

**Report of ACEJMC Evaluation**  
**Professional master's/Undergraduate programs**  
2022– 2023

Name of Institution: **University of Alabama**  
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Stuart Bell**  
Name of Unit: **College of Communication and Information Sciences**  
Name and Title of Administrator: **Brian S. Butler**  
Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: **Jan. 22-25, 2023**

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **February 14-17, 2016**  
Recommendation of the previous site visit team: **Reaccreditation**  
Undergraduate program: **Reaccreditation**  
Professional master's program: **Reaccreditation**

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council:  
Undergraduate program: **Reaccreditation**  
Professional master's program: **Reaccreditation**

**Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team:**  
Undergraduate program recommendation: **Reaccreditation**  
Professional master's program recommendation: **Reaccreditation**

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: **Marie Hardin, Professor and Dean**  
Organization/School: **Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State**

*Signature*



**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Sandy Banisky, Retired Abell Professor in Baltimore Journalism**  
Organization/School: **Philip Merrill School of Journalism, University of Maryland**


*Signature*



**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Jenny Buschhorn, Associate Professor of Practice**  
Organization/School: **School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Texas State University**

*Signature*



**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Del Galloway, Senior Vice President, Atlantic and Pacific Regions**

Organization/School: **Wells Fargo**

*Signature*

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**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Jacqueline Jones, Professor and Dean**

Organization/School: **School of Global Journalism and Communication, Morgan State University**

*Signature*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "J".

**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Hyunjin Seo, Oscar Stauffer Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development**

Organization/School: **William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Kansas**

*Signature*


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hyunjin Seo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "H" and "S".

**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Dan Shelley, President and CEO**

Organization/School: **Radio Television Digital News Association**

*Signature*

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Name of Institution: The University of Alabama

Name of Unit: College of Communication and Information Sciences

Year of Visit: 2023

**1. Check regional association by which the institution now is accredited.**

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- 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 in your state. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.**

In 1819, The Congress of the United States donated 46,000 acres of land within the State of Alabama for the endowment of a seminary of learning. The General Assembly of Alabama created the Board of Trustees in 1821, and on April 18, 1831, the University was opened for admission of students.

From the [Code of Alabama 1975, Chapter 47, University of Alabama](#):

§16-47-1. Body corporate.

The Governor and the State Superintendent of Education, by virtue of their respective offices, the trustees heretofore appointed from the different congressional districts of the state under the provisions of Section 264 of the Constitution and such other members as may be from time to time added to the board of trustees and their successors in office are constituted a body corporate under the name of "the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama," to carry into effect the purposes and intent of the Congress of the United States in the grant of lands by the act of April 20, 1818, and of the act of March 2, 1819, to this state, to be by it held and administered for the benefit of a seminary of learning. (School Code 1927, §543; Code 1940, T. 52, §486.)

**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 accrediting visit:** February 14-17, 2016

**If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:** N/A

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

1949

**6. Insert here the undergraduate mission statement and the separate mission statement for the graduate program. Statements should give the date of adoption and/or last revision.**

**C&IS:** *Revised: Fall 2021*

The University of Alabama's College of Communication and Information Sciences is a comprehensive multidisciplinary division in which teaching, research and service are focused on shared creation, presentation, dissemination, retrieval, collection, analysis and evaluation of messages and meanings in a variety of settings. The mission is supported by one of the country's most diverse combinations of academic and service programs.

Values:

Personal and professional excellence  
Creativity and intellectual curiosity  
Interpersonal adaptability and negotiation  
Integrity and ethical grounding  
Diversity and appreciation for differences  
Passion and resilience  
Collaboration and unity

**A+PR:** *Revised August 2013*

The mission of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations is to prepare highly competent, socially conscious and engaged leaders to shape the future of global advertising and public relations.

**JCM BA:** *Revised February 18, 2019*

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media teaches students to make sense of information, sort truth from fiction, and tell stories with authenticity and inspiration—all critical tasks in an information age. We prepare our graduates to find jobs and excel across many fields, and be discriminating media consumers. We also prepare our graduates to think critically about media and their role in a democratic and diverse society. We believe that those who can collect information, filter it for accuracy and importance, and tell it well can change the world.

**JCM MA:** *Revised May 2021*

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media teaches students to make sense of information, sort truth from fiction, and tell stories with authenticity and inspiration—all critical tasks in an information age. We prepare our graduates to find jobs and excel across many fields, and be discriminating media consumers. We also prepare our graduates to think critically about media and their role in a democratic and diverse society. We believe that those who can collect information, filter it for accuracy and importance, and tell it well can change the world. We strive to educate students in the tradition of the liberal arts in pursuit of professional, intellectual, ethical and personal goals in a democratic society; to provide leadership in the College and University in writing, reporting, editing, producing and presenting news/information in various forms; to advance the discipline through research and service.

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

Number of weeks in a semester: 16  
Number of weeks in a quarter: N/A  
Number of weeks in summer sessions: 5  
Number of weeks in intersessions: 3

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

Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree

X   Ph.D. degree

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

Bachelor's degrees:

- Advertising \*
- Public Relations \*
- News Media

Master's degree: Journalism and Media Studies\*

*\* Programs are offered both online and on campus.*

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

120 Semester Hours

**Credits hours required for a professional master’s degree:**

31 Semester Hours

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

Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.

**Semester Hours:**

1-6 News Media electives

1-9 A+PR electives

**12. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered in the undergraduate program 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>            |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Department of Advertising and Public Relations | Dr. Matthew VanDyke, interim chair |
| Department of Journalism and Creative Media    | Dr. Michael Bruce, interim chair   |

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

38,320 students as of Fall 2021; see [UA’s Factbook](#) for more details.

**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 | Fall 2022 Census   |           |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
|                               | <u>Main Campus</u> | <u>DL</u> | <u>Total</u> |
| Advertising                   | 322                | 7         | 329          |
| Public Relations              | 738                | 20        | 758          |
| News Media                    | 483                | 0         | 483          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>1,543</b>       | <b>27</b> | <b>1,573</b> |

**15. Give the number of graduate students enrolled:**

Journalism and Media Studies: On-site 23; online 49; Total 72

**16. 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 the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2023 visits. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

Please see [attached file](#) with all skills classes for Spring 2022 and Fall 2022; Main Campus and Online courses are listed in separate worksheets.

**17. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2022–2023 academic year: \$13,500,000**  
**Give percentage increase or decrease in three years: 13% increase**  
**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: A+PR and JCM = \$5,408,390**

**18. List name and rank of all full-time faculty. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.**

Semester: Fall, 2022

\*Teaching release (one course or more) due to leaves or administrative appointments

| <b>Professors</b>  | <b>Associate Professors</b>  | <b>Assistant Professors</b>   | <b>Instructors</b>   |
|--|--|---|--|
| Andrew Billings<br>*Kimberly Bissell<br>Rick Bragg<br>*William Evans<br>*Karla Gower<br>Hyoungkoo Khang<br>Eyun Jung Ki<br>Wilson Lowrey<br>*Damion Waymer | Dianne Bragg<br>Brian Britt<br>Rebecca Britt<br>Kenon Brown<br>*Michael Bruce<br>George Daniels<br>Jameson Hayes<br>*J. Suzanne Horsley<br>Terry Kinney<br>Elliot Panek<br>Michael Parrott<br>Mark Roberts<br>*Matthew VanDyke<br>Kristen Warner | Matthew Barnidge<br>*Mark Barry<br>Andrew Bauer<br>Courtney Boman<br>Josh Bramlett<br>Nancy Brinson<br>Judith Clark<br>Joseph Colvin<br>John Haley<br>Steven Holiday<br>Shaheen Kanthawala<br>Jihoon Kim<br>Seoyeon Kim<br>Jiyoung Lee<br>Laura Lemon Petersen<br>Dongjae Lim<br>Jessica Maddox<br>Kaitlin Miller<br>Landon Palmer<br>Sean Sadri<br>Teresa Tackett<br>Justin Walters<br>Alyxandra Vesey | *Hailey Allen<br>Lars Anderson<br>Thomas Arenberg<br>William Brantley<br>Maya Champion<br>*Susan Daria<br>Camille DeBose<br>Teresa Gawrych<br>Jared George<br>Andrew Grace<br>*Randall Huffaker<br>*Michael Little<br>Mark Mayfield<br>*Tracy Sims<br>Zachary Tigert<br>Janet Walker<br>*Caleb Walters<br>*Gerald Waters<br>*Matthew Wisla |

