Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2022–2023

Name of Institution: The University of Southern Mississippi

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Joe Paul, President

Name of Unit: School of Media and Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Dr. Edgar Simpson, Director

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 13-16, 2022

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Nov. 15-18, 2015

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Provisional

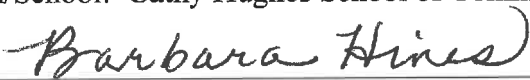Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair
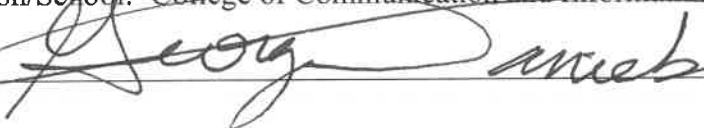Name and Title: Dr. Barbara Hines, Professor Emerita
Organization/School: Cathy Hughes School of Communication, Howard University

Signature _Barbara Hines_

Team Member
Name and Title: Dr. George Daniels, Associate Professor
Organization/School: College of Communication and Information Sciences, The University of Alabama
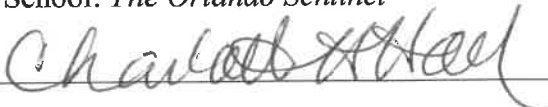
Signature _George Daniels_

Team Member
Name and Title: Charlotte Hall, Retired
Organization/School: *The Orlando Sentinel*

Signature _Charlotte Hall_

Name of Institution: The University of Southern Mississippi

Name of Unit: School of Media and Communication

Year of Visit: Fall 2022

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

___ Higher Learning Commission
___ Middle States Commission on Higher Education
___ New England Commission on Higher Education
___ Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
_x_ Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges
___ Western Association of Schools and Colleges

2. Indicate the institution's type of control; check more than one if necessary.

___ Private
_x_ Public
___ Other (specify)

3. Provide assurance that the institution has legal authorization to provide education beyond the secondary level. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.

The university was originally established by a legislative act in 1910. The authorizing document is available at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/85roizwo22rnoh1/Part1_USM%20Authorization.pdf?dl=0

Relevant information can also be found at:
https://catalog.usm.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=1118

4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?

_x_ Yes
___ No

If yes, give the date of the last full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit: Nov. 15-18, 2015

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

The Department of Journalism was first accredited in 1984-85.

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

The school's mission statement can be found at: https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/overview-0.php

School of Media and Communication Mission (*Adopted: May 17, 2021*)

School Mission
To advance the field of communication by creating and sharing knowledge and practice.

School Vision
To create, assemble, and refine knowledge of communication while teaching students the concepts, theories, and technical skills they will need to be productive and responsible contributors in diverse fields of communication.

School Values
- •Excellence – we strive for the highest levels of performance and are committed to continuous improvement.
- •Scholarship – we perform scholarly work that advances the field of communication.
- •Education – we share our knowledge and expertise with others.
- •Respect – we value diversity of ideas and experience; we show respect through collegiality and ethical behavior.
- •Engagement – we actively contribute to our communities.

MCJ Mission Statement (*Adopted: April 9, 2007; updated: April 30, 2021*)

The mission of the Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) program in the School of Communication is to provide excellent education in Journalism, Public Relations, and Advertising, and to graduate a highly qualified, diverse group of baccalaureate and graduate degree holders.

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: 4.5 or 9
Number of weeks in intersessions: 2

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

_x__ Bachelor's degree
_x__ Master's degree
_x__ Ph.D. degree

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

Digital Journalism (Journalism in 2021-2022)
Strategic Communication (Public Relations and Advertising in 2021-2022)

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

120 semester hours

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

Students may earn 3-6 semester hours in the professional internship.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Digital Journalism	Dr. David Davies
Strategic Communication	Dr. Jae-Hwa Shin

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 13,673 in Fall 2022

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Semester/AY Undergraduate majors in
Digital Journalism	59
Strategic Communication	51
Total	110

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term.

