

## Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program  
2022-2023

Name of Institution: Murray State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Robert L. Jackson

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism and Mass Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: Kevin Qualls

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: October 30-November 2, 2022

Date of the previous accrediting visit: October 26-28, 2015

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

### Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Re-accreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

#### Team Chair

Name and Title: Alan G. Stavitsky, Dean and Professor

Organization/School: University of Nevada, Reno

Signature



#### Team Member

Name and Title: Pam Luecke, Professor Emerita

Organization/School: Washington & Lee University

Signature



#### Team Member

Name and Title: James Stewart, Department Head and Professor

Organization/School: Nicholls State University

Signature



**PART I: General information**

**Name of Institution:** Murray State University

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

**Year of Visit:** 2022-2023

**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.**

Murray State University is authorized to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board under Title 16 of Kentucky Administrative Regulations as approved and amended by the Kentucky Legislature.

**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 26-28, 2015

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

1986

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

The latest [mission statement](#) was adopted in 2022 to reflect the current ACEJMC values.

To equip students with the necessary philosophical and ethical frameworks; the requisite technical skills in writing and media production; and the ability as life-long learners to interpret, create, and communicate global and local events in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive manner that advances the interests of all stakeholders in media, commerce, and society, while advocating for democratic principles.

Values:

We expect our graduates to achieve the following learning objectives as outcomes of their education in our majors and programs:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

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

Fall and spring semesters of 16 weeks

December-January winter interseesion term of 3 weeks

Summer Session One, 5 weeks

Summer Session Two, 5 weeks

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

Bachelor’s degree

Master’s degree (not a part of the accreditation process)

Ph.D. degree

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

Bachelor of Arts in Advertising  
Bachelor of Science in Advertising

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism  
Bachelor of Science in Journalism

Bachelor of Arts in TV Production  
Bachelor of Science in TV Production

Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations  
Bachelor of Science in Public Relations

- An explanation of BA/BS distinctions can be found [here](#).

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)** 120 credit hours

**11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience. (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)** 1, 2 or 3 credit hours

**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.**

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Advertising	Mr. Gill Welsch
Journalism	Ms. Leigh Landini Wright
Public Relations	Dr. Marcie Hinton
Television/Media Production	Mr. Chris Haynes

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

7,730 Undergraduate Students

1,904 Graduate Students

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	SP '22
Advertising Sequence	21 (BA/BS)
Journalism Sequence	39 (BA/BS)
Public Relations Sequence	36 (BA/B)
Television Production Sequence	30 (BA/BS)

Total 116

Beyond the 116 enrolled in ACEJMC accredited majors, the unit has 19 graduate students and 10 students in the Graphic Communications Media major.

15. Number of students in **each section** of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2023 visits. Include a separate list for **online skills courses**, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaign courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

#### ENROLLMENT IN SKILLS COURSES

Course No.	Course Title	SP '22	FA '22
GCM 152-01	Intro. Digital Imaging	9	14
GCM 152-02	Intro. Digital Imaging	7	12
GCM 152-03	Intro. Digital Imaging	9	13
JMC 194-01	Newswriting	14	13
JMC 194-02	Newswriting	6	9
JMC 270-01	Media Production	8	5
JMC 270-02	Media Production	7	10
JMC 270-03	Media Production	4	4
JMC 304-01	Multimedia Writing	8	13
JMC 305-01	News Editing	8	N/A
JMC 358-01	Television Studio Production	N/A	10
JMC 397-01	In-depth Reporting	N/A	9
JMC 398-01	Advanced Multimedia Reporting	9	N/A
JMC 412-01	Content Creation for Public Relations	7	12
JMC 417-01	Advertising Creative Strategies	9	7
JMC 448-01	Media Production Enterprises	N/A	6
JMC 451-01	Television Field Production	N/A	5
JMC 455-01	Capstone in Media Production	11	N/A
JMC 456-01	Advertising Capstone: The Campaign	7	14
JMC 597-01	Collaborative Journalism Capstone	7	5

\*N/A denotes where no section is offered.

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

**year: Give percentage increase or decrease in three years**

'20-'21 Operating Budget	\$1,464,642	
'21-'22 Operating Budget	\$1,373,129	6.3% decrease from prior year
'22-'23 Operating Budget	\$1,422,968	3.6% increase from prior year

Most of the monies listed above account for salaries and benefits. Two senior faculty members retired at the end of 2021. New hires were hired at a lesser salary, resulting in a decrease in the budget related to salary and benefits from '20-'21 and '21-'22.

In addition to the budgets above, other expenses are paid on behalf of the department by the dean's office. These expenses include travel funds and technology upgrades. For example, in fiscal year '21-'22, the dean's office funded \$282,000 in classroom remodels, furniture and presentation technology in JMC classrooms. Another \$225,000 is earmarked for a renovation of the offices of *The Murray State News*.

**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
Anderson, Stephanie <sup>1</sup>	Ed.D., Assistant Professor
Ezumah, Bellarmine	Ph.D. Associate Professor
Haynes, Christopher G.	M.S. Senior Instructor
Hinton, Marcie	Ph.D., Associate Professor
Kim, Kenneth	Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Magee, William	M.S., Instructor (GCM only) <sup>2</sup>
Norsworthy, Brent	M.S., Instructor <sup>3</sup>
Owens, Debbie A.	Ph.D., Associate Professor
Qualls, Kevin	J.D., Associate Professor, Dept. Chair
Shemberger, Melony	Ed.D., Associate Professor
Terracina-Hartman, Carol	Ph.D., Assistant Professor <sup>4</sup>
Thomas, Elizabeth	M.S., Senior Instructor
Vance, Tim	Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Welsch, F. Gilland	M.S., Senior Instructor
Wright, Elizabeth Leigh	MFA, Associate Professor

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Anderson resigned to take another position in June 2022.