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

**Part-time Instructors**

| <b>Spring 2022</b>   | <b>Fall 2022</b>          | <b>Spring 2023</b>        |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pamela Chvotkin      | Ademola Adelu             | Ademola Adelu             |
| Nathan Dains         | Alexis Barton             | Gulmira Amangalieva       |
| Bradley Fisher       | Colton Cabiness           | Sandra Barnidge           |
| Brett Hudson         | Pamela Chvotkin           | Alexis Barton             |
| Tralene Hunston      | Nathan Dains              | Colton Cabiness           |
| Jessie Jones         | Andrew Daws               | Pamela Chvotkin           |
| Richard LeComte      | William Field             | Andrew Daws               |
| Leonard Mall         | Caroline Gazzara-McKenzie | Michael Dorrill           |
| David Miller         | Ellen Gomory              | Caroline Gazzara-McKenzie |
| Blake Morris         | Craig Graves              | Craig Graves              |
| Frances Putman       | Brett Hudson              | Erin Hackenmueller        |
| Rebecca Robinson     | Allison Jordan            | Brett Hudson              |
| Julie Salter         | Da Young Kang             | Jessie Jones              |
| William Shores       | Samantha Kocan            | Allison Jordan            |
| Jamon Smith          | Richard LeComte           | Da Young Kang             |
| Edwin Stanton        | Sai Datta Mikkilineni     | Samantha Kocan            |
| Keli Stiglich        | David Miller              | Richard LeComte           |
| Anna Claire Toxey    | Laura Pitts               | Kaley Martin              |
| Jessica White        | Frances Putman            | David Miller              |
| James Wiles          | Sara Quick                | Laura Pitts               |
| Caryn Wiley-Rapoport | Amy Ritchart              | Frances Putman            |
|                      | Rebecca Robinson          | Sara Quick                |
|                      | William Shores            | Amy Ritchart              |
|                      | William Singleton         | Rebecca Robinson          |
|                      | Edwin Stanton             | Lila Sears                |
|                      | Keli Stiglich             | William Shores            |
|                      | Anna Toxey                | William Singleton         |
|                      | Jessika White             | Edwin Stanton             |
|                      | Larry Willis              | Keli Stiglich             |
|                      |                           | LaTonya Taylor            |
|                      |                           | Kevin Thompson            |
|                      |                           | Spencer Tomsett           |
|                      |                           | Anna Toxey                |
|                      |                           | Anna Grace Usery          |
|                      |                           | Jessika White             |
|                      |                           | Larry Willis              |

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

2021-22 academic year: 434 bachelor's; 27 master's

2020-21 academic year: 404 bachelor's; 20 master's

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

The College of Communication & Information Sciences (C&IS) at the University of Alabama is an outgrowth of the university's College of Fine Arts & Sciences and its Extension Division. The first newswriting course at the university was offered in 1925 by the Department of English. In 1928, the Department of Journalism was established; later, advertising and public relations courses were integrated into its offerings. The Extension Division helped stand up a broadcasting department, which became the Department of Radio Arts in 1939.

The UA Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a School of Communication in 1973, which became a College of Communication in 1988. In 1997, the College merged with the School of Library & Information Studies in 1997. Today, it is the C&IS.

The Journalism Department was accredited by ACEJMC in 1949. It lost its accredited status in 1968, but it was reaccredited in 1978. Advertising + Public Relations (formally created in 1974) was accredited in 1984. The Department of Telecommunication & Film (which started as the Department of Radio Arts) was accredited in 1990. That department was merged with the Department of Journalism in 2016 to create the Department of Journalism and Creative Media.

### **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.**

C&IS has a robust, detailed and comprehensive strategic plan that aligns with its mission and vision. The plan, for 2021-26, was developed under the previous dean, and “C&IS stakeholders” were invited, via the website, to submit ideas to help drive progress on its implementation. The plan has five strategic priorities:

1. Cultivate high-quality academic programs
2. Enhance the research culture
3. Improve internal and external communities
4. Provide a learning environment that promotes diversity, equity, leadership and service
5. Strengthen national and international profiles

The plan outlines “Key Result Areas” (KRAs), which outline goals and strategies around the priorities. Those include goals toward student success (e.g., “Elevate students’ professional connections, skills, and preparation for the workforce...”) and those focused on service (e.g., “Position the College as a leader in advocating for the civic good and social change...”).

The new dean, Brian Butler, has increased resources available for a Strategic Plan fund to which faculty members can submit ideas for consideration by a committee that vets them for their



alignment with the plan and then makes funding recommendations.

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

The College's mission statement and strategic plan are readily accessed here: <https://cis.ua.edu/about/>. The two departments with programs under review also have strategic plans accessible via the College's 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 College's strategic plan is one that informs its day-to-day work in multiple ways; it is also written in a way to allow for adaptation based on changes in instruction and technology. The departmental plans feed up to the College plan, using the strategic priorities for their own strategies. Furthermore, the current Dean's choice to continue to emphasize the plan developed before his arrival has allowed the work to continue and expand, with the involvement of faculty and an expanded pool of funds to support it.

**(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.**

By all accounts, the College administration provides effective leadership for faculty and staff, and it represents C&IS very well across the university. This has been the case throughout the review period, from the previous Dean (Mark Nelson) to the new Dean (Brian Butler). Almost to a faculty member, College leadership (dean, associate and assistant deans, and interim department chairs) were praised for their service, efficiency, and accessibility. This is commendable, given the fact that there has been some recent turnover in departmental leadership and the introduction of a new Dean in recent months. The interim leadership at the departmental level is the result of the recent promotion of a department chair (A+PR) and a need to replace another (JCM) in 2021. Searches have been conducted or are ongoing for chairs for both departments, but in the meantime, the interim department chairs are well-regarded for their openness, collaboration and service orientation. Furthermore, praise for the Dean was universal, with faculty members describing him as open to new ideas, curious about their work and supportive of their scholarship. Peer administrators described him as a leader who is a quick study and looks for opportunities to collaborate and showcase C&IS strengths.

**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?**

Conversations with leadership across the university indicate that the College has consistently, throughout the period under review, been regarded as a good citizen of the institution and a leader among its peers. The previous Dean, who retired in 2022, spent 31 years at the university in various roles, including as vice provost for academic affairs and vice president for student affairs before leading C&IS for eight years. He was an advocate for C&IS across the institution and was well-connected with alumni, and he put a priority on undergraduate programs with strong retention and graduation rates. Under his leadership, the College flourished and became an exemplar for student success, assessment, alumni relations and fundraising.

The new Dean, a social scientist with a strong background in research and program development, is already regarded as willing to engage across the institution on behalf of the College, including in raising its profile as a contributor to UA's research mission. He is already regarded as a strong fundraiser and advocate for C&IS. Faculty in the College indicate that they are excited about his interest in their scholarly work and his invitation to them to share ideas for new initiatives.

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

The unit has current information (2022) posted on the ACEJMC 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.**

Data for the College can be found here: <https://cis.ua.edu/about/accreditation/>. Data is provided for each major and for the master's program. The Provost praised the College as the "gold standard" for its retention, from first to second year, of undergraduate students.

**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 College has a Faculty Handbook and a network of committees with oversight of areas including curricula; initiatives around diversity, equity and inclusion; scholarships and awards; and promotion and tenure. Committees operate at the College and Department level. Faculty interviews and a review of meeting records indicate that these committees are active.

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

Both the university and the College have established processes for such searches. The search for the current Dean was conducted with the oversight of the provost's office in 2022. Searches for department chairs may be internal or external. An external search for a new chair for the Advertising+Public Relations Department was ongoing during the site visit.

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

A review of files made available to the team indicate that these avenues are available.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The unit's self-study states that the JCM Department has not yet developed a separate strategic plan for its master's program; the self-study indicates that this is a priority for the JCM Graduate Committee going forward as it continues to develop a master's program that emerged from the departmental merger (with master's programs) in 2016.

The Department's full strategic plan, adopted in 2019, has goals that apply to all degree programs it offers, including the M.A. program. Those goals include providing a learning experience for students that emphasizes diversity, equity, leadership and service. Two strategies in the plan focus solely on the master's program. They are to pursue more active recruitment and retention of high-achieving students and to refine the program to accentuate unique faculty and Department strengths. The Interim Department Chair, who is also director of the College's Digital Media Center, said tying the program more systematically to media production in the DMC would be one such way to refine it to leverage strengths.