Spring 2022

Course	Enrollment
MCJ 102 Media Writing (Sec 01)	15
MCJ 102 Media Writing (Sec 02)	19
MCJ 203 News Writing and Reporting (Sec 01)	11
MCJ 203 News Writing and Reporting (Sec 02)	11
MCJ 300 Multimedia Journalism	17
MCJ 302 Photography for Journalists	17
MCJ 304 Broadcast Reporting I	19
MCJ 312 Graphic Design	20
MCJ 344 Audio Reporting and Podcasting	20
MCJ 406 Journalism Workshop	10
MCJ 418 Practicum	7
MCJ 422 Writing and Design for Public Relations and Advertising	19
MCJ 425 Data and Media Analytics	20
MCJ 428 Public Relations and Advertising Campaigns	19
MCJ 429 Internship	19
MEA 101 Audio Essentials (Sec 1)	12
MEA 101 Audio Essentials (Sec 2)	15
MEA 101 Audio Essentials (Sec 3)	9
MEA 101 Audio Essentials (Sec 4)	13
MEA 102 Video Essentials (Sec 1)	12
MEA 102 Video Essentials (Sec 2)	17
MEA 102 Video Essentials (Sec 3)	9
MEA 102 Video Essentials (Sec 4)	11
MEA 103 Design Essentials (Sec 1)	9
MEA 103 Design Essentials (Sec 2)	13
MEA 103 Design Essentials (Sec 3)	11
MEA 103 Design Essentials (Sec 4)	17

Fall 2022

Course	Enrollment
MCJ 102 Introduction to Media Writing (Sec 01)	19
MCJ 102 Introduction to Media Writing (Sec 02)	19
MCJ 203 Reporting (Sec 01)	11
MCJ 203 Reporting (Sec 02)	12
MCJ 300 Multimedia Storytelling	14
MCJ 301 Feature Writing	14
MCJ 302 Photography for Journalists	20
MCJ 312 Graphic Design	19
MCJ 330 Advertising Creative Strategies	15
MCJ 404 Broadcast Reporting & Producing	14
MCJ 418 Practicum	1
MCJ 422 Writing & Design in Strategic Communication	11
MCJ 428 Strategic Communication Capstone	6
MEA 101 Audio Essentials	18
MEA 102 Video Essentials	17
MEA 103 Design Essentials	18

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2022–23 academic year: $1.93 million.

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years: The school budget (including accredited programs under review) has neither decreased nor increased in the past three years, with the exception of a 3 percent, across-the-board salary increase in Summer 2022.

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: $1.62 million across the school.

17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit. Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.

Christopher Campbell Professor
Steve Coleman Assistant Teaching Professor and Tech Support Director
Dave Davies Professor
Cheryl Jenkins Associate Professor
Quentis JonesVisiting Instructor and Internship Coordinator (2022-2023)
Lindsey Maxwell Associate Professor
Emmanuel NwachukwuVisiting Assistant Professor (2022-2023)
Jae-Hwa Shin Professor
Fei Xue Professor

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2022. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2022.

Spring 2022:	Fall 2022:
Chuck Cook	Wilbur Justin Martin
Shea Drake	Chuck Cook
Ahmed Makharesh	Shea Drake
Wilbur Justin Martin	Joshua Wilson

19. For each of the last two academic years, give the total number of graduates from the unit.
2021-22 academic year: 52;   2020-21 academic year: 42

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The School of Media and Communication is one of 14 schools in the College of Arts and Sciences, the college created because of a university-wide *Vision 2020* reorganization. Under its 2022 configuration, it offers accredited programs in Digital Journalism and Strategic Communication. Located on the main campus in Hattiesburg, it serves primarily the southern part of the state and neighboring Gulf Coast states. There are 13,673 students at the university, 110 of them enrolled in the accredited programs being reviewed.