<sup>2</sup> GCM, or Graphic Communications Media, is a program in the department. It is not ACEJMC-accredited and not part of this self-study. For more details, see the section on department history in Part 2 below. Mr. Magee passed away on Aug, 31, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Norsworthy's instruction is split between GCM (.75) and JMC (.25)

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Terracina-Hartman is the adviser to the student newspaper. Her instructional load is reduced by ½, accordingly.

**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.)**

	SP ' 22	FA '22	SP '23
Herndon, Orville <sup>1</sup>	X		
McKeel, Jeremy <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X
Rode, Ed <sup>3</sup>		X	X

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Herndon was a staff member in SP '22. His job description has changed, and now his duties are split between publication support (.75) and teaching (.25).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. McKeel is a Murray State staff member who is in charge of Digital Media Service in the University's Office of Branding, Marketing and Communication.

<sup>3</sup> [Mr. Rode](#) is a one-year emergency hire who is teaching courses that would otherwise be taught by Stephanie Anderson (resigned) or Gross Magee (deceased).

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

2021-22 academic year: 70

2020-21 academic year: 37

The numbers above represent only ACEJMC accredited majors. Otherwise, the 28 MA/MS students and 15 Graphic Communications students graduated from the unit. Graduate rates for '21-'22 are significantly higher than those in the previous year. Many students delayed coursework and, subsequently, graduation due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

## PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Founded as Murray Normal College in 1922, Murray State University is marking its centennial this year. (The site team arrived at the end of its Centennial Celebration weekend, held in conjunction with Homecoming.) One of eight public universities in Kentucky, Murray State is, quoting from the self-study, “a comprehensive university with the principal mission of providing quality higher education to an 18-county service region in western Kentucky. It is a residential university, with most students coming from within a few hours drive of Murray, Kentucky. Many of them are ‘first generation’ higher education students.”

The higher education system in Kentucky has experienced significant budget challenges in recent years, exacerbated by the pandemic. State government reallocated higher education funding to address shortfalls in the state employee retirement system. Tenured faculty at Murray State’s sister institutions were laid off as a result of budget cuts (though none at Murray State). Reduced tuition revenue from enrollment declines and higher costs due to inflation have worsened the budget situation.

Institutional budget challenges notwithstanding, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications (JMC) benefits somewhat from being housed in Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business (AJB-COB), where it is one of six departments. From the self-study: “AJB-COB is among the better funded among the seven colleges within the university thanks, in large part, to funding sources beyond state appropriations. Financial support from alumni, business and industry, and the college’s in-demand programming have made AJB-COB resilient in an era of budget cuts and diminished state appropriations for higher education.”

The present unit has evolved from curricula in various other departments:

- 1926: first journalism courses offered in the English department
- 1927: first full-time instructor hired and *The College News* student publication began (today operating as *The Murray State News* and “TheNews.org”)
- 1948: broadcasting courses offered in the speech and theatre department, producing programs for the new campus radio station
- 1965: journalism, speech and broadcasting were combined in a Department of Communications
- 1975: that department was divided into a Department of Communications and a Department of Journalism and Radio-Television, with separate majors in the latter unit
- 1985: the Department of Journalism and Radio-Television added majors in Advertising and Public Relations, as well as a master’s degree in Mass Communications
- 1986: the unit earned initial ACEJMC accreditation for its four undergraduate majors
- 1995: the department was renamed the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications



- 1999: the unit was moved from the College of Fine Arts and Communication to the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business, where it is one of six departments (the others: Accounting; Computer Science and Information Systems; Economics and Finance; Management, Marketing, Business Administration, and Logistics and Supply Chain Management; and Organizational Communication and Leadership)
- 2010: the prior Department of Graphic Communications Management was eliminated and its programs were shifted to the unit (GCM is not part of the unit's ACEJMC accreditation)
- 2014: the department added minors in Journalism and Media Production.

**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, meaningful short-term measurements, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.**

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

**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 unit has a written mission statement that is posted on its website:

*To equip students with the necessary philosophical and ethical frameworks; the requisite technical skills in writing and media production; and the ability as life-long learners to interpret, create, and communicate global and local events in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive manner that advances the interests of all stakeholders in media, commerce, and society, while advocating for democratic principles.*

The mission statement goes on to list ACEJMC's Values and Competencies as "outcomes" of their graduates' educations.

The department's strategic plan, approved in 2015, is also clearly posted on its website. The plan is structured around four "elements": *academic excellence; student success; research, scholarship and creative thought; and community engagement*. Each element includes

strategies that tie directly to ACEJMC's Values and Competencies; the plan does not include short-term measurements.

The self-study noted that the business dean to whom the unit reports charged the department in 2019 to "re-imagine JMC" in light of pending retirements and ongoing changes in the field. A faculty retreat was held in early 2020, with a professional facilitator, to begin the process, which was soon halted by pandemic dislocations, but had begun to spark creative conversation about the future of the unit. The department chair said the process was further delayed in the past year by the imperative to prepare the self-study, and that planning would resume following the site visit. The business dean told the site team that the department was "responding well" to his charge.

**(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?**

The administrator, a long-time faculty member, has served as chair since July 2021, when the previous chair retired. The dean told the team the chair is "doing very well" and "takes on challenges head-on," while being sensitive to faculty and student needs. Faculty generally expressed support for the chair's leadership, with isolated exceptions, and noted his clear passion for the department. Students spoke of his commitment to their academic and personal success.

Campus stakeholders from other units praised the chair for his collaborative spirit and partnership.

(A related leadership note: JMC faculty member Melony Shemberger is the elected member on the state's Board of Regents representing faculty.)

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

The unit's data is updated and available on ACEJMC's searchable database website.

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

The unit gathers and posts enrollment, retention and graduation data annually and prominently on its website.

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

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

The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance, set forth centrally by Murray State.

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

The unit has policies and procedures, set out by the institution, for selection and evaluation of administrators.

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

The unit has a range of policies and procedures to address faculty, staff and student concerns, as set forth by the institution.

## **SUMMARY:**

The department had initiated a strategic planning process to "reimagine JMC," at the behest of the college dean, in 2019. While the process was halted by the pandemic, it had begun to spur unit-wide conversation about the department's future role; the department expressed plans to restart the process. A new chair took over in July 2021. While much of his first year was

involved with preparation of the self-study, faculty generally praised his leadership and commitment. The department has appropriate policies and processes for governance and administration.