**(i) The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional graduate program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional graduate program.**

The JCM Department Bylaws require the engagement of a Graduate Program Committee to make admissions decisions and to "consult with the Graduate Coordinator" (also in the Department) on all aspects of the program. The bylaws further stipulate that "issues pertaining to graduate curriculum and overarching program structure need to be approved by departmental faculty" with permanent Graduate Faculty status.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate) This is a highly functioning College with a robust shared governance process and strong leadership. It is driven by a strategic plan that helps provide continuity even as there have been administrative changes in the unit during the recent review period.

(Professional Master's) The master's program is governed through a structure that is specified in the JCM Department bylaws. Faculty members with a graduate-faculty appointment, including those who are part of the Graduate Program Committee, are charged with overseeing the program. Although it does not currently have a stand-alone mission and strategic plan, the program is integrated in the Departmental mission and strategic plan; the Graduate Committee will continue to develop strategic priorities for the master's degree.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

Discussions of indicators b, c and f should describe and evaluate individual academic sequences in the unit.

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

The College of Communication & Information Sciences maps required and elective courses within the major and the number of hours needed outside of the major. The catalogue details the number of hours required for each major, as well as the number of required liberal arts and sciences general education courses in order to meet the University Core Curriculum. All students are required to take a minor unless they are seeking more than one major. Within the College, students may not select a minor in the same department as their major.

**(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.**

*ADV:* The unit provides a balance of theoretical/conceptual and professional skills courses. Students complete two three-hour core courses composed of theoretical or conceptual courses: Introduction to Mass Communication and Introduction to Advertising or Introduction to Advertising and Public Relations. Course descriptions reflect that the classes are not solely professionally focused. Students are also offered additional theoretical and conceptual courses including Creativity and American Culture, Nonprofit Communications, and Advanced Digital Marketing.

*PR:* The C&IS beautifully integrates an appropriate balance of hands-on professional course work with valued theoretical and conceptual courses. From Introduction of Public Relations (APR 231) and Introduction of Audience Analysis (APR 280) to Public Relations Strategy (APR 303) and Public Relations Campaigns (APR 433) students receive a well-rounded learning experience.

*JCM:* JCM's curriculum indeed provides a balance of courses compliant with ACEJMC competencies. Students must take "core courses" (7 credit hours), "news media core courses" (24 credit hours), "skills courses" (four at 3 credit hours each), plus additional required courses which vary by a student's chosen track. Tracks available are digital news, management and entrepreneurship, public affairs reporting, specialized writing, and visual journalism. There is also a "sports media concentration" range of courses available (12 credit hours), which includes classes in "digital sports" and "sports writing."

Outside of the College, JCM students are required to take a minimum of 53 hours of courses (although, according to the provost, that number will be reduced considerably in the coming years). Students are also required to take at least 18 credit hours of courses toward a minor degree in another area of study.

**(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.**

*PR:* The public relations curriculum reflects the knowledge, skills and abilities required of public relations students to succeed as they enter the profession. Faculty, students and alums believe the program is advanced and professional. A Digital Communication Concentration is offered to PR majors interested in new technologies.

*ADV:* The results indicate that students are well prepared to take on the digital and technological challenges of the professional workplace. Courses in digital analytics, channel planning, digital writing & strategy, and digital design provide students with up-to-date digital and media competencies. Students have access to cutting-edge data analytics resources including Sprinklr and all University students have personal access to the Adobe Suite.

*JCM:* While the site team did notice the presence of digital news courses, there is some question whether the number and subject matter of such courses are adequate to serve the needs of JCM students as they prepare to enter the professional world. That said, a key in making the digital news courses meaningful to students, obviously, is the quality of instruction. Students with whom the site team visited spoke very highly of the instruction they were receiving. Otherwise, there was near universal praise from JCM students regarding the quality of instruction. Many students, in fact, indicated great affinity for the way faculty go above and beyond to connect them with internships and professionals in their fields of study, and check their general well-being.

**(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 C&IS does a particularly good job of creating valuable hands-on professional experiences – including internships – that allow students to apply their knowledge, skills and abilities. A variety of student-led organizations also offer opportunities to engage and interact with professionals. Throughout the site team’s conversations with students, particularly public relations students, they spoke favorably about the professional exposure and opportunities available to them within the College.

**(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.**

Lab and skills courses adhere to the 20-1 ratio. Lecture classes are sometimes larger, but seldom exceed a 35-1 ratio.

**(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).**

Internships are strongly encouraged for undergraduate students but not required. The College has many opportunities for practical experience on campus and students report also having sufficient access to external internships. Employers in the area say that students and recent graduates are well-prepared and compete favorably with interns and hires from other media programs outside the state, as well as the immediate area.

*JCM:* JCM undergraduate majors are not required to participate in internships in order to graduate, although internships are encouraged and facilitated by faculty. Academic credit is awarded for successful internships (but not professional experiences outside the classroom when students do not pre-enroll such professional experiences as internships). According to student input received by the site team, Journalism and Creative Media faculty often go to great lengths to encourage, and even help arrange, internships at prestigious regional and national professional journalism and creative media outlets. Students are allowed to earn up to six semester credits for internships. Grades for such internships are determined jointly by professional supervisors and appropriate faculty members.

*ADV and PR:* The Department encourages students to apply for and complete internships, as an important aspect of their education and professional preparation. Because of the small size of the local community and corresponding modest number of local opportunities for internships and the large number of students, the Department does not require an internship for graduation. However, it strongly encourages students to complete internships, whether for-credit or not. The students and faculty interviewed said that many, if not most, students participate in a practicum, internship or professionally oriented experience outside the classroom.

**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 must submit a Student Information Form and Request for Credit Internship, which details the job responsibilities, and lists contact information for the on-site supervisor. Internships are conducted under the joint supervision of the Department in which the student majors and the professional media outlet. The intern's final grade is based on a joint evaluation from the site supervisor and the Department coordinator.

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.

The process in effect for professional external interns is the same for campus-based internships as well. Intern work is evaluated by a professional supervisor and a faculty coordinator.

### **Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

#### **(g) At least half of the required credit hours are in either professional skills courses or integrate theory and skills appropriate to professional communication careers.**

The Journalism M.A. curriculum requires students to complete 31 credits, and more than half of the required credit hours are professional skills classes or classes that combine theory and skills. The curriculum meets the requirement.

The master's program has two tracks: Plan I is a thesis track that combines skills with theory. The College catalog says these students typically move on to a doctoral program. Plan II is geared to students who want professional skills and requires completion of a project instead of a thesis. Plan II includes three on-campus options plus an online option. In the 2021-22 academic year, 13 master's students were enrolled on campus and 28 were studying online.

The required courses in Plan I, the thesis track, concentrate on critical thinking, theory and research methods: JCM55, Graduate Studies Orientation; MC551, Seminar in Communication Theory or CIS605, Cultural and Critical Theory; MC550, Research Methods, or CIS 609, Humanistic Research Methods; JCM562, Contemporary Issues in Journalism, or JCM522, Science & Environment in Media, or JCM520, Media Effects, or MC526, Race and Gender in Media; JCM563, History of Journalism and Media, and JCM599, Thesis Research.

Students also must take 12 credits of electives from a menu that includes Advanced Sports Writing, News Analysis, Journalism and Emergent Media and Teaching Multimedia News.

Plan II, the project track, offers three on-campus options:

Option A is the Community Journalism Concentration, which immerses students in professional journalism. It includes a summer internship at the University's Digital Media Center, a laboratory that is home to Alabama Public Radio and WVUA-23, in Tuscaloosa.

Option B is a sports media concentration that allows students to complete their coursework with a 3-hour presentation or comprehensive exams. Option C is a "general path" that requires students to complete coursework plus a 3-hour project or comprehensive exams.



Required courses in Plan II include: JCM501, Media Production Tools; JCM 502, Producing Community Journalism; JCM511, Depth Reporting; JCM555, Entrepreneurial Journalism; JCM562, Contemporary Issues in Journalism; JCM572, Seminar in Professional Journalism; and JCM597, Master's Project.

The sports concentration requires those courses plus JCM517, Advanced Sports Writing; JCM535, Sports Documentary; MC531, Sports & Social Media, and MD564, Sports Media Research.

The online option, which can be completed in 18 months, requires: JCM555, Entrepreneurial Journalism; JCM562, Contemporary Issues in Journalism, and JCM597, Master's Project, plus two more core courses. Students then must choose at least three courses from a menu of 11 skills courses.

**(h) Instruction and curricular requirements for professional graduate students are more advanced and rigorous than for undergraduate students, including courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students.**

Both theory courses and professional skills courses are offered at advanced levels that are not available to undergraduates. For courses that accept both undergraduate students and master's students, instructors say extra coursework is required for the graduate students. Graduate students in the master's Project course must complete an advanced professional project or comprehensive exam, neither of which are available to undergraduates.