Journalism and mass communication education at USM has had a robust history. Journalism education began at USM in 1918 with the establishment of a campus newspaper; a Department of Journalism was created in 1955 to focus on news-editorial journalism and public relations. With the addition of radio-television it became part of a Department of Communication (1966); in 1983 it became part of the School of Communication created by the Mississippi College Board and earned its first accreditation in 1984-85. In 2018, there was a university-wide reorganization to reduce the number of colleges, departments, and schools and the College of Arts and Letters (home to the School of Mass Communication and Journalism and 13 other units) was merged with the College of Science and Technology to form a new College of Arts and Sciences.

In 2018, the School of Mass Communication and Journalism merged with the Department of Communication Studies to form the School of Communication. The new school had three disciplinary units: Mass Communication and Journalism; Communication Studies; and Entertainment Industry. A curriculum revision in 2019-2020 updated curricula and renamed Entertainment Industry as Media and Entertainment Arts and removed its video production major from the accredited programs. After the merger, the school had an interim director in 2018-19 and another in 2019-2020. It was renamed the School of Media and Communication effective fall 2022. A curriculum revision took effect in 2019-2020. The school had an interim director in 2018-19, another in 2019-20 and the current director was hired following a national search in fall 2020.

There are 409 students in four programs in the renamed School of Media and Communication and 110 of them are in the accredited programs in what is now Digital Journalism (formerly journalism) and Strategic Communication (formerly advertising and public relations), the focus of this report. The other programs in the school are Communication Studies and Media and Entertainment Arts.

The school has been housed in College Hall since 2013, located at the gateway to the campus, one of the four oldest buildings on the campus that was handsomely renovated to house all of the school's curricular and co-curricular activities.

While the new director has only served since 2020, comments from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and university partners indicate he is a "man with a mission: to provide an exceptional environment to ensure everyone's success." He has quickly gained the respect of colleagues across campus, who talk of his energy, creativity, and willingness to forge new paths.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

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

Since the last site visit, there have been significant changes that played out in the era of the pandemic. However, during that time, adhering to the Mission Statement and Five-Year Plan provided some stability in a sea of change. While there were tweaks to the statement and plan, the School was focused on always moving forward by making minimal word changes to the documents.

The Mission Statement appears on the school's website: *The mission of the Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) program in the School of Media and Communication is to provide excellent education in Journalism and Strategic Communication, and to graduate a highly qualified, diverse group of baccalaureate and graduate degree holders.* There are also links on the site to the strategic, assessment and diversity plans.

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?

While the School of Communication was established in 2018 with the merger of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) and the Department of Communication Studies, this is the first semester the School of Media and Communication is operating under the merged mission statement and a new five-year plan that better reflects the school's diverse range of majors. It remains on the forefront of the school's agenda.

The previous mission statement was adopted in 2007 and updated in 2021 for the MCJ program. It was designed to "provide excellent education in Journalism, Public Relations, and Advertising and to graduate a highly qualified, diverse group of baccalaureate and graduate degree holders."

The revised plan adopted in 2022 by the faculty responsible for working for its success focused on six major areas: recruiting and retaining high quality students, maintaining and expanding a vibrant curriculum that reflects ACEJMC standards and marketplace needs, expanding curricular activities to offer students hands-on learning experiences, ensuring the faculty, students, and curriculum reflect the diversity of the University and surrounding communities, expanding the school's outreach to alumni to better serve students and improve school programming and to increase resources available to school faculty and students. The plan offers action items to monitor the school's success in meeting those goals. It offers more clarity and specificity than a previous plan in place from 2007-2021.

The mission statement: https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/overview-0.php

The five-year strategic plan: https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/fiveyearplan.pdf

(b) The unit's administration provides effective leadership within the unit and effectively represents it in dealings with university administration outside the unit and constituencies external to the university.

Characterize in depth the leadership of the unit as an agent for progress, advocate for the unit's fields of study within the university and aggressive connector with alumni. What significant achievements can be attributed to the leader? Has the leader built partnerships within the university? Is the leader seen as a strong advocate on matters of diversity, inclusion, and equity? Is faculty and student diversity improving? Do scholars and professionals work collaboratively? Is

creativity in curriculum, teaching and research sought and rewarded? Is the leader driving forward the curriculum (while respecting faculty governance and required process) to keep up with a rapidly changing media world?