**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 within the department may pursue either a Bachelor of Arts (requiring six hours of foreign language) or Bachelor of Science (requiring additional coursework in science or math).

Of 120 hours, students take 37 in university-required gen-ed course work, 14 in the mass communication core and from 35 to 38 within their concentration. Within the remaining 31 to 34 hours, students are required to complete a minor. Students within the program are permitted to major in one concentration and minor in another. However, most complete minors outside of the department. Of 2022's 51 graduates, 64.71% earned a minor outside of the department, and the six-year average was 61.8%.

The department identified four of its core course offerings that meet the spirit of “liberal arts and sciences/general education:” Media Literacy and Society; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Media; Mass Media Effects; and Mass Communications Law.

**(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 provides a balance between practical-skills application and theory-based coursework, though it leans toward the skills-based. The 14-hour core includes 12 hours of theory-oriented courses, such as Mass Media Effects and Media Literacy and Society. The four areas of concentration (Advertising, Journalism, Public Relations and Television Production) are based on a mix of both skills- and theory-based courses. For example, among their course work, PR majors take Public Relations Principles and Digital Technology for Public Relations. They are also required to take nine hours of coursework outlining basic business concepts (Foundations of Business, Fundamentals of Management and Principles of Marketing).

### **Advertising**

In the Advertising sequence students are required to take courses specific to that discipline including Introduction to Advertising, Advertising Media Sales, and Advertising Capstone: The Campaign. They have a choice of three courses from a list of 10 possible options. They also take three business courses outside of the accredited unit.

### **Journalism**

In the Journalism sequence, students take four reporting or writing courses covering various forms of media. They then choose one course from a list of options running from Principles of Photography and Photojournalism to International Mass Communication and Opinion Writing.

### **Public Relations**

As noted above, PR students take a mix of theory and practice courses both within and outside of the accredited unit.

### **Television Production**

Television Production students take 21 hours of coursework including audio and video instruction, as well as work in both field and studio setting. They choose an additional course from a list with 12 options, including various forms of media from advertising to sports to international mass communication.

### **(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 department ensures that instruction meets current industry demand, particularly in the digital arena, by working closely with professionals in evaluation of student work. In multiple courses, and all capstone courses, professionals provide feedback on student performance. The faculty believes this process affords students the benefit of insight from industry leaders and allows the students to broaden their networks for post-graduation employment. In addition, reviews from, and candid conversations with, internship supervisors have provided a rich source of input on curriculum development. The self-study notes that the faculty is working on improving data-analysis instruction based on these sources.

The faculty has taken advantage of opportunities for continuing education in the digital arena. Three members attended Poynter Institute training programs, including the Teachapalooza front-line teaching professional development academy. One served a summer fellowship, learning current digital and social media practices in a Top 30-market television newsroom.

To ensure consistency across sections and adherence to ACEJMC Core Competencies, the department has developed a course-alignment matrix. This document, while allowing for academic freedom, outlines the learning outcomes of each course. The department has revised the Course Alignment Matrix to the re-articulated values and competencies.

Each sequence has a designated curriculum coordinator. Consistency across multiple sections of the same course is further augmented by the fact these classes are usually taught by the same instructor, which helps lighten the load of a heavy teaching schedule (four courses per semester is standard).

Media Literacy and Society is an exception, in that various members of the faculty teach this course. However, benchmark assignments are used in each section for assessment purposes. Several “Signature Assignments” are included in every section of this course, for assessment.

Faculty also serve as “Teaching Assistants” in one another’s classes, which give them access to the courses of their colleagues in the digital learning platform Canvas LMS. This allows instructors to share content and evaluate student work across sections.

**(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.**

As noted above, outside professional input is integrated at multiple stages of curricular development. In addition, the faculty itself is extremely active in professional activities. The average number of years of professional work among full-time faculty is 15.5. Most continue to work as professionals. One is a practicing member of the state bar, two are freelance reporters at the regional level, one is a television producer for Kentucky Educational Television and two work in the public relations industry. The faculty have also sought out opportunities for continuing education.

Department representatives annually meet with advertising and public relations professionals associated with Omnicom-affiliated agencies in Chicago and New York. Each year the department hosts a “Meet the Pros” event, at which faculty, professionals and students can meet, exchange information and network.

The faculty is also active with professional organizations, in the aggregate holding memberships in: BEA, AEJMC, CMA/ACP, PRSA, AAF and the Kentucky Press Association. They have also held leadership roles with these organizations. For example, one

served as president of CMA/ACP and one is chair of AEJMC's Religion and Media interest group.

**(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.**

The department reports that in Spring 2022 the average enrollment across the 16 sections of what it identified as skills courses was 8.6 students, with the highest enrollment of any section at 14. In the Fall 2022 semester, the average was 9.47 students across 17 sections, with the highest single-class enrollment 14.

**(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).**

Students are not required to complete an internship, but are strongly encouraged to do so. The department has a robust internship program. At its heart is a system begun in 2012 by a 45-year veteran of Madison Avenue, who is a non-paid executive in residence (the department chair said the faculty member works for football and basketball tickets). Drawing on his connections with the Omnicom Group, the department has placed more than 200 students with organizations across North America, England, China and Korea. Often, they are hired full time upon graduation by the firm where they completed the internship. Some have gone on to become vice presidents.

The department has an internship coordinator to ensure consistency across processes and evaluation. Majors are allowed to earn up to three credit hours for internships.

Those seeking to host an intern must meet criteria that include: providing 200 hours of on-the-job contact; ability to afford adequate and appropriate hands-on experience; allowing for faculty on-site inspection; and either offering pay or meeting the U.S. Department of Labor's guidelines for unpaid internships.

Students seeking internships are encouraged to enroll in JMC 596, which is taught in the fall. This allows them to work at the job site during the summer and receive credit during the fall when the fees for the internship would be part of the regular full-time tuition.