## **SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate) The unit has a solid curriculum that does a good job of balancing theoretical and practical courses. The College provides a wealth of practical opportunities and internships are not required, but strongly encouraged. Students feel well prepared by the faculty, and employers say interns and entry-level employees are ready to work and compete successfully in the professional setting.

(Graduate) The graduate journalism curriculum focuses heavily on professional skills and critical thinking, with a goal of preparing students for the job market. Master's students are not required to take courses focused solely on law and/or ethics, but instructors say those topics are addressed all semester. Some courses include discussions of media law, particularly the First Amendment, and media ethics. For example, JCM 562, Contemporary Issues in Journalism, is a required course that includes critical thinking on issues that include legal and ethical challenges. JCM511, Depth Reporting, includes discussion of law and ethics as students work on a reporting project.

Master's students say they believe they are well versed in law and ethics because they focus on legal and ethical problems as they develop and complete their projects.

The Community Journalism track, a one-year, 31-credit program, has room for just one elective. The curriculum, geared to providing skills for the job market, does not require courses in data journalism or social media analytics – two skills that newsrooms increasingly rely on.

Though data journalism is offered as an elective, the self-study shows that of 15 master's students, two chose data journalism as an elective. Of those 15, four chose a course titled Sports and Social Media. Other students completed the program without the study of data journalism or social media analysis.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program):**

**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.**

An assistant dean in the College with oversight of assessment works with assessment coordinators, faculty and Department Chairs to ensure their plans are up-to-date and implemented annually. The plans, posted on the website and clear in their approach, meet ACEJMC's requirements to employ direct and indirect measures to assess learning outcomes related to modern curricula that prepare students for a diverse, digitally driven workplace (See Standard 2.) A representative for the university's office with oversight of assessment activity across the institution called the College an exemplar, in terms of moving assessment from a "bureaucratic exercise" to a broader conversation among faculty about student learning and one that yields results.

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

The assessment plan for the programs under review are here:

<https://cis.ua.edu/about/accreditation/>

- (c) 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 assessment plans for each undergraduate major under review define the learning outcomes as those specified by ACEJMC. For example, the A+PR Department focuses on six of the competencies (visual communication, writing, ethics, critical thinking, statistical concepts, and critical evaluation of work) in a direct-measure capstone project (campaign planbook) by students. Another is the JCM Department's 2022-23 plan, which focuses on four ACEJMC competencies: ethics, critical thinking, writing, and tools/technology, and uses a number of measures to assess learning.

- (d) *The unit assessment plan uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning.***

Each Department uses multiple measures to assess student learning. For instance, the A+PR Department employs both a final campaign planbook evaluation by professionals (direct) for multiple competencies and a survey asking students to assess their knowledge across all competencies (indirect). The JCM Department this year used measures including a portfolio

review, internship supervisor evaluation (direct) and survey of students (indirect) to assess writing proficiency.

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

Professionals are engaged in evaluating projects in A+PR capstone courses and portfolios in senior Journalism courses.

**(f) 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 College has a robust system for collecting data, evaluating it, and addressing issues in student learning, and faculty are engaged in this process. The self-study and faculty members provided examples of “closing the loop.” Those include altering instruction in specific course modules to help students better grasp concepts (e.g., related to photography and lighting); revision of courses to address emerging issues identified in data collection (e.g., revising an advertising course to focus more on data interpretation); and addition of courses to help students master competencies (e.g., adding an advanced research course to help students better understand research methods).

**Professional master’s program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**The unit’s professional master’s program has a written assessment plan, posted to its website; collects and reports data from its assessment activities; and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

The College’s professional master’s program has a written assessment plan posted on the College of Communication & Information Sciences site. The College updated its graduate assessment plan in 2021 to reflect ACEJMC’s revision of standards. Master’s faculty teaching relevant courses on campus and online receive assessment information each cycle. Those data are used to update syllabi to add learning objectives that reflect the revised ACEJMC values and competencies.

The JCM Assessment Committee meets each fall to review data from the previous semesters and discusses the findings with faculty. It also creates a plan for future assessment. The assessment program includes meetings with professionals who review students’ work. Instructors say they sharpen presentations and add lessons based on the committee’s findings.

The College cycles through ACEJMC values and competencies, measuring a different menu each year. Assessment compares outcomes in the online program to the on-site professional program. The assessment program uses both direct and indirect measures to assess the master’s students’ critical thinking abilities, writing quality, use of technology and mastery of the profession’s values. Direct measures include content analysis of students’ news stories, internship evaluations and exams. Indirect measures include surveys of students and graduates.

## **SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate): The College's assessment program is a clear priority, with the appointment of an assistant dean to oversee the process. It is part of the fabric of C&IS and the life of the Departments and faculty, and it seems to be accepted as a valuable tool in improving student learning. The results are demonstrated in improved courses and curricula.

(Graduate) The journalism master's program assesses courses that reflect the ACEJMC values and competencies. It uses assessment data in the revising and updating of syllabi. For example, 2016-17 assessment data prompted the addition of more readings and assignments about diversity in various courses. After reviewing the 2020-21 data, a lesson was added to the Depth Reporting class to help students learn to find more diverse news sources.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program):**

**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 robust diversity plan that is socialized throughout the College. It is well executed and maintained, and there is a supportive climate within the College for achieving the plan’s objectives. The unit’s diversity plan, which aligns with and complements that of the university, addresses an inclusive curriculum and features strategies and tactics that drive a culturally proficient faculty, staff and student body – including strategies to address women- and minority-centric issues. The plan reflects the College’s definition of diversity, identifies underrepresented groups and articulates KPIs.

**Diversity plan tied to unit’s strategic plan, which is tied to its budgeting process. The unit posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.**

Yes, the unit’s diversity plan is featured in and tethered to its strategic plan. It is integrated into the unit’s budgeting process and is prominently featured on the College’s website.

**(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.**

Diversity, equity and inclusion concepts, theory and hands-on application are offered on a continuum throughout the curriculum, from introductory concepts through master-level course work, and syllabi reflect learning outcomes. An emphasis is placed on the role, value and impact of journalism and strategic communications in a global society and the responsibility of students and professionals to advance understanding of DEI across cultures. Racial, ethnic and gender diversity components are integrated into multiple required and core classes – including diversity-centric courses that meet the unit’s writing requirements.

Specifically, courses across the College featuring cultural communication include 100- and 200-level introductory courses, 300 level course work where concepts are reinforced and master-level curriculum in the unit’s 400 level classes.

A “*Teaching Across the Curriculum*” workshop is presented to faculty to encourage the incorporation of DEI across the college’s curricula. This workshop is modeled after that of a program hosted by the Poynter Institute.

To complement, strengthen and advance the unit's diversity-centric curriculum, the College has two boards comprising accomplished, diverse professionals and academicians. The C&IS Board of Visitors strengthens the College's demographic diversity, and The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations Board of Advisors reflects a diverse mix of communications leaders: 42% women, 17% Asian, 12.5% African Americans and 12.5% Hispanic.

The unit also has a "DEI Speaker Funds" program, a \$10,000 permanent budget line item to support attracting guest speakers to the college who address DEI issues.

**(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 College successfully integrates and advances concepts of DEI with its faculty, staff and students. Examples include the creation of the unit's first-ever standing committee on DEI, which drives action and accountability throughout the College (established in spring 2021); and "Diversity Across the Curriculum," a Poynter Institute modeled workshop presented to the unit's faculty in September 2022 that incorporates dimensions of DEI throughout the unit's curricula. In addition, 11 faculty and staff from the unit completed the "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace" certification, a seven-week program. The unit's annual "Discerning Diverse Voices" symposium – in its 14<sup>th</sup> year – showcases diversity-related research and creative activity of faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Dr. G. Christine Taylor, the university's first Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion hired in 2018, speaks favorably of the unit's commitment to DEI, citing C&IS as a leader among its campus peers for taking the initiative and "doing the work to get to where it needs to be."

Dr. Taylor explained, "Because of where we are as a university on our institutional journey, DEI conversations and the work required are just getting started."

The unit has well defined strategies and tactics to recruit and retain minority faculty and staff. Programs include its "Diversity Advocate" training, an online course provided to all search committee members, which other units within the university model. Since its inception more than 75 faculty, staff and graduate students have completed the "Diversity Advocate" course. The unit requires that each search committee must have at least one diversity advocate to support DEI at all stages of the recruiting and hiring process. The university has an affinity group program that supports faculty and staff in their professional development and networking that nurtures a safe and welcoming campus environment.