During the seven-year time being assessed, there were changes across campus in leadership. With the advent of the merger of the school, a respected, senior faculty member completed a four-year term as interim director and returned to the faculty. As part of *Vision 2020*, the university's realignment plan, an interim served as director of the School of Communication from 2018-19. A second interim director served during 2091-2020 while a nationwide search was conducted to lead the newly named school. Both interim directors were from the Communication Studies program.

The current director of the newly created School of Media and Communication was hired in 2020 and assumed his duties during the pandemic, when the university campus was closed. Working from his home, he garnered enhanced support for the school across campus, with faculty, students, and alumni and continues to do so. In fact, his dean lauded the director's leadership and vision. While the faculty has been instrumental in curricular change, the director has provided stability and a vision to ensure the curriculum is vital and responsive to students' and employers' needs. He has insured the operation of a consistent assessment program. In his move to Hattiesburg, the director has spent time reaching out to alumni and employers to create stronger partnerships. While current faculty numbers are good, there is an enhanced effort to ensure student and faculty diversity. He has a veteran faculty who pulled together during the school's reorganization; they also provide College and University service ranging from the Faculty Senate to the Undergraduate Council, from the STEM Mentoring and Equity for Women Task Force to the University IRB Committee. The director has worked closely with faculty to develop and support financially scholarship and creative opportunities.

To benefit from the school's faculty talent, the director has established a leadership team for the School that includes an undergraduate, graduate, basic course, assessment and advisement, and recruitment coordinators and faculty leads in the four areas: Communication Studies, Digital Journalism, Strategic Communication, and Media and Entertainment Arts.

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (https://lookup.acejmc.org).
During the previous six-year period for accreditation review, the school had current data. However, it is currently being updated on the ACEJMC website effective fall 2022.

(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.
Under the current Five-Year plan, emphasis is placed on enrollment and retention with statistics found on the website: https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/accreditation.php

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 school faculty meet monthly, with additional specific curricular or tenure and promotion meetings as required. There is a detailed policy document governing the decision-making process. The school's policy committee is currently working on an updated version to reflect changes in university guidelines.

The document can be found at https://www.usm.edu/provost/_school-documents/com_final_2021-05-17-signed-p.pdf

There are nine standing faculty committees and members of the faculty of the programs seeking accreditation are well represented on those committees.

Faculty participated in a daylong retreat in spring 2021 to discuss curriculum as part of the Five-Year Plan, while selected faculty also attended a daylong retreat on the structure and offerings of the Student Media Center. From those meetings, the School's Accreditation Committee drafted a Five-Year Plan for the MCJ program (Digital Journalism and Strategic Communication) which was reviewed and approved by the school director and MCJ faculty. The plan can be found at: https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/fiveyearplan.pdf

While the faculty in the school meet collectively, there was some desire by faculty to meet more regularly in their specific discipline.

(f) The institution and/or the unit defines and uses a process for selecting and evaluating its administrators.
The *Faculty Handbook* provides the process of evaluation for school directors at USM: https://www.usm.edu/provost/internalportal/facultyhandbook2021.pdf, section 4.4.1. Directors are chosen by the dean, in consultation with a faculty hiring committee, and confirmed by the provost and university president. The final candidates visit campus to discuss their research and teaching interests, and to meet with the faculty, staff, and students at the school and college.