The department assists students in securing posts through standing positions with Omnicom Group, using database resources from Murray State Career Services, responding to industry requests and by recruiting students for internship programs that specifically include members of multicultural groups. These include, for example, AAF's Most Promising Multicultural Students program, the 4A's Multicultural Advertising Intern Program, Fleishman Hillard's Alfred Fleishman Diversity Fellowship and NABJ's internships.

The faculty coordinator assigns a grade for the course that is based on results of the site supervisor's report, and faculty evaluation of assignments completed at the internship site and the student's case study book reflecting their work experiences.

Students consistently reported that faculty push them toward internships and provide assistance in securing them.

The internship coordinator reports that of the Fall 2021 enrollment, 22.9% of senior students had completed one internship and 12.5% had completed two. Public Relations students were more active in the internship area, with 50% of the Fall 2021 group having completed one or more. Just over 36% of Television Production majors completed an internship, while 27.2% of Advertising majors did so. Of Journalism seniors, one completed two internships.

The coordinator reported that these figures are lower than would be typical as consequence of pandemic restrictions during the course of that cohort's time at the university.

In addition to the internship program, 29.9% of seniors have taken advantage of some on-campus opportunity for professional training, such as working with the office of Digital Media Services.

**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.**

At various points during the internship, students and supervisors provide status reports to the faculty coordinator, indicating what things are going well or poorly. These reports are delivered via email or group video conferencing. When possible, the coordinator visits the site.

**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:**

Though it slants toward skill-based instruction, the curriculum is a mix of skills- and theory-based courses. It affords students the opportunity to receive a broad-based baccalaureate-level education.

Students benefit from a vibrant internship program and are inspired by alumni success stories, particularly those from fairly recent graduates.

The previous site team noted inconsistency in noting expected ACEJMC competencies in syllabi. There has been considerable improvement in this area. For example, among the 27 syllabi for the Fall 2022 semester, only five failed to specifically denote ACEJMC competencies as learning outcomes.

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

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

*The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another.*

### 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 department has a culture of assessment and a knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator. Faculty seem to grasp the value of assessment in strengthening the curriculum. The plan was updated in 2022 to reflect ACEJMC's new values and competencies.

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

The department's assessment plan is posted on the department's website at <https://www.murraystate.edu/academics/CollegesDepartments/CollegeOfBusiness/Programs/JournalismAndMassCommunications/outcomes.aspx>

**(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 department's current assessment plan includes 10 learning outcomes that mirror the Professional Values and Competencies of ACEJMC. Before that, the plan included the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies. Grids for each of the four sequences indicate the required course in which each competency is introduced, reinforced and mastered.

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

The plan does use a variety of direct and indirect measures.

One direct measure described in the plan is a pre-test and post-test in two core courses each semester, JMC168, Media Literacy and Society and JMC590, Mass Communication Law. The tests, however, might be more accurately described as formative and summative assessments, selected to highlight a specific competency, and they take place in a variety of courses.

Another direct measure described in the plan is a summative assessment of final projects in capstone courses for each of the four sequences. These projects are reviewed by faculty, professionals and clients. In addition, students are encouraged to develop a portfolio of representative work produced in their courses throughout their academic career. This is submitted for evaluation in a required Senior Seminar.

Indirect measures include supervisor evaluations of student performance on internships; regional and national student awards; and participation in student media and campus professional organizations.

The plan examines three or four competencies each year on a rotating basis, so after three years, all have been measured.

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

Both the internship evaluations and the capstone reviews include journalism and mass communication professionals.

**(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 department’s self-study included data from some assessment activities but lacked data on others. Upon request, the department head provided copies of a few internship evaluations and several notes from faculty visits to internship sites. The latter included numerous suggestions for skills and competencies to be better addressed in future courses. No data from the evaluations of capstone projects was provided.

The department has made many changes to its curriculum in recent years in response to industry trends, student interest, strategic goals and encouragement from the dean. Some curricular changes are also in response to assessment data and provide evidence of closing the loop.

For example, when an embedded assessment in an advertising course showed students fell short of the desired goal in “Writing correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve,” the curriculum coordinator for the sequence recommended “increasing practice assignments so students will have more opportunity to use their writing skills before they need to perform for a grade.”

Similarly, when a course-embedded assessment showed PR students' presentation skills were below the desired goal, the faculty member resolved to devote more instruction to visual presentation strategy.

And when an exercise in a journalism course showed some weakness in students' understanding of diversity, it was recommended that the students be given a clearer description of the culture diversity of sources and additional instruction in cultural competency in future terms.

The self-study also included a May 2022 document entitled "Closing the Loop" which included 11 recommendations from the four curriculum coordinators after they had reviewed assessments from the past two school years. The recommendations were at a general level, such as "Give greater emphasis to knowledge areas where students have trouble meeting learning objectives," and "Continue to teach ethical practices."

#### **SUMMARY:**

The department has a structure for and tradition of assessment and there is evidence of closing the loop. Results from some assessment measures described in the plan are not synthesized or well documented. These are missed opportunities that could strengthen the plan.

**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 department’s diversity plan was updated in May 2022 after the department spent considerable time exploring diversity, equity and inclusion issues. Both the previous plan and the current one have four objectives: recruiting diverse students, retaining diverse students, developing an inclusive curriculum, and recruiting a diverse faculty and staff.

Like the previous plan, the 2022 plan incorporates the university’s non-discrimination policy as its definition of diversity: race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability or veteran status. It also embraces the university’s diversity plan, which has three objectives: recruitment and enrollment of diverse students, increased retention and graduation rates, and addressing the challenge of recruiting and retaining faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.

The department’s new plan adds a creative dimension to its efforts: emphasis on the faculty’s own understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. The department calls this aspect of the plan “E.d.i.t. {Yourself}” -- for “Equity, diversity, inclusion in teaching” -- and has spread word about this initiative throughout Wilson Hall with large signs and mouse pads.

