the department’s yearly assessment reports as they offered a clear-eyed examination of strengths and weaknesses of the program as well as the unit’s efforts to address any concerns. The annual reports in every year for which assessment was conducted specifies action that was taken as the result of data collected that year. The unit has multiple and impressive examples of “closing the loop” in each year assessed.

SUMMARY:

The unit has a comprehensive assessment program conducted in concert with university assessment processes. Assessment was conducted regularly except in the crisis years of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. The unit’s self-study provides ample evidence of “closing the loop,” i.e., actions taken by the faculty to address concerns and weaknesses found in assessment. The unit’s external Advisory Board is an important and influential component of the assessment process.

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 has a written diversity plan – a “direct response” to the last accrediting report, according to the dean – that is easily accessible on the website. This document, written in 2016, provides an action plan for achieving goals. There have been impressive results: For example, while in fall 2006, roughly 9 percent of the majors reported their ethnicity as Asian, African American or Hispanic, in spring 2015, some 44 percent of J&PR students self-identified as members of those three ethnicities, “an increase of nearly 400 percent,” per the self-study. The plan focuses on domestic minority groups. In particular, the unit is aligned with the university's 2015 designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. The unit's plan is also consistent with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion portion of the Cal State Chico's 2019-2024 strategic plan, one of three priorities in that plan. The unit's plan lacks specific KPIs and doesn't document progress toward goals.

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

The plan is readily available on the institution's website, on the Journalism and Public Relations on the “Our Mission” page.

(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 curriculum is infused with diversity related topics, assignments, guest speakers and projects. Specific courses focused on diversity are spread throughout the 100, 200 and 400 levels. A number of these courses are in the required core for all majors. In reviewing syllabi and interviewing faculty and alums, diversity and inclusiveness awareness was consistently evident. For example, the required Writing for Public Audiences course uses texts by diverse authors with classroom discussions and author visits as a springboard for student writing assignments. The team observed the Race and Diversity in the Media class and found 13 highly engaged students in a dynamic discussion. The Survey of PR and Media Relations class observation included a final project presentation that incorporated DEI considerations as a matter of course.

Faculty have a long list of client projects related to disability advocacy groups, LGBTQA+ organizations and programs for formally incarcerated adults, for low-income Californians, for first generation college students and more. An alum who self-identified as a person of color reflected that faculty “gave us a space to talk. It was incredibly rewarding to air some of that stuff out in a really safe environment.” In conversation with current students, including a number of students representing domestic diversity, the department was repeatedly described as “very inclusive.” Students praised diversity courses such as Race and Diversity in Media and Gender and Sexuality in the Media, saying “it was super impactful,” “I left the class with a completely different way of thinking about things,” the class “challenged a belief I didn't even know I had,” and the classes “need to stay a requirement.”

(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.

The self-study includes an impressive list of faculty who are continuing professional education and certifications in areas of diversity and inclusiveness, providing evidence of commitment to ongoing, continuous enhancement of understanding diversity issues. A few examples of this training include a Diversity Academy, offered by the Chico State Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Hispanic Serving Institution Faculty Learning Community, Dow Jones Multimedia Training for Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and an Impact Fellowship at the China Studies Institute.

A national search led to the successful hiring of a Latino professional-in-residence early in this accrediting cycle, but the lack of security created by the institution's one-year contract requirement for the first six years of employment, combined with the Camp Fire, resulted in the faculty member leaving. Two female faculty members have been granted tenure in the review period and another female professor was promoted to full. Budget constraints limit the number of part-time faculty to three, which includes one female. The unit has a plan for recruitment and retention of diverse faculty ready for when the resources to hire become available again. Their previous successful recruiting efforts indicate their commitment to diversifying the faculty when able.

(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 unit has an impressive recruiting story, with the percentage of diverse students matching or exceeding that of the institution and their service area. An intentional plan to create a pipeline for recruiting from high schools and community colleges across the state showed good results. Enrollment in general plummeted at the institution following the Camp Fire and the pandemic; faculty report special efforts to retain all students, but in particular students of color, with one-on-one attention and accommodations.