To recruit talent that strengthens the diversity of the unit, the College advertises in publications consumed by minority groups, recruits at HBCUs and invests in recruitment outreach to women-centric organizations. College leaders and search committee members recognize that in addition to these outreach efforts, relationship-driven strategies are key to success.

A reflection of the College's commitment to DEI is the composition of its leadership team. Three units are now led by women (Dr. Robin Boylorn in the Holle Center for Communication Arts, Dr. Karla Gower in The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, and Dr. Kim Bissell in the Institute for Research in Communication). The senior associate dean is a person of color (Dr. Damion Waymer), and the Holle Center for Communication Arts is led by a person of color (Dr. Boylorn). Three of four of the College's associate/assistant deans are women: Dr. Kim Bissell (associate dean for research), Dr. Sara Hartley (associate dean for undergraduate studies and external relations), and Dr. Suzanne Horsley (assistant dean for assessment, accreditation, and diversity).

**(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 College has a diverse student enrollment, but its Black student population is 10.8%, which is nearly 14% lower than that of the state, while its enrollment of White students is more than 79% (compared to a state percentage of 64.1%). The next highest percentage of minority students within the college is Hispanics at 6.6%, which exceeds that of the state at 5.3%.

University-wide, 60% of enrollment is out of state and 40% is in state. The university has a significant percentage of students from California, New Jersey and the Chicago area.

To drive progress and attract, retain and graduate an even more diverse student population, the unit has multiple outreach programs, including boots on the ground, hands-on recruitment of underrepresented groups in communities statewide, student ambassadors, reflecting a diverse demographic who staff DEI lectures and symposia hosted by the College, and active participation in the campuswide "Our Bama" and "Vision Day" programs, which target students from diverse backgrounds, as well as under-resourced high schools.

To strengthen the retention of students with socioeconomic challenges, in 2019 the College began offering "balance-relief funding" to students who were prevented from registering for classes because of financial holds on their student accounts. The unit dedicates a budget of \$10,000 to support those students in need. Much, if not all, of this is from external support.

An innovative program to build a more diverse pipeline of prospective public relations professionals will soon launch. It's a partnership between the unit's public relations department, the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, My Publicist is Black and the Country Music Association. These partners will present the CMA Fellowship for Diversity and Inclusion – an eight-week program featuring students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds who will work collaboratively to support the 2023 CMA Fest – the organization's largest live event.



**(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 unit has created and maintains a climate free of harassment and discrimination. It has a Human Resources Committee of faculty, staff and students that is of counsel to the unit’s Dean and others within the unit to promote the social life and well-being of the College community.

To affirm and support LGBTQ+ students, the university has created “UA Safe Zone,” a program featuring a decal placed in high-profile locations featuring the university’s iconic elephant in the equally iconic colors of the Pride flag, representing the LGBTQ+ community. “Safe Zones” tell students these are safe places to be who you are and to safely share your story.

**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.**

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

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit’s total faculty. (Report international faculty the same way the university reports them.)

SCHOOLS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES should adjust the response and listing below to best represent the racial/ethnic/socio economic groups of the area’s population.

**Academic year: 2021–2022 Full-time faculty**

| <b>Group</b>                           | <b>Female</b> | <b>% of total faculty</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>% of total faculty</b> |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Black/African American                 | 2             | 3.3%                      | 4           | 6.6%                      |
| White                                  | 18            | 29.5%                     | 29          | 47.5%                     |
| American Indian/Alaskan native         | 0             | 0%                        | 0           | 0%                        |
| Asian                                  | 2             | 3.3%                      | 1           | 1.6%                      |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race)             | 1             | 1.6%                      | 0           | 0%                        |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0             | 0%                        | 0           | 0%                        |
| Two or more races                      | 0             | 0%                        | 0           | 0%                        |
| Other race                             | 0             | 0%                        | 0           | 0%                        |
| International (any race)               | 2             | 3.3%                      | 2           | 3.3%                      |

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

| <b>Group</b>                           | <b>Female</b> | <b>% of total<br/>faculty</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>% of total<br/>faculty</b> |
|--|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Black/African American                 | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| White                                  | 2             | 18.2%                         | 8           | 72.7%                         |
| American Indian/Alaskan native         | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| Asian                                  | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race)             | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| Two or more races                      | 0             | 0%                            | 1           | 9.1%                          |
| Other race                             | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |
| International (any race)               | 0             | 0%                            | 0           | 0%                            |

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate and Graduate) The College’s commitment to, investment in and progress toward a more diverse, equitable and inclusive program is strong – and it’s reflected in the composition of its leadership team, the evolution of its diverse student enrollment and its recognition that while progress has been made, the work continues. College leaders, faculty and many students recognize the program is not where it wants to be and are committed to doing the work required to get there.

**Overall evaluation (Undergraduate and graduate):  
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.**

In the three years prior to the site team visit, a majority of core and required courses offered by the A+PR and JCM Departments were taught by full-time faculty (71.58% for the A+PR Department and 59% for the JCM Department in 2019-2020; 76.79% for the A+PR Department and 60% for the JCM Department in 2020-2021; and 78.52% for the A+PR Department and 67% for the JCM Department in 2021-2022). The proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty in the Departments has increased during the period.

**(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.**

There is an appropriate balance of professional and scholarly experience in the Departments' faculty. As of fall 2022, the Departments had a total of 64 full-time faculty members: 9 full professors, 14 associate professors, 23 assistant professors and 18 instructors. Of these, 21 held tenure (8 full professors and 13 associate professors). The majority of tenure-track and tenured faculty in the Departments have Ph.D.s, and 80% of full-time faculty have worked in industry. Part-time faculty typically provide students with current professional experience. Overall, faculty members are active in professional and scholarly associations as leaders or members.

As part of professional development opportunities, workshops on teaching and diversity as well as subject areas are offered regularly at the College or Department levels. Travel funds are provided to support faculty professional development. Several faculty members commented that the College had supported their participation in leadership or other professional training outside the university.

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

The Departments require, support and reward faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. These activities are valued in terms of generating new ideas and knowledge, integrating them into the classrooms and contributing to local, national and international communities.

Support for faculty scholarship is provided in various ways including internal seed grants, travel support, course releases and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities. Internal grants to support faculty scholarship are available at the Department, College and university levels. All full-time faculty are eligible for travel support to make conference presentations or take part in

professional training. In addition, tenured faculty members are eligible for sabbatical leaves. The College's Institute for Communication and Information Research offers workshops on grant writing and provides interdisciplinary research collaboration opportunities. To support faculty efforts on external grants, the College has recently hired a grant writing staff person whose position is shared with the College of Human Environmental Sciences.

Most faculty said they felt supported in their scholarly activity and free to pursue scholarship, whether creative, professional or more traditional research. Several faculty members expressed desire to see more internal seed grant opportunities at the College level.

Expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity are described in unit guidelines for tenure and promotion as well as the College of Communication & Information Sciences Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion. The JCM Department has a supplemental document for creative scholarship. In addition, the College abides by the University of Alabama Faculty Handbook. These documents lay out categories of eligible works of scholarship, research and creative activity expectations by rank. The self-study summarized these criteria and provided links to relevant documents.

Several faculty members expressed concern that criteria for assessing creative works are not clear.

**(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.**

Faculty members have been active with relevant academic and professional groups in sharing their work. The self-study identified 162 awards and honors (two from the A+PR Department and 160 from the JCM Department); 44 external grants (13 from the A+PR Department and 31 from the JCM Department); 423 articles in refereed journals (169 from the A+PR Department and 254 from the JCM Department); 12 scholarly books (three from the A+PR Department and nine from the JCM Department); 10 textbooks (three from the A+PR Department and seven from the JCM Department); 77 book chapters (21 from the A+PR Department and 56 from the JCM Department); 201 refereed conference papers (52 from the A+PR Department and 149 from the JCM Department) and 110 non-juried creative works (two from the A+PR Department and 109 from the JCM Department) during the six-year period. Compared with the previous accreditation cycle, this reflects an increase in the number of awards/honors, external grants, refereed journal articles, textbooks and non-juried creative works, and a decrease in the number of book chapters and refereed conference papers. These accomplishments reflect activities by all tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members.

Faculty research and creative/professional activity include publications in peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books and book chapters, textbooks, conference papers, encyclopedia entries and creative works. Refereed journal articles are published in some of the top journals in related fields including *Journal of Communication*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*,

*Health Communication and Science Communication.* Faculty received external grants from international, federal and regional organizations.