The emphasis on faculty development in pursuit of DEI grew out of extensive faculty discussions that recognized that individual professors are starting at different places when it comes to equity, diversity and inclusion issues. Professors are encouraged to take responsibility to pursue personal development and enrichment experiences that will heighten their understanding and, over time, enhance students’ learning. In conversations with the site team, faculty seemed supportive of this new approach. The professors’ enrichment will be a factor on their performance evaluations.

Key indicators of the students’ DEI understanding will be examined in learning outcomes, an annual Senior Survey and faculty performance evaluations.

The previous site team criticized the department's diversity plan for its lack of performance indicators and tactics to correspond with strategies and for lack of measurements to evaluate the plan's effectiveness. Specific benchmarks are still missing from the new plan.

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

It does.

**(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.**

Cultural proficiency and the value of domestic and global diversity are taught in many courses throughout the curriculum. In group meetings, students were comfortable discussing multicultural themes and cited specific assignments that required them to seek sources from different perspectives or tailor a message to an audience unlike themselves. The self-study included examples of speakers who were brought to campus either in person or via Zoom to enhance student exposure to multicultural perspectives.

To bolster both faculty and student understanding of the importance of DEI in communications, the department is adding a required course called Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Media in spring 2023. Responsibility for teaching the course will be rotated in the belief that "the best way to learn something is to teach it."

**(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.**

There have been two full-time faculty searches in the past six years and each had a diverse pool of candidates. One resulted in the hiring of a white woman and the other of a male, naturalized citizen of Asian descent.

During the last self-study in 2015, two (or 14%) of the department's 14 faculty members were Black. In this year's self-study, the percentage of non-white, full-time faculty members has risen to 23%. Seven of the current faculty members are women. Of the four adjuncts or part-time faculty, all four were white and there were no searches for adjuncts in the past six years.

During the self-study period, the department tapped funds from the provost's office to hire a visiting professor of color for a year in 2016; that professor taught courses specifically for undergraduates. Also of note: a long-time female professor of color served as interim department chair in 2016-2018.

**(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.**

Student recruitment is done primarily at the university level, but the department plays a role in several activities, including on-campus workshops for high school journalists. These have been on hiatus for two years because of COVID, but the department is looking forward to resuming them in 2023. For the first time, the department is sending two faculty members to recruit at the Journalism Education Association in November.

The provost told the site team that the university is bolstering its recruiting efforts in Memphis, Nashville and St. Louis, in part to increase student diversity.

The percentage of students of color in the department has grown significantly since the last site visit, when 10.4% of its students were minority. Today, the comparable number is 18.6%, including students who are Black (11.4%), American Indian or Alaska Native (.6%), Asian (.6%), Hispanic (1.8%) and multiracial (4.2%). Non-resident aliens total 3%, compared to 6% during the previous site visit.

Overall, the department's students are more diverse than those in the university or its primary service region. Three-fourths of the department's students are white, non-Hispanic, vs. 78% for the university and 81% for its 18-county region. The department has a higher percentage of Black and multiracial students than the university but a lower percentage of Hispanic, Asian and non-resident alien students.

**(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 department demonstrates a commitment to being inclusive and the site team was not made aware of any instances of discrimination. Students described the atmosphere as supportive and welcoming. The building, while old, has an elevator and one computer lab



was recently moved to the first floor to improve accessibility. Restrooms on the first floor include handicapped stalls.

**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.**

**(Please include the Faculty Population table).**

<b>Full-Time Faculty 21-22</b>					
<b>Race</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>% of Total Faculty</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>% of Total Faculty</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<i>Asian</i>		0%	1	8%	1
<i>Black or African American</i>	2	15%		0%	2
<i>White</i>	6	46%	4	31%	10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>13</b>

<b>Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty 21-22</b>					
<b>Race</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>% of Total Faculty</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>% of Total Faculty</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<i>Asian</i>		0%		0%	0
<i>Black or African American</i>	0	0%		0%	0
<i>White</i>	1	25%	3	75%	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>

### **SUMMARY:**

The department has a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion and manifests that commitment in multiple ways.

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

## PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The accredited department has 14 full-time faculty members overseeing its four sequences (Advertising, Journalism, Public Relations and Television Production).

Faculty are expected to be productive in teaching, research and service. However, they are provided the latitude to emphasize their strengths in the annual evaluation process. They may elect to place from 50 to 70% of their effort on teaching; from 30 to 40% on “intellectual (or creative)” activities; and from 10 to 20% on “service and/or academic advising.”

Reflecting on its original foundation as a normal school, Murray State continues to place great weight on teaching. A typical teaching load is 12 hours (four courses) per semester within the department. Faculty members can receive release time for departmental activities. For example, a faculty member gets a two-course-per-semester release for advising the student newspaper and the chair receives the same release in order to meet administrative responsibilities.

In addition, faculty members may request release time from teaching based on “exceptional workload in one of the other two” areas. Approval of such requests are typically approved.

The provost and department head reported that the process for receiving this release is informal. The faculty member requests the release from the department chair, explaining the need for the reduction. If the chair approves, the dean’s office is then notified. The department chair reported that he typically receives one such request per semester. University administrators, the department chair and faculty all report that senior administration routinely approves these requests.

Since Fall 2020 the full-time faculty have taught more than 95% of the courses overall, and since the Academic Year 2019-2020, they have taught 100% of the core and required courses.

The department adheres to policies regarding annual evaluations established by the College of Business, within which it is located. This includes assigning the faculty rating on a four-point scale ranging from “0 = Does not meet Collegiate expectations in this category” to “3 = Outstanding. Clearly is a top performer in the College and Department in this category” following the chair’s review of the member’s activity report and vitae detailing their accomplishments in each of the three areas.

This process has been modified for the current academic year. Henceforth, the report will now include the following items:

- Peer evaluation of classroom instruction
- Peer evaluation of syllabi
- Peer evaluation of instructional design
- A self-reflective statement from the faculty member, to include:
  - DEI Professional Development Activities
  - Application of learned DEI principles in classroom instruction
  - Intellectual Contributions and their nexus with classroom instruction.