(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 faculty exhibit mutual respect and collegiality. This is a warm, cohesive group that alums recall contributing to the welcoming atmosphere of the program. Current students describe the same welcoming atmosphere with "passionate helpful faculty," and also noted times when they had felt quite comfortable addressing concerns - such as a troubling comment in class - and found the faculty members receptive and helpful. An Asian-American student said he didn't see many other Asians on campus, but he appreciates seeing Asians represented in the materials used in classes. This contributes to his feeling of being welcomed and included, he said.

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:

The unit has achieved admirable progress in diversifying the student population with intentional recruiting practices, resulting in numbers mirroring and in some cases surpassing their service area. The curriculum is infused with representation of both domestic and international diverse voices – including under-represented minority and refugee populations – in readings, writing assignments, classroom interactions, speakers and projects. The small faculty are committed to completing continuing education in areas of diversity and inclusiveness, with certifications in a variety of programs mostly focused on historically marginalized and underserved populations. Although budget issues have eliminated the opportunity to hire and thus diversify the faculty, frequent diverse guest speakers are an example of the tactics used to increase representation in the classroom.

A weakness is that syllabi do not have any standard diversity statement nor any standard or consistent use of diversity-related Student Learning Objectives that connect course work to diversity-related competencies.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

Academic year: 2021–2022 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
American Indian/Alaskan Native				
Asian				
Black/African American				
Hispanic/Latino				
Two or More Races/Ethnicities	1	12%		
White	3	38%	4	50%
International (any race)				

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

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
American Indian/Alaskan Native				
Asian				
Black/African American				
Hispanic/Latino				
Two or More Races/Ethnicities				
White	1	25%	3	75%
International (any race)				

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.

Cal State Chico structure ensures that each department's faculty have primary responsibility for all things curriculum, as well as research/creative activity and service, through documents such as the University Personal Policies and the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

(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 department is composed of seven full-time faculty members. The team includes two full professors, two associate professors, one assistant professor, one professional-in-residence, and one full-time instructor. Four have doctoral degrees, one has a Master of Fine Arts (terminal degree in the field), one has a master's degree and one has a bachelor's degree with full completion of master's-level coursework.

Conversations with the faculty reinforce the evidence on CVs and the conversations with campus peers – as well as alums and Professional Advisory Board members – of a highly qualified and current professoriate. The professional-in-residence regularly shares knowledge of the latest industry-critical technology with the rest of the faculty, an example of the collaboration and teamwork evident in this unit.

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

During the review period, three faculty members were awarded sabbaticals to pursue research and creative activity. Procedures for salary, retention, tenure and promotion at Cal State Chico are guided by the faculty union's Collective Bargaining Agreement and the university's Faculty Personnel Policies and Procedures manual.

(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, the faculty produced eight refereed journal articles, 13 refereed conference papers, five book chapters, 18 internal and four external grants, 41 non-refereed articles, and nine refereed conference panels or workshops.

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

Conversations with the dean, associate dean and other campus representatives indicate deep respect for the unit's faculty. The dean described the challenge the small unit has providing required representation on campus committees while still having to do all their own departmental work. The faculty makes it work. The unit received praise for its innovative interdisciplinary projects, such as initiatives involving

computer animation in the engineering program, developing an agriculture communication track, and collaborating with the nursing program.

SUMMARY:

The collegial faculty demonstrate teamwork at its finest. This small group jointly shoulders a tremendous amount of teaching and service, and still produces significant research and creative activity.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (8)
		Full Professors (2)	Associate Professors (2)	Assistant Professors (1)	Other Faculty** (3)	
Awards and Honors	1		1			1
Grants Received Internal	18	5	5		8	18
Grants Received External	4	2			2	4
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	1	1				1
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	1	1				1
Books Edited	1		1			1
Book Chapters	5		3	1	1	5
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	8	2	5	1		8
Refereed Conference Papers	13	2	11			13
Invited Academic Papers	1	1				1
Encyclopedia Entries						
Book Reviews						
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	41		2	11	28	41
Juried Creative Works						
Non-juried Creative Works	8			1	7	8
Other (Referred Conference Paper Panels or Workshops)	9		9			9

*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.