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

University administrators and representatives from other units on campus give the College strong marks for collaboration and service as well as for the quality of education it provides students. They noted a high student retention rate in the College, faculty service on university committees, active engagement on university initiatives by the College’s faculty and students, among other things. In addition, those who have interacted with students in the College lauded student professionalism and skills in communication, technology and media.

**Scholarship Table**

**A+PR**

|                                       | <b>Individuals</b>                        |  |  |  |   | <b>Unit</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|-------------|
|                                       | <b>Full Professors</b><br>(5)—one retired | <b>Associate Professors</b><br>(6)—one retired | <b>Assistant Professors Tenure Track (TT)</b><br>(11)—one left the academy | <b>Other Faculty**</b><br>(13)—one retired and one left the University | <b>Totals</b><br><b>(35)—but 3 assistant professors (2 on TT) started in 8/22 so are excluded from this chart</b> |             |
| Awards and Honors                     | 0   | 1  | 0  | 1  | 2   | 2           |
| Grants Received Internal              | 1   | 2  | 7  | 5  | 15  | 15          |
| Grants Received External              | 2   | 2  | 11   | 5  | 20  | 13          |
| Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored | 2   | 1  | 0  | 0  | 3   | 3           |
| Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored       | 0   | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3   | 3           |
| Books Edited                          | 0   | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1   | 1           |
| Book Chapters                         | 9   | 6  | 7  | 0  | 22  | 21          |
| Monographs                            | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | 0           |

|  |    |    |    |   |     |     |
|--|----|----|----|---|-----|-----|
| Articles in Refereed Journals  | 30 | 68 | 72 | 1 | 173 | 169 |
| Refereed Conference Papers   | 18 | 18 | 15 | 5 | 56  | 52  |
| Invited Academic Papers  | 1  | 4  | 0  | 0 | 5   | 5   |
| Encyclopedia Entries   | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0 | 2   | 2   |
| Book Reviews   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0   | 0   |
| Articles in Non-refereed Publications (2 whitepapers)  | 0  | 1  | 5  | 1 | 7   | 6   |
| Juried Creative Works  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1 | 1   | 1   |
| Non-juried Creative Works  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1 | 1   | 1   |
| Other (please specify) conference proceeding (17), software (3) and professional reports (4) | 1  | 8  | 15 | 0 | 24  | 23  |

## JCM

|   | Individuals          |                           |                           |                      |             | Unit   |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------|
|   | Full Professors (04) | Associate Professors (05) | Assistant Professors (06) | Other Faculty** (06) | Totals (21) | Totals |
| Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities |                      |                           |                           |                      |             |        |
| Awards and Honors   | 39                   | 32                        | 76                        | 13                   | 160         | 160    |
| Grants Received Internal                                    |                      | 2                         | 7                         | 1                    | 10          | 10     |
| Grants Received External                                    | 7                    | 9                         | 17                        |                      | 33          | 31     |
| Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co- authored                      | 7                    | 2                         | 1                         |                      | 10          | 9      |
| Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored                             | 5                    | 2                         |                           |                      | 7           | 7      |
| Books Edited  | 6                    | 2                         | 2                         | 2                    | 12          | 12     |
| Book Chapters   | 19                   | 31                        | 8                         | 2                    | 60          | 56     |
| Monographs  |                      |                           |                           |                      |             |        |

|  |     |    |    |    |     |     |
|--|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| Articles in Refereed Journals  | 121 | 45 | 98 | 1  | 264 | 254 |
| Refereed Conference Papers   | 34  | 70 | 48 |    | 152 | 149 |
| Invited Academic Papers  |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Encyclopedia Entries   | 3   | 5  | 4  |    | 12  | 12  |
| Book Reviews   |     | 11 | 1  |    | 12  | 12  |
| Articles in Non-refereed Publications  | 13  | 21 | 31 | 44 | 109 | 109 |
| Juried Creative Works  |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Non-juried Creative Works  | 67  | 12 | 22 | 8  | 109 | 109 |
| Other (please specify)   |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Conference Proceedings   |     | 1  | 1  |    | 2   | 2   |
| Interviews   | 2   | 13 | 17 | 20 | 52  | 52  |
| Moderator/Respondent   |     |    | 4  |    | 4   | 4   |
| Online Articles  | 4   | 7  | 61 | 8  | 80  | 80  |
| Panels   | 7   | 36 | 12 | 2  | 57  | 57  |
| Podcasts   | 2   | 2  |    | 3  | 7   | 7   |
| *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. |     |    |    |    |     |     |

**Professional master’s program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(f) Faculty members teaching in the graduate program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at that university.**

The University of Alabama Graduate School has set policies for graduate faculty membership, and there are three categories of members: full, associate and affiliate. Criteria for a full or associate member include a Ph.D. and a rank of at least assistant professor in a full-time, tenure-track position as well as ongoing interest in the graduate program and research productivity. All tenured/tenure-track faculty are appointed to the graduate faculty, with assistant professors appointed as associate members. An academic unit may nominate “well-qualified” individuals who do not meet the criteria for full or associate members for affiliate membership for specific time periods not to exceed three calendar years. The College has 13 full members, 13 associate members, and 5 affiliate members. All full and associate members have a doctoral degree. All affiliate members have a master’s degree and extensive professional media backgrounds.

**(g) Graduate faculty oversee the curricula and course quality for professional master's courses.**

In the three years prior to the site team visit, the majority of graduate courses were taught by graduate faculty: 90% in 2019-2020, 95% in 2020-2021, and 93% in 2021-2022.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

The faculty are productive in terms of research and creative works, award-winning teachers and respected across the campus for their contributions and collegiality. Most faculty members have significant professional experience with the majority of full-time faculty also holding Ph.D.s. Overall, faculty feel supported in their scholarship and teaching endeavors.

(Professional Master's)

Faculty are productive in terms of scholarship output and are active in sharing their research and creative works through relevant scholarly and professional associations and public engagements.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance:  
COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program):  
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 College does an excellent job of providing students with the support and services necessary to complete their degrees within four years (for an undergraduate degree) and in as little as five years (for an accelerated master's degree). Additionally, the College offers a "Capstone Communication Living-Learning Community," in which students can live in the same dormitory for easier collaboration, support and participation in relevant extracurricular activities. From new student orientation to degree audits to annual monitoring to ensure compliance with degree requirements, the College stays in close touch with students to ensure their progress remains strong and to help with any necessary course corrections during their academic career.

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

An often-heard theme in meetings with students, mostly, and with faculty was that faculty, by and large, do an outstanding job of providing students not just with academic advice, but professional advice as well. Also, faculty – particularly in JCM, but in A+PR as well – are very good at connecting students with professional advisers who serve the College, with whom many students form longstanding bonds that help not just their academic work but serve as conduits to high-quality internships and, often, professional opportunities during and immediately after their time at the College.

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

There are numerous vehicles by which the College ensures students have all the information they need in these areas, e.g., the New Student Guide; the Weekly Advising Newsletter; the Start Strong Resource Guide; and major curriculum handouts for students enrolled in advertising, public relations and news media (JCM).

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

This is one area in which the College particularly excels. There are numerous on-campus opportunities and a large number of opportunities in professional settings made possible by faculty members' connections with professional newsrooms, professionals involved in the creative media industry and professionals in the advertising and public relations sectors.

On-campus opportunities within the College:

- WVUA 23 – a commercial news station owned and operated by the College that serves nearby Birmingham, AL, at top 50 media market
- The Center for Public Television – a professional studio for creation of videos, films and documentaries; serves both on-campus and community partners
- Alabama Public Radio – a national award-winning statewide network of public radio stations headquartered within the College
- Capstone – a full-service student-managed and student-operated advertising agency serving a number of professional client companies and non-profits

On-campus opportunities for students in the College and others (but not part of the College):

- Alice Magazine – College woman’s lifestyle and fashion publication
- Bama Life – email lifestyle newsletter for undergraduates campus-wide
- The Crimson White – the official University student newspaper
- WVUA-FM – a radio station featuring music and entertainment programming with student DJs
- Marketing and Sales – a campus marketing and ad agency that helps local and national businesses obtain a means effectively to reach the University community; students sell and execute creative assets for multiple media platforms

Professional opportunities:

- Numerous internships in advertising, public relations, newspaper, radio, television, digital and TV-and-film production companies in the Southeast region and nationwide (undergraduates have internships at both on- and off-campus locations; graduate students almost exclusively at the College’s Digital Media Center)

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

There is ample evidence in the self-study, confirmed by the site team, that data have been used during the review period to improve and enhance advising services for students. Specifically, the College has made significant improvements since the last accreditation process in 2015. It has established the centralized Tisch Student Services and External Relations department to provide students with a “one-stop-shopping” approach to receiving assistance and input from academic advisers. This is in addition to the significant amount of time many faculty members expend working with students individually to assist with academic and career issues and advice. Further, the quality and efficacy of advising is assessed throughout the student life cycle – admission to graduation.