The department has its own handbook (developed the summer prior to the previous site-team visit) outlining tenure requirements that is an addendum to the university-wide-policy manual. Its guidelines reflect input from campus promotion and tenure experts, recommendations from its faculty and principles of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and ACEJMC. According to that document, “teaching is paramount to everything a faculty member does.” However, it also notes the link between scholarship/creative activity and teaching, and the vital need for department faculty to be a source of service to various communities with which the department interacts. This document is detailed and well-fashioned, including within each of the three areas expectations, examples and tips on meeting benchmarks. The final section offers general tips on achieving promotion and/or tenure.

**(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 benefits from a veteran faculty. Table 2 reports that the five most senior full-time faculty members (all associate professors) have on average 12 years of professional experience (from 0 to 28 years). The only one with no professional experience has 15 years of full-time college teaching experience, and the others have on average 18.8 years of full-time teaching experience at the collegiate level.

The remaining faculty have on average 18.6 years of full-time industry experience (ranging from three to 45 years) and 14.9 years of years of full-time college teaching experience (ranging from three to 35 years).

The faculty are very involved in activities that maintain their currency within relevant industries and help hone their skills as teachers. Most continue to work in their respective professional fields. They take advantage of learning opportunities both on and off campus. On

campus the department takes advantage of support from the university's Faculty Development Center. Services from this office include:

- Quality Matters certifications, with funding assistance from the provost office.
- New Faculty Orientation
- Pedagogy
- Service learning
- Experiential/project-based learning
- Technological training

Off campus, the faculty have attended numerous workshops, and are active with professional and educational organizations. They have held leadership roles within these organizations, including serving as president of CMA/ACP, and chair of AEJMC's Religion and Media interest group.

Students consistently reported that they felt they benefited from a faculty that was both experienced and current in the professional arena.

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

As noted by the previous site team, the department does not have its own travel budget. However, the dean's office has provided funding for attendance at numerous meetings of professional or educational groups, including international conferences. Travel for those on the tenure track are prioritized. In addition, there are opportunities on campus for competitive grants from the Committee on Institutional Research through the Presidential Fellowship program "for full-time faculty, staff, and administrators, to promote research, scholarship, and creative activity that results in published and presented work." In addition, the CISR has a supplemental program that awards up to \$250 for domestic and \$300 for international travel. These funds are available when college or unit funds are unavailable and upon at least statements of support from the college or unit.

The previous site-team reported that department faculty had received about \$19,000 for travel over a two-year period and that none had to pay their own travel costs for academic peer-reviewed presentations. This cycle faculty have received about \$25,000. Drawing direct dollar comparisons is difficult, given the travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior administration, the department chair and faculty all report that requests for travel funding have routinely been approved for tenure-track faculty, in some instances even when the faculty member was not presenting.

During this accreditation cycle, the department routinely granted course release for those “approaching publication deadlines and tenure applications.”

A faculty member received a sabbatical in Spring 2022 to assist in establishing an educational communication program in Africa and North America.

With regard to expectations for promotion and tenure, the department has established an addendum to the university’s policy and procedures manual that does a thorough job not only describing such expectations but also offering guidance on meeting them.

**(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.**

Department faculty have made considerable advancement in research, creative and/or professional activity since the last site-team visit. In the table on this matter included in the previous site-team’s report, department faculty had produced 105 total items. This cycle that figure is 129. Faculty increased refereed journal articles by 82% (from 11 to 20). In the area of professional work (Included under “Other”), faculty productivity almost doubled (19 items to 34). In the area addressing traditional academic “research” (items “Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored” through “Book Reviews”), total output decreased from 63 items to 56 during this cycle. However, this includes a drop from 40 refereed conference papers during the prior review to 15 during this period (the pandemic reduced the opportunity for conference presentations).

Clearly conference attendance must be viewed through the lens of the pandemic’s impact on travel. Even so, the department’s faculty have attended numerous workshops and conferences.

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

The provost and dean reported that the department’s record of teaching, service and creative/research activities compares favorably with other units on campus. They and the faculty report that there have been times when committees outside of the department have not initially understood the nature and value of professional output in this academic field. The provost and dean appeared to have a clear grasp on the issue. Consequently, these instances have been rare and easily resolved.

During this cycle three members of the faculty received promotion to associate professor and received tenure. Two more are in the process of seeking promotion to full professor. The department chair reports that he anticipates the approval of both applications by the end of this academic year.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from department*	Individuals				Totals (15)
		Full Professors (1)	Associate Professors (6)	Assistant Professors (4)	Other Faculty** (3)	
Awards and Honors			11		1	12
Grants Received Internal			3			3
Grants Received External			4	2		6
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored			1			1
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored				1		1
Books Edited			1			1
Book Chapters			8	1		9
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals			20	2		22
Refereed Conference Papers			13	2		15
Invited Academic Papers			2			2
Encyclopedia Entries			3			3
Book Reviews		1	1			2
Articles in Non-refereed Publications			5			5
Juried Creative Works		5	3			8
Non-juried Creative Works				3	2	5
Other (please specify) <sup>1</sup>		19	2	6	7	41

\*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.

<sup>1</sup>"Other" includes television programming produced by department faculty for air on Kentucky Educational Television, non-academic published writings such as poetry and essays, photographic exhibitions, and continuing legal education presentations.

## SUMMARY:

The Department has a veteran faculty with a deep commitment to student success both within and outside of the classroom. They have considerable professional experience, and are engaged in activities that maintain the currency of their skills. They are active in appropriate academic/professional groups. Their value to the university-wide community is respected by administration and by other units across campus.

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

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit provides students with the support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.**

The department is committed to student success and supports it in numerous ways. Faculty advise student organizations, support students in internship searches and help them make choices about majors and careers.

Students had nothing but praise for their professors and none reported any impediment to completing their degrees on time. Materials outline major requirements and suggested paths for completing a degree on time.