All Cal State-Chico students have digital access to their Degree Progress (DPR) report, which tracks all university and program curriculum requirements. J&PR faculty go over the DPR report with students and guide them through its complexities during advising sessions held each semester. Unit faculty and campus colleagues report that J&PR is one of the few campus units that steadfastly requires all students to attend regularly attend advising sessions. In fact, until recently J&PR students were required to meet with an adviser for an advisement session before they are allowed to register in the campuswide registration system.

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

Student advisees are distributed evenly among faculty members so that each student meets once a semester with a faculty adviser. Faculty members reported that they appreciated these one-on-one sessions with students to discuss classes, career planning, and student concerns. The department provides faculty with a nine-page advising handbook that outlines advising best practices, course planning guidelines, curriculum requirements, internship processes, required paperwork, and other matters. department faculty expand their office hours during the advising period to better accommodate students.

Since Department faculty advisers concentrate mainly on departmental requirements, they work closely with university and college-level advisers who are available to answer questions and to guide students on university-wide requirements. A new College Advising Center in the College of Communication & Education is staffed by peer mentors who undergo 100 hours of training and who are available to help drop-in students. The department reports that it rarely encounters students to fail to meet requirements or do not know what they need to do to successfully complete the program.

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

In addition to the DPR, students are also provided detailed curriculum sheets that outline the requirements in both the journalism major and in public relations. Regular meetings of student organizations such as the student newspaper and the student public relations agency provide a social setting that encourages students and advisers to share news about activities and to discuss requirements, policies, and career advice. Both faculty and students report that the small size of the department makes it easy for students to stay informed about activities within the department.

(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 two primary avenues that J&PR provides for students to develop their professional skills are the student newspaper, The Orion, and the student advertising agency, Tehama Group Communications. The two organizations provide students the opportunity to get their first experience in a media-related field and to build their professional portfolios.

The Orion is a well-respected publication with a long history of serving the campus, though student participation in the past five years has lagged because of declining enrollment in the journalism major. The department faculty commissioned a lengthy study of the newspaper to consider ways to increase student participation.

Students have recently completed news internships with newspapers such as the Sacramento Bee, San Francisco Chronicle and San Joe Mercury-News. Recent PR internships have taken place at more than 30 local organizations.

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

The unit is considered a campus leader in advising in that it adheres strictly to the university requirement that all students are advised. The department credits its four-year graduation rates – one of the highest of any unit in the university – with its consistent advising.

J&PR closely tracks enrollment and retention data using university databases. For the freshman class cohorts beginning their college careers from 2012 to 2017, J&PR reported an average four-year graduation rate of 49 percent compared to the overall university rate of 31 percent. The department's average six-year graduation rate for the 2012 to 2014 cohorts was 78 percent compared to the overall university rate of 66 percent.

One potential barrier to enrollment growth in J&PR is the fact that communications-related practices are scattered across departments in the College of Communication and Education. For example, broadcast majors reside in the Media Arts, Design and Technology department, which recently created a social media minor that has little to no connection to journalism and public relations. The Communication Studies department offers a degree in Communications and Public Affairs that could be confused with a focus on public relations.

Faculty from other departments within the college told the site team that the units used to be more territorial and are now working together more as a team. But more could be done to clarify and streamline the offerings. Better integration and promotion of these areas of study could make it easier to convey to parents and students the fact that the college offers relevant and current overall opportunities for skills development and professional preparation in communications.