On the graduate level, professional master’s degree students are advised by their faculty members.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(f) The unit has appropriate admissions and retention policies for the professional master's program.**

The College has a Graduate Program Committee, consisting of three members of the graduate faculty, that makes admissions decisions for all applicants. While the structure and duties of this committee are clear in the College's bylaws, there are no specific guidelines available as to measurable criteria required to gain admission to the professional master's program. Also, convoluted evidence was presented to the site team relative to retention rates in the program. That said, anecdotal substantiation presented to the site team – by students – indicated many have a great affinity for the program, its faculty and the degree to which master's degrees conveyed by the College prepare them to be better, more effective and knowledgeable members of related professions upon and for years following graduation.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate) The College of Communication and Information Sciences does a notable job of ensuring the best possible student experiences, from curriculum to instruction to extracurricular and professional opportunities. One area in which it stands out is the quantity and quality of programs and services offered to students to ensure they are able to graduate ready for the professional workforce. Students are embraced and encouraged by a number of systems put in place to help ensure success and by a caring, nurturing faculty and administration that genuinely wants to affect the best possible outcomes.

(Professional Master's) Generally speaking, students enrolled in the professional master's degree program do not receive as many services as undergraduates. However, because there are fewer students, each is advised and mentored by his/her/their graduate-level faculty members. This closer, more intimate arrangement allows for more personalized assistance. Notably – in at least a small part because of this method – virtually every graduate student in the program acquires a professional job within six weeks of graduation.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**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 College has a detailed annual budget tied to its strategic plan, and it has a defined process for building and producing the budget in collaboration with faculty, staff and administrators. Each department within the unit oversees its own operating budget, including endowed funds, and each department receives annual funding from the Dean's office for faculty travel. Classroom and technology resources are evaluated throughout the year.

Director of Financial Affairs, Melanie Danner, who has been with the university for 30 years and at C&IS for 25 of those 30 years, speaks positively of the budgeting process, which under Dean Butler is even more transparent – receiving accolades from faculty. Danner explains that unit oversight of individual budget drives more strategic decision making and accountability.

Each year in June, the university Vice President of Finance and the Provost meet with finance directors at units throughout the university to review strategic goals and assess future needs (human and financial). The university and College's fiscal year begins October 1. A Strategic Funding Committee within the College captures program needs of all units for consideration at the university level.

**(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 College provides its students, faculty, staff and administrators the resources – financial, technological and human – required to fulfill its mission. The university recognizes the value of C&IS, and with the unit's increase in student enrollment, continues to fund its growth with additional faculty, staff and graduate assistantships. Specifically, the university has funded 12.5 new faculty positions in the past five years (since the last ACEJMC site visit in 2015-2016), and the university's Office of Academic Affairs has invested funds for two new staff positions in the College's student services area.

Indeed, the C&IS budget has increased 13% the past three years (2019-2023) reflecting the university's and College's investment in the unit's growth – which has grown steadily the past 20 years (from 15,000 in the early 2000s, to more than 38,000 today)

Relative to other university Colleges, the unit's resources are fair and equitable. While other units such as the College of Arts and Sciences have much larger budgets, the C&IS is recognized as a valued university program, which is reflected in its increased budget. NOTE: A measurement of metrics across different colleges – with varying missions, student enrollment and number of faculty and staff – is difficult.

Currently underway is a university capital campaign with a goal of \$1.5 billion. The target for C&IS is \$25 million, which it already has reached.

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

The College of Communications & Information Sciences comprises four on-campus facilities:

1. Reese Phifer Hall
2. The Digital Media Center located in the university's football stadium
3. The School of Library & Information Studies in Gorgas Library
4. The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations in Capital Hall

Its facilities are enviable– enabling and advancing effective scholarship, teaching and learning.

**Reese Phifer Hall** is the unit's primary facility featuring two buildings comprising 70,000 square feet of assignable space, which houses the largest portion of the College staff – approximately 100 people. In addition to classrooms and conference rooms, Reese Phifer Hall houses "The Hub," a gathering area with a coffee bar and vending machines, as well as student meeting spaces, large screen monitors and wired and wireless connectivity. Student organizations have facilities in Reese Phifer Hall, including the Capstone Agency, a student-run public relations firm, the Alabama Forensic Council, a university speech and debate team, and The Speaking Studio, a public-speaking consultancy facilitating individual or group presentations – an innovative, value-added space available to students and faculty across the university to assist with public speaking. Reese Phifer Hall also is home of the dean's office, as well as the departments of Advertising + Public Relations, Communications Studies, and Journalism and Creative Media.

Opened in 2014, the unit's **Digital Media Center** is an exceptional state-of-the art media center of 40,000 assignable square feet of space, containing three television studios and production control rooms, four radio production suites and 10 non-linear editing suites, as well as spaces that encourage collaboration among students, faculty and staff. The Center for Public Television and Radio is housed within the DMC featuring WUAL-FM, WVUA-TV and WUOA-TV 23/7, a commercial television station. Dean Butler and Michael Bruce, Interim Chair of the College of Journalism and Creative Media, have partnered to host forward-looking "what if" sessions with faculty and professionals to explore how the programs can work even more collaboratively, creating a more integrated learning environment, while ensuring maximum use of facilities.

The DMC is also home to Crimson Tide Productions, a separate unit that supports the university's athletic program. Dean Butler sees opportunities to strengthen and advance the relationship between the DMC and Crimson Tide Productions, which would provide an even more valuable learning experience. Gorgas Library, the university's main library, houses the School of Library & Information Studies, one of only 10 such programs nationwide, which occupies more than 7,000 square feet of assignable space. Here, the unit has 19 faculty and staff offices and four classrooms, two of which have been recently updated, with one featuring hybrid teaching capabilities.

**The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations** is a one-of-a-kind, industry-revered program that develops and recognizes leaders and role models in public relations. Named for Betsy Plank, a University of Alabama alum and industry legend, the center occupies 11,000 square feet in Capital Hall, housing 10 faculty offices, as well as meeting rooms.

**(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 College's equipment, technology and support services are strong – helping inspire an environment that drives creativity, research and collaboration. Student fees help underwrite investment in student-used technology and media services. As enrollment has increased so, too, has demand on some equipment, making its availability less than optimal.

The Institute for Communication and Information Research, housed in Reese Phifer Hall, features the physical and technological infrastructure required to conduct advanced research in communication and information sciences. *Media Psychology*, a peer-reviewed journal recognized as the most prominent journals in the field of media research, also has its roots in ICIR.

ICIR equipment and facilities support faculty and doctoral research, and includes among its state-of-the art facilities:

- The Public Opinion Lab, a media analytics facility designed to conduct cutting-edge industry and academic research on the ever-changing social media ecosystem.
- The Content Analysis Lab, which can record six satellite feeds in any sequence simultaneously, features iMovie or Final Cut Pro for editing downloaded clips
- The Theatre Lab, a setting for conducting large group viewings of stimuli materials or lives presentations.

The exceptional Digital Media Center houses the equipment, technology and support services to produce state-of-the art programming across its newsrooms and media channels – where students and professionals collaborate on the design and production of content across platforms.

Faculty have access to statistical packages, including SPSS and SAS, and the College makes

available upon request software such as AMOS and NVivo for more detailed data analysis. The Center for Instructional Technology provides the centralized support for faculty development and instructional technologies and enables faculty to enhance teaching and learning. The unit's main learning management system is Blackboard Learn – providing course content, syllabi, multimedia resources, gradebook resources and discussion boards.

**SUMMARY: (Undergraduate and Graduate)**

The College has the facilities, equipment, technology and other resources to support its mission and prepare students professionally, though much of its equipment – particularly in the Digital Media Center – is aging and investments are required to ensure the College fulfills its mission.

Relative to other units at the university, the allocation of resources to the C&IS is fair and equitable.

A challenge voiced by students and faculty in A+PR is the location and distance of its two primary facilities – Reese Phifer Hall and Capital Hall – which results in long commutes and a less than ideal learning experience, and which negatively impacts the unit's collegial and collaborative culture.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate and graduate):  
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 maintains several professional advisory and mentor groups. Professionals, including alumni, are heavily engaged:

- UA C&IS Board of Visitors, (advisory board) 60 members, 6 standing committees
- Oakley Society, professional mentor program, 60 members

Alumni and business professionals alike praise the university for maintaining contact and providing opportunities for professionals to provide input and guidance to the various programs within the College.