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

Academic advising is conducted by faculty members for all four years of a department major's time at Murray State. (Students coming into Murray State without declaring a major are advised by professional advisers in the Student Engagement and Success Office.) During the pandemic, personal advising continued via Zoom. Faculty are required to offer at least 10 hours per week of office hours, and some clearly provide many more.

Students must meet with their adviser each semester before registering for classes. After the discussion, the adviser lifts the "hold" on the student's online record in the Racer Academic Completion Report. Then and only then may a student register. The student may access his or her RACR record at any time to see what other courses are required to graduate.

In the senior survey, 85% of the respondents said they were satisfied with advising.

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

The department requires all first-year students to enroll in a one-credit course (JMC 100 T) to learn about majors and degree requirements. It also publishes plans for both four-year and two-year students and has curriculum guides available both online and on paper.

News about departmental activities is visible on bulletin boards throughout Wilson Hall and students say they are kept informed about events and activities through faculty emails and in-

class announcements. The department chair plans to add electronic signs in the building to further enhance communications.

**(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.**

Students may participate in numerous extra-curricular activities to complement their majors and interests. Among those are the MSU Ads Club, PRSSA, the MSU TV Club, The Murray State News campus newspaper and website.

Students may also get professional experience with paid positions at several campus offices, including Racer Athletics, which streams scores of athletic events via ESPN+; WKMS, a campus-based NPR affiliate; and the university's Branding, Marketing and Communications office.

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

The registrar's office collects enrollment, retention and graduation data and it is maintained by the office of institutional effectiveness. The department posts this data on its website, although at the time of the site visit, it posted only the raw numbers of graduates in each sequence, not the graduation rate.

The department's enrollment this year is about half what it was during the last site team visit. The department attributes some of that to the COVID-19 pandemic, saying some students chose not to return to Murray. In addition, the department's recruiting efforts have been curtailed.

The department is eager to help enrollment rebound, but believes that may take some time. Faculty participate in the university's "Re-Capture Campaign," by contacting students who have not registered for the next semester to find out why and offer solutions.

**SUMMARY:**

Student services are a strength of the department and the faculty demonstrate a strong commitment to student success.

**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 self-study provided a detailed breakdown of the unit's budget by categories.

The department notes that “nearly all budgetary planning and implementation is beyond the scope of (d)epartmental authority.” The chair bases the department's annual budget proposal on the previous year's budget, with requested adjustments based on departmental needs. The chair's proposal is submitted to the AJB-COB dean, who incorporates it into the college's request to the provost, which ultimately goes to the university president. The Kentucky system's Board of Regents approves the Murray State budget, within the funding constraints set by the governor and legislature.

Department faculty are involved in the budgetary process primarily through determining equipment needs. While the unit budget does not include resources for equipment, the dean has generally funded equipment purchase and repair requests from college accounts.

**(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 department reports that resources provided by the university are sufficient to achieve its mission in terms of facilities and instructional technology. The self-study noted, however, that “(r)ecruiting and retaining faculty will prove problematic unless equitable compensation is funded.” Two promising candidates in 2021 faculty searches withdrew at the finalist stage, according to the self-study, “due to less-than-competitive compensation rates.”

The department's operating budget decreased in both of the two previous academic years prior to the site visit. The self-study attributes this decline to the retirements of two senior faculty members who were replaced by more junior faculty at lower salaries.

The department receives revenue from online course fees, 70% of which are shared with colleges and departments across campus. From the self study: “The availability of these funds has made it possible for the department to make technology and capital outlay plans for three-year periods with reasonable expectation that they can proceed on schedule.” However, most of the department's online courses are part of a graduate program in public relations and a

recent Board of Regents decision to eliminate web fees for graduate courses will limit online course revenue going forward.

The department is housed in a college of business, which has a higher national market salary structure than JMC as a discipline. Therefore, JMC faculty salaries lag behind those of colleagues in traditional b-school units such as Accounting, Economics and Management. (The self-study notes that unit salaries are “on par” with those in the college’s Department of Organizational Communications and Leadership, as well as those in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.)

The business dean told the site team that “we’re thrilled to have (the department)” in the college, seeing JMC as “a good fit.” Accordingly, he said college resources would be made available to help the department attain its goals in the strategic planning process.

Because Murray State’s student media are housed in the department, the unit has additional expenses beyond others in the AJB-COB. The college augments the unit budget to support student media. The advisers and directors of The Murray State News, TheNews.org, and MSU TV-11 submit budget requests to the chair, who signs off on all expenditures, in collaboration with the dean.

An estate gift from a former faculty member established the Robert H. McGaughey III Fund for Excellence in 2019 as a means to provide direct donor support to the department. Fundraising efforts are underway to augment the bequest with a larger endowment to provide ongoing revenue for the department; an annual lecture series is planned with initial spending from the endowment.

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

The department has seven classrooms, three of which also serve as computer labs outside of regular class periods. These facilities are located on the first and second floors of Wilson Hall and on the eighth floor of the Fine Arts Building. In total the computer labs contain 53 Mac computers for student use, loaded with Adobe Creative Cloud and other software. Additional computing resources are available in space shared with the university’s Digital Media Services operation and in the department’s Hortin Reading Room.

Most of the computers were purchased in 2019 or 2021, with many of the latter using CARES Act funding.

In addition, the department houses student media in offices on the first floor of Wilson Hall. Facilities include a newsroom with 23 iMacs, staff offices, and still and video camera equipment.

Students generally expressed satisfaction with facilities in terms of computers and editing rooms, notably raising few complaints about access. While some students noted problems with temperature control in Wilson Hall (and joked about classrooms that still have chalkboards, albeit with new computer projectors attached to the ceiling), they clearly felt affection for the historic building, one of the oldest on campus.

The department's TV studio, on the eighth floor of the Fine Arts Building (about a five-minute walk from Wilson Hall), was described in the self-study as "dated," with "1960-era studio lighting" and an older-style set that had been donated by a local station.

Despite the older lighting grid and studio set, students and faculty reported the studio is sufficient for their teaching and production needs. The studio has four 4K studio cameras. Faculty teaching in the TV Production sequence expressed some concern that the aging lighting dimmer may fail at some point, but have short-term contingency plans as they seek college approval for new lighting equipment.