SUMMARY:

The department's campus colleagues report that it has a reputation across campus as being exceptionally open to and responsive to students. Students are required to be advised, and the department diligently holds students to meet this expectation. Faculty receive guidance on best advising practices, and few students report problems with progress toward graduation. Extracurricular activities such as The Orion student newspaper and the Tehama Group Communications student-managed PR agency are an integral part of the department and its curriculum. Better integration and promotion of related studies across the college could help boost overall enrollment.

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 department's allocation of general funds for fiscal year 2021-22 – which is primarily driven by salary requirements, full-time equivalent students enrolled in classes and the number of program majors and minors – was \$810,059. That allocation has been dropping slightly year over year, along with overall state funding for the institution. About 97 percent of the department's budget allocation goes to salaries for faculty and staff.

J&PR brings its total annual budget to about \$1 million by supplementing the university allocation in several ways. First, it actively seeks support from two types of funds from student fees: Instructionally Related Activity (IRA) grants and Student Learning Fees (SLF). The latter are awarded by a panel of students representing all seven colleges and are given with the aim of enhancing the student experience.

The department applies those supplemental funds to technology, student travel and a work study program that enables \$300-\$500 award stipends to Tehama Group Communications (TGC) student leaders who might otherwise have to forego the opportunity in favor of paying work off-campus.

Alumni donations and university-giving campaigns support activities such as student awards, branded items and faculty adviser travel for student networking and professional activities. Client fees for TGC work also support the student agency.

Several people interviewed by the site team made a point of noting how creative and resourceful the J&PR department is with funding sources and discretionary accounts to advance its strategic plan.

(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 chair, the dean and the senior assistant to the dean (who administers budgets for the college) all confirm J&PR is resourced fairly relative to other departments. The allocation logic, which is based on FTEs and salaries, helps ensure fair distribution of general funds. The senior assistant dean noted that, because J&PR has had some increase in enrollment, its allocation of funds for discretionary activities has actually risen in the last year relative to other departments in the college.

All agree the whole California State University system is experiencing severe financial constraints. Despite this and other challenges, the J&PR department is advancing its mission.

The self-study and site interviews point to an acute need to grow enrollment and, consequently, a desire for increased marketing and promotion of the J&PR program and the successes of its faculty and students. The dean agrees this is a priority, but the department's current budget enables only minimal publicity. The college is helping by creating a new position for a Public Affairs & Communication Specialist who will be charged with storytelling, marketing and promotion of the units in the college. The university has allocated funds for an institution-wide marketing campaign, and J&PR hopes to benefit from that, as well.

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

Cal State Chico sports a spacious, well-appointed library with abundant digital and analog resources. Its Rose Garden room provides faculty with a verdant, private refuge for focused work when they need uninterrupted time.

The appropriately scruffy Orion newsroom offers ample, dedicated space and sufficiently current technology for student staff to produce the mostly online publication. One student mentioned the space is noisy, however, and its location in the basement of a building sometimes interferes with mobile and wifi signals.

The Tehama Group Communications student-managed public relations agency benefits from bright, comfortable, dedicated space and a wide range of video, lighting and photography gear.

While some classrooms could benefit from windows, improved ventilation and general updating, space and information resources are sufficient.

(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.

The Mac Lab's 25 iMac computers were refreshed in 2017 and 2022. Tehama Group Communications makes a range of digital cameras, accessories, lights and audio-recording gear available to students, and complete digital journalism backpack kits were purchased through grant in 2019 for The Orion newsroom.

Students say they have everything they need, from cameras and sound-recording gear to software and instruction. Laptops are available for short-term and long-term checkout. One student mentioned he mistakenly left his laptop at home after Thanksgiving break and had a MacBook Pro within a day.

"I didn't miss a beat," he said.

Broadcast instruction falls under the leadership of a separate department in the college: Media Arts, Design and Technology. Consequently, a fully equipped broadcast studio, photography studio, sound-recording spaces and VR/AR production space are available to students, although because these spaces don't fall under the direct purview of the J&PR department, students and faculty say they are somewhat difficult to find and access.