(g) Faculty, staff, and students have avenues to express concerns and have them addressed.
USM offers multiple options of dealing with complaints and concerns by faculty, staff, or students. Informal concerns are handled by a meeting with the director. Formal complaints follow the procedure in the *Faculty Handbook* (c. 5, 6, and 7).
https://www.usm.edu/provost/internalportal/facultyhandbook2021.pdf

The *Employee Handbook* outlines the procedure for staff grievances:
https://www.usm.edu/employment-human-resources/_files/employee_handbook_fy22january.pdf

The *Undergraduate Bulletin* provides the process for student complaints:
https://catalog.usm.edu/content.php?catoid=28&navoid=1724

SUMMARY:

The site team was challenged to follow all the changes that occurred during the period under review. It understands reorganization was mandated by a former president and his university-wide *Vision 2020* plan. The team can confirm that despite all the changes, there was effective leadership at the school level that was strengthened with the 2020 hiring of a permanent director. Faculty developed curricular offerings that received approval at all levels, used assessment as a tool to enhance their teaching and learning, and benefited from university and school research support. Faculty mentioned that the new director has brought them back together and they have a shared vision for the future. They are continuing to update policies and procedures to reflect the renamed school.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

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

Journalism and Public Relations and Advertising are the accredited programs in the School of Media and Communication reviewed by the visiting site team in Fall 2022. There were three significant curriculum revisions between 2018 and 2022 after the School of Mass Communication and Journalism was merged with the Department of Communication Studies to form the School of Communication. With curricular reform in 2022, those programs have become Digital Journalism (broadcast journalism and multimedia journalism) and Strategic Communication (advertising, public relations, media sales and organizational communication) offered in the renamed School of Media and Communication. The total number of hours required for graduation is 120; a minimum of 75 hours of courses outside of Mass Communication and Journalism, including 65 hours in the basic liberal arts and sciences are required.

The University's General Education Curriculum includes:
GEC 01. Written Communication (6 hours)
GEC 02. Natural Science (8-10 hours minimum)
GEC 03. Humanities (9 hours)
GEC 04. Aesthetic Values (3 hours)
GEC 05. Social and Behavioral Sciences (6 hours)
GEC 06. Mathematics (3 hours)
GEC 07. Writing-Intensive Requirement (Major Area)
GEC 08. Speaking Intensive Requirement (3 hours)
GEC 09. Capstone Requirement (Major Area)

(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.

Based on the *2021-2022 Bulletin*, all accredited programs in the school require four areas of course work: MCJ core, MCJ values courses, major requirements, and skill courses in major area of study.

Core Courses for All Students in Accredited Programs (15 hours)
1) Media Literacy
2) MediaWriting I
3) Audio/Video/Design Essentials
4) Digital and SocialMedia
5) Media Law and Ethics

Additional course in track/sequence that all students in track/sequence must take:

Journalism (30 hours)
1) News Writing and Reporting

2) Multimedia Journalism
3) Photography for Journalists
4) Broadcast Reporting I
5) Journalism Workshop

Elective course or courses that must be taken within the track/sequence

Three of the following: Feature Writing, Investigative Strategies, News Editing, Graphic Design,
       Photojournalism, Audio Reporting and Podcasting, Advanced Multimedia Storytelling,
       Broadcast Reporting II, Broadcast News Producing, Data and Media Analytics, Internship

Elective courses that must be taken within the program

Two of the following: Gender, Race and Media, Theories of Mass Communication, Mass Media
       History, Media Criticism, Media Management and Economics

Required outside of the accredited unit: none

Public Relations and Advertising (30 hours)
1) News Writing and Reporting
2) Introduction to Public Relations and Advertising
3) Writing and Design for Public Relations and Advertising
4) Public Relations and Advertising Research
5) Public Relations and Advertising Campaigns

Elective course or courses that must be taken within the track/sequence

Three of the following: Multimedia Journalism, Feature Writing, Photography for Journalists, News
       Editing, Graphic Design, Creative Strategy, Media Planning, Data and Media Analytics, Seminar
       in Advertising, Seminar in Public Relations, Internship

Elective courses that must be taken within the program

Two of the following: Gender, Race and Media, Theories of Mass Communication, Mass Media
       History, Media Criticism, Media Management and Economics

Required outside of the accredited unit: none

*Students must also select at least two of the **MCJ values electives**:*
MCJ 355 Race, Gender and Media
MCJ 407 Theories of Mass Communication
MCJ 461 Mass Media History
MCJ 462 Media Criticism
MCJ 463 Media Management and Economics

The team observed lively, engaged students in classes that challenged them to understand theories while developing skills that would be useful in the job market**.**

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

The faculty has developed color-coded curriculum matrices that clearly demonstrate the connections are guided by the shared belief that the students in their programs must be prepared for the technological

changes affecting the media industry. Curriculum review is on-going. The school receives feedback from members of the School's Board of Advisors, internship directors, portfolio reviewers, guest speakers, as well as alumni and senior exit surveys that suggest regular updates to address issues and skills related to digital media.