An adjacent production lab has backdrops of various colors for use in demonstrating lighting and interviewing.

**(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.**

In addition to the computing, editing and studio resources noted above, the unit provides video and audio equipment for field recording. Beginning students have access to 12 JVC 4K field cameras with tripods. Intermediate and advanced students have access to 12 Sony HD cameras with tripods. There is also a range of microphones, light kits and related gear.

Advanced students have access to a drone for field production, under the supervision of a faculty member who is a licensed drone pilot.

With the exception of some complaints about audio headsets, students generally were satisfied with the quality and quantity of the equipment, which can be checked out from a room in the Fine Arts Building adjacent to the TV studio and staffed by work-study employees.

Faculty were similarly satisfied with equipment quality and access for their research, creative and professional activities.

Technical support is available from the department's IT staffer, augmented by staff from Murray State's Digital Media Center, which is located next to the TV studio in the Fine Arts Building, and by a staffer at the AJB-COB, who provides assistance for a recently installed server system.

Students expressed satisfaction with the level and responsiveness of tech support.

**SUMMARY:**

Most budgetary authority is beyond departmental control, based at the college level and beyond. Departmental resources were described in the self-study as sufficient to fulfill the unit's mission. The department expressed concern that its salaries have been non-competitive in recent national searches.

The college dean says he's "thrilled" to have JMC as a unit of AJB-COB and is committed to providing resources as available. Some of the facility issues identified as concerns by the previous site team have been addressed, though others remain, such as a "dated" TV studio.

Students and faculty are generally pleased with the quality and availability of computing, editing and field production equipment.

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

## PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni, and actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The unit communicates regularly with its alumni through social media, a newsletter (recently shifted from print to digital) and email updates sent to about 3,000 people. The department also sponsors a Meet the Pros event each fall in which alumni and professionals are invited to campus to meet with graduating seniors across the curriculum. Meet the Pros was held on Zoom during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and returned in person in 2022.

The unit also has a presence at Murray State's annual Tent City celebration at Homecoming to engage with alumni, and held a Zoom-based alumni reunion in 2020 during the COVID shutdown.

The department has worked during 2022 to rebuild its advisory committee, adding six new members. In addition to Meet the Pros and advisory group feedback, the unit brings professionals to campus to attend capstone course presentations and to review student work.

Faculty participate in professional associations, notably the Kentucky Press Association, Kentucky Bar Association and the Kentucky Associated Press Broadcasters, as well as in national disciplinary associations such as AEJMC, ASJMC, BEA and College Media Advisors.

**(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.**

Department faculty are engaged in developing standards of professional practice through sponsoring training workshops for student and professional journalists, participating in panels on topics of media ethics and literacy around the region, and through a Kentucky Humanities Council-funded project on civic information.

**(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 engages in public-facing, service-learning initiatives. A notable example was a 2021 investigative journalism project involving students with staff of the university's NPR-member station WKMS, in partnership with the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting.

The unit's television faculty have produced content for Kentucky Educational Television, the state's public TV system.

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

The department has supported Kentucky's active scholastic journalism system through an annual campus-based workshop for about 250 to 300 high school students. The workshop was paused during the pandemic, during which the unit offered Zoom visits by faculty to high school journalism classes. The unit hopes to resume the in-person workshop in spring 2023.

**SUMMARY:**

The department communicates with its alumni and actively engages with professional associations. Faculty are involved in refining standards of professional practice and offering professional development to industry. JMC provides public-facing, service-learning opportunities for students, notably in partnership with public media. The department supports scholastic journalism in Kentucky through an annual workshop for high school journalists.

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

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

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

##### Strengths

- Resilient students who are enthusiastic about the program
- Dedicated faculty committed to students' academic and personal development
- An academic home in a college of business with a supportive dean committed to providing resources as available
- A creative approach to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion focused on professional development to enhance faculty cultural competence
- Robust internship and campus work opportunities for students, notably a decade-long partnership with global strategic communication firm Omnicom

##### Weaknesses

- Significant enrollment decline, about 50%, from the time of previous site visit
- Faculty salaries that are sometimes not competitive for national recruitment
- Missed opportunities for data collection and synthesis on some assessment measures
- A television studio with dated equipment

#### **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 on the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.**

The four deficiencies set out in the previous report were:

*Heavy teaching loads that prevent faculty from being more productive as scholars.*

The department has sought to provide tenure-track faculty with course releases to free up time for scholarship. Faculty reported they consistently received such releases when requested for research and creative projects.

*Values and competencies are not consistently documented in course syllabi.*

The unit has made significant progress in this area, though some work remains to be done. Syllabus review has been added to the department's annual review process, to ensure the values and competencies are presented.

*Dated equipment and facilities, especially the television studio.*

The department's facilities have been upgraded since the previous site visit. Windows in Wilson Hall were replaced and classrooms in both Wilson and the Fine Arts Building received new carpet, paint and ceiling tiles. New 4K cameras and a production switcher were installed in the TV studio. New computers were purchased for labs in both Wilson and Fine Arts. New field cameras, light kits and portable teleprompters were also purchased.

*Little outreach with alumni outside the immediate area.*

The department addressed this concern in several ways. It sent faculty, pre-COVID, to New York and Chicago to meet with students and alumni involved in and supervising summer internships. When the pandemic halted travel, faculty made use of Zoom to bring out-of-region alumni to appear in classes.

Also during the pandemic shutdown, faculty recorded Zoom interviews with alumni working on the East Coast and in Chicago, segments of which were used in the introductory Contemporary Mass Media class to illustrate career opportunities and served in addition to reconnect the alumni with the department.

The department also shifted its alumni newsletter, *JMC Journal*, from print to online distribution. This allowed for more frequent publication (one or two issues per year to four) and to a broader distribution list of more than 4,000 Murray State alumni.

**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 clearly written but was missing data for several standards. The information was ultimately made available to the team on site.