The provost's office allocates \$600 in professional development funds for faculty. Funds are distributed to departments, where units can make choices about how to use those funds to support faculty activities.

The dean shared with the site team a vision document recommending an institutional capital campaign to fund an "interdisciplinary, multi-platform, state-of-the-art storytelling lab, the Wildcat Media Center, that provides students and faculty access to collaborative space and to the emergent and traditional technologies necessary to craft impactful and relevant narratives."

The vision is to bring together under one umbrella the currently dispersed agency, newspaper, radio station, broadcast and virtual-reality programs. According to the document, this will provide both students and faculty across departments the opportunity to engage in collaborative, hands-on, high-impact storytelling.

SUMMARY:

The last several years have brought a succession of traumas and challenges to the J&PR department, along with all of Cal State Chico and its surrounding areas. Nevertheless, a dedicated and resourceful staff, passionate alumni, and supportive college and dean are providing resources, facilities, and equipment that enable students to develop current, relevant skills that employers value. While concerns about future funding persist and the department would benefit from additional investment in marketing to promote its programs and boost enrollment, it is successfully advancing its mission.

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.

Alumni relations are a strength of the program, with many graduates serving on the Professional Advisory Board, hosting students at their workplace for site visits, hiring students or presenting to classes. In more than a dozen phone conversations with alums from a range of graduation years, praise was consistent and enthusiastic for the program. Social media was implemented in 2011. An electronic alumni newsletter kept graduates apprised of the department's news from 2015-2017. Casualties of the Camp Fire and pandemic, these communication channels are in the process of being restarted.

Phone calls with more than a dozen alumni indicated they felt current, nonetheless. Many described ongoing contact with individual faculty members as well as with current students. The network of former and current students seems to be very strong and active, fed with care by the faculty. Faculty have taken students on site visits to Seattle and Redmond, San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento. They also developed a survey for former Orion newspaper students, part of an effort to reach out to News alums. The survey generated a 45 percent response rate, and the renewed contact produced 44 new donors to The Orion.

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

Faculty have been active in providing leadership in the development of high standards of professional practice in a variety of ways, including: presenting to professional organizations and to the public about their areas of expertise; judging competitions; and reviewing grants and papers. The current department chair serves as Managing Director for Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender.

(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 unit provided a long list of projects in the community through courses such as the new, interdisciplinary Media, Entertainment and Technology Experience class (six projects) and the Tehama Group Communications class (almost 60 projects since Spring 2017). These projects contributed to a wide array of community groups, including nonprofits, small businesses, large businesses, university clients and government programs. Projects in other classes across the curriculum, such as PR Strategy, also worked with real-world clients on service projects/service learning in the Chico area. Alums remembered benefitting from significant community engagement by reporting for The Orion.

(e) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

Faculty in the unit worked with high school teachers to establish a partnership with the unit's Orion news organization and to bring students to campus, as well as have faculty present to classes and critique student work.

SUMMARY:

The unit nurtures a vibrant alumni network through site visits, classroom speakers, social media outreach and newsletters. Current students were enthusiastic about meeting many alums throughout their degree program, resulting in leads for internships and jobs. Faculty members engage in diverse service opportunities to build their connection with the community and the profession.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS:

- Continued significant progress in diversifying the student body
- Faculty who are passionate about student success and create a welcoming, inclusive environment
- An up-to-date curriculum with diversity woven throughout
- Strong network of enthusiastic, supportive alumni

WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES:

- Severe decline in student enrollment across the institution, and in the unit
- Ongoing difficult budget situation
- Continued faculty turnover in the news professional-in-residence position
- Communications practices distributed and siloed throughout the college

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

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. 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.

Both the 2009 and 2016 reports noted California's persistent, unresolved budget crisis. That continues, greatly compounded by the devastating Camp Fire and the pandemic.

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 frank, well-organized and comprehensive. It was carefully written and presented, and the site team found it to be a good read.