Several courses in the **MCJ core** teach students digital media skills:
MEA 101 (1 hr) Audio Essentials
MEA 102 (1 hr) Video Essentials
MEA 103 (1 hr) Design Essentials
MCJ 310 (3 hrs) Digital and Social Media
In these courses, students can acquire certifications in Hootsuite or Google Analytics and produce a social media portfolio that includes a blog, video blog or audio podcast.

Each major has incorporated digital technology into its curriculum:

Journalism students produce digital news stories using camera equipment and video editing software for TV news, as well as sound recording equipment and sound editing software for radio and other forms of digital audio media. A senior portfolio features a personal website/blog.

Some students expressed concern about the lack of advanced writing courses for journalism majors. They felt the emphasis on broadcast limited their opportunities to expand their longform writing and editing skills.

Public Relations and Advertising students learn Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop to create graphics and use iMovie and Adobe Premier to create video projects. They provide multimedia content such as media kits, brochures, posters, display ads, PSA video, social media content, special event multimedia content as part of the campaign project in the capstone class. Three and four-hundred level courses allow students to earn certification in Hootsuite Social Marketing, Google Ads, Google Analytics, Hootsuite and a social media or digital marketing certification.

While on site, the team observed instruction of courses offered under the old and new catalog. They were lively and geared to preparing students for the workforce. Newer software programs strengthened the fall 2022 curriculum.

While students expressed enthusiasm about being back in the classroom after the pandemic, they confirmed the challenges of online learning. Students also felt that there was some repetition in what was being taught in upper division skills courses that they had previously mastered at the 200 level. The team could not find examples in the course syllabi to confirm that concern.

(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.

Before the merger, the School of Mass Communication and Journalism held MCJ Days every spring featuring industry practitioners who spoke in classes, reviewed portfolios, and participated in panel discussions. Now the school offers a Mississippi Association of Broadcasters Day, and a StratCom Week was offered during Fall 2022. During the pandemic, alumni reviewed portfolios online and spoke in classes via Zoom.

Faculty members are strong role models for their students. They actively participate in respected programs, workshops, and webinars to keep up to date with trends and technologies. Many have had faculty fellowships: Poynter, Scripps Howard Visiting Professor, Mississippi Association of Broadcasters, Advertising Educational Foundation Visiting Professor, The Commission on Public

Relations Educator Summit, the AEJMC Leadership in Diversity program and have themselves earned valued professional credentials like Accredited Public Relations (APR) from the Universal Accreditation Board of the Public Relations Society of America or industry certifications (Adobe Max).

(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 on online, should not exceed 20-1.

As reported in Spring and Fall 2022, enrollment in skills and laboratory courses ranges from 9 to 20 students.

(f) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Units may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter hours).

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

Students may take up to nine semester credits (or their equivalent) at professional media outlets owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.

During the accreditation cycle, internships were encouraged for a student's success. There is an internship coordinator who works to see that a firm is legitimate, and the site supervisor is a credentialed professional willing to provide at least 160 hours of supervision. Before beginning an internship, a student must attend an information session. Throughout the internship, sites are monitored for effectiveness and appropriateness. On successful completion of an internship (and the final report and evaluation forms), a student can earn three credits for the internship. In Fall 2014, the internship program was expanded to offer up to six credit hours for internships. Further expansion of the internship program is part of the Five-Year Plan. In a student meeting with mostly seniors, only about half had done an internship.