The College also provides students with numerous opportunities to connect with professionals via an in-house Career Center, Industry Immersion Travel, career fairs, guest lectures and various student organizations. The College has no lack of on-campus professional participation.

**(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 issues of public consequence and concern.**

Faculty are highly involved in their various subject areas. Whether guest speakers, advisors, directors, editors, committee chairs or professional reviewers, C&IS faculty share their expertise and help to progress their professional practices. The unit is represented in the following organizations and more:

AEJMC

American Academy of Advertising

American Advertising Federation

Broadcast Education Association

Center for Scholastic Journalism

International Communication Association

International Journal of Advertising

Journal of Advertising

Journalism Historian Association

Journal of Public Relations Education

Korean Association for Broadcasting and Telecommunications Studies

Library of Congress

Peabody Awards Screening Committee

Public Relations Society of America



Radio Television Digital News Association  
Society for Cinema and Media Studies  
Society of Professional Journalists

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

Civic engagement is strong among C&IS faculty and students. Faculty, staff and students are involved in developing and maintaining communications outlets, research programs and centers that promote dialogue across many of today's most difficult challenges. The Dean has challenged the unit to develop proposals that bring forth new ideas and initiatives with an emphasis on civic and community engaged scholarship. The College has undertaken and shepherded several ongoing projects that bring the scholarship of the university to the community at large:

- **“Revise and Resubmit” Podcast** – talk to communication and mass communication professors about how the research they do can affect your everyday life.
- **The Center for Public Television and Radio**'s primary mission is to inspire, educate, and inform Alabamians through the production of high-quality television, radio, and new media programs. A critical secondary mission is to provide opportunities and experiences for students interested in production, broadcasting, and new media.
- **The Digital Media Center** is a state-of-the-art facility and home to the Center for Public Television, **Alabama Public Radio, WVUA 23, and Crimson Tide Productions.**
- **The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations** is the leading global resource for advancing the public relations profession.
- **The Holle Center for Communication Arts**, focuses on supporting creative activity and scholarship that advances human dignity, breaks down barriers to understanding, illuminates injustices, and encourages collaboration and empathy.
- **The Office of Politics, Communication and Media (OPCaM)** hub for interdisciplinary research and public-facing dialogue, creates civic and community engagement on regional, national, and international levels by connecting high-quality research with public conversations that shape and respond to the growing impacts and rapidly evolving role of politics, communication, and media in democratic and public life.
- **The Office of Research in Media Integrity** seeks to be the home for systematic, innovative, and important research into media integrity and ethics.
- **The Alabama Program in Sports Communication (APSC)** provides the opportunity to connect sports communication programs and emphases in C&IS with many other colleges

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

The College of Communication & Information Sciences via the Department of Journalism & Creative Media has made a strong and substantial commitment to supporting K-12 school and scholastic journalism. The C&IS is the home for several Alabama and national youth journalism opportunities and resources. Faculty manage and direct several key scholastic organizations and workshops:

- Executive Director of the Alabama Scholastic Press Association (ASPA). serving journalism and media programs in elementary, middle and high Schools, providing workshops, training, publications and competitions throughout the year.
- Unit hosts the annual Multicultural Journalism Workshop (MJW) – 39<sup>th</sup> year
- Unit is home to the National Elementary Schools Press Association (NESPA) – members from hundreds of schools across 48 states and more.
- Unit leads Communication and Media Preview program each summer (CAMP) – immersion in related media and communication fields

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program):**

**COMPLIANCE**

### **PART III: Summary by site visit team of the undergraduate program**

(A separate summary is required of the professional master's program)

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

##### **Strengths**

- *Experiential learning opportunities.* The Departments provide a variety of experiential and hands-on learning opportunities for students through classes, student agencies and internships.
- *Culture that inspires student engagement and loyalty.* Faculty members support, care and are available for students, which contributes to nurturing student engagement with and loyalty to the College and the university.
- *Effective and stable administration of programs, even though leadership changes.* Faculty almost uniformly express confidence in the leadership and note the smooth transition despite major leadership changes and interim leaders recently occupying key positions.
- *Collegial, productive faculty.* Faculty in the College closely collaborate on research, teaching and service projects. There is a culture of mutual support.
- *Strong professional connections that benefit students.* Faculty provide on-campus and off-campus opportunities for students to network with leading industry professionals. Having a strong alumni network is particularly helpful.
- *A model approach to assessment.* Plans are current, relevant and actionable, and there are concerted efforts to close the assessment loop by adjusting curricula based on assessment outcomes.
- *A commitment to advance the work of DEI.* At both the Department and College levels, there have been increased efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion not only by incorporating more DEI training and education but also by ensuring their commitment is reflected in DEI outcomes.
- *Budget and administrative processes increasingly transparent.* Many faculty expressed gratitude for the initiative, by the new Dean, to engage with them to help them better understand the College's resources and funding.
- *Strong retention and graduation rates.* The College's high retention and graduate rates are reflective of the quality of faculty and advising provided in the College. They are also a point of pride for the university.

##### **Weaknesses and challenges**

- *Faculty offices and facilities that are more than a mile apart.* Faculty split between Reese Phifer and Capital Hall pose challenges for collaboration and consultation as well as student meetings with faculty.
- *Lack of clarity on promotion and tenure for faculty focusing on creative work.* The Departments and the College need to improve promotion and tenure criteria for faculty whose scholarly contribution is creative activity, such as filmmaking.

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

NONE.

**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 that recommendation.**

N/A

**6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the 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.**

No standards were out of compliance. However, the site team pointed out the following:

- *An uncertain balance between numbers of sequences and faculty, space and equipment to serve them.*

An administrative reorganization of the College in 2016 (merging two departments), updated curricula across all majors under review, and the growth of faculty and resources seem to have addressed almost all of these issues found in the previous review. Across all student meetings and faculty interviews, there were no complaints about these issues. Instead, the perception was that equipment is plentiful and that while the space in Reese Phifer may need some updates, there is not a lack of space. As noted earlier, faculty offices in two different buildings (Reese Phifer and Capital Hall) pose challenges for collaboration and consultation.

- *Stress on the 20-1 student-faculty ratio in some skills courses because of the demands of an increasing student body for access to classes that permit timely graduation.*

Again, the site team found that any issue that existed at the last review has been addressed. Retention and graduation rates are strong for the programs under review, and a review of skills-course enrollments did not indicate a problem.

- *Uneven use of assessment data for improving curriculum and instruction.*

We address this above. Each unit has made progress in clarifying and specifying assessment expectations and processes and in utilizing direct and indirect data on student learning.

**7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process, and often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the accrediting visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.**

The self-study was well organized and rich with data and links to additional material. Errors were rare. The report could have benefited from more clarity at times but was helpful to the team.

### **PART III: Summary by site visit team of the professional master's program**

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

##### **Strengths**

- *Great affinity between students and faculty.* Faculty members' engaging teaching styles and interest in the well-being of students contribute to high satisfaction with the program, as expressed by the students who were interviewed.
- *High job placement rates and career success.* Experiential and hands-on learning opportunities incorporated within the curriculum contribute to high job placement rates and career success among graduates. Most graduates are hired within six weeks following graduation.
- *Accelerated program.* The one-year timeline is attractive to both working professionals who want to learn new skills and recent graduates from an undergraduate program who want to build credentials.

##### **Weaknesses and challenges**

- *Lack of a strategic plan.* A lack of "strategic planning" was noted in the last review as a deficiency. The master's program under review this cycle is different and is housed in a newly reconstituted academic department, which has integrated the program into its holistic plan. Thus, there has been planning – and certainly more must be done, including the drafting of a separate, stand-alone plan for the degree program itself. Barring further extenuating circumstances, it should be in place long before the next review.

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

NONE.

#### **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 that recommendation.**

N/A

**6) If the unit's professional master's program was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the master's program 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.**

No standards were out of compliance. However, the site team pointed out the following:

- *Inadequate strategic planning for the professional master's degrees.* See above.
- *A lack of clarity about the professional focus of the thesis-based master's degrees.* The master's program's mission statement clearly articulates its goal "to strengthen community journalism by establishing trained professionals in the field of study, you will explore new ways to serve communities through evolving journalism practices and digital innovation."

**7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process, and often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the accrediting visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.**

The self-study was well organized and rich with data and links to additional material. Errors were rare. The report could have benefited from more clarity at times but was helpful to the team.