The internship documents are:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/iy6jted1pbr4gqy/Part2_Standard2_Internshippacket2022.pdf?dl=0

SUMMARY:

As with many schools, the USM curriculum has continued to change as technology changes; however, it still emphasizes ACEJMC's values and competencies. With a good mix of theoretical and skills courses, the curriculum is moving more toward digital in both programs. Faculty have the resources to ensure course content is current and use assessment results to guide changes. The programs under review during this cycle were structured to focus both on Journalism and Mass Communication and Public Relations and Advertising. The fall 2022 curriculum builds on the traditional coursework and expands understanding of newer technologies.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The school participates in the annual university-wide program-level assessment process for its undergraduate and graduate programs, utilizing the assessment management software system WEAVE. The school has consistently incorporated ACEJMC values and competencies into its curriculum design and the learning outcomes are listed in the assessment plan. Two direct measures (capstone courses and senior portfolio) and four indirect measures (exit surveys, internship evaluations, student competitions/awards, and alumni survey) are used to assess student learning.

In particular, the alumni survey results allow recent graduates not only to reflect on their education, but also to describe their efforts to find and keep jobs in strategic communication and journalism. This along with the portfolio reviews affords the school an opportunity to remain relevant in the face of the changing digital media world.

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

The unit's Assessment Plan is posted on a section entitled "Accreditation and Assessment" on the school's home page. The Assessment Plan, which was updated April 30, 2021, is available for download.

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

In Fall 2014, the school revised its student learning outcomes and measures to better match ACEJMC standards and named it "Southern Miss Six." Those were revised in 2021 to fit the latest values and competencies included in the revised ACEJMC Standards.

1. Demonstrate an appreciation of the relevant constitutional freedoms, history, legal issues, and ethical principles involved in mass communication.
   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies
   - Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located
   - Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
   - Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethnically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.

2. Demonstrate an appreciation of human diversity, domestically and globally, in the creation and interpretation of media content.

   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies

- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.

3. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and research information and to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies
   - Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
   - Effectively and correctly apply basic numeric and statistical concepts

4. Demonstrate the ability to write correctly, clearly, and fairly; and to effectively critique the work of others.

   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies
   - Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes they serve
   - Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, and appropriate style and grammatical correctness

5. Demonstrate the ability to present visual information effectively and creatively.

   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies
   - Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.

6. Demonstrate the ability to engage innovative tools and technology.
   ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies
   - Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

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

The measures used in the written assessment plan are as follows:
Capstone Course (direct measure)
Senior Exit Survey (indirect measure)
Alumni Survey (indirect measure)
Internships (indirect measure)
Student Competitions (indirect measure)
Senior Portfolio (direct measure)

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

The school adopted the senior portfolio review as a centerpiece of the assessment process in 2007. The School's Advisory Board members and other media professionals in attendance at Mass Communication and Journalism Days have participated in the portfolio review sessions and completed surveys regarding the quality of the portfolios. Students also had their portfolios reviewed by professionals at the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters (MAB) Day. In addition, the school's student organizations have organized several portfolio/resume workshops with the help of USM alumni.

According to the school's assessment coordinator, the participation in Mass Communication and Journalism Days was not always consistent and in 2020, the senior portfolio review was moved into capstone courses. All student portfolios are required to be available online, allowing access to media professionals who serve as external reviewers. Each semester, the instructors for the capstone course will identify alumni and/or professionals to review portfolios with no one reviewer having more than four portfolios to review.

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

The school used assessment data as it completed several curriculum revisions between 2018 and 2022. New courses, especially courses addressing emerging media, were added. Several existing courses were modified to better reflect industry trends. It also used the data to improve the Student Media Center, which is designed to provide students with more co- and extra-curricular opportunities and to improve the quality of that work. Senior portfolio review used to be conducted at major school events, such as Mass Communication and Journalism Day (prior to the merger) and Mississippi Association of Broadcasters Day. The school's assessment coordinator reports that findings from the exit survey prompted the modification of some events (i.e. a social activity to facilitate student networking).

SUMMARY:

The unit has a written assessment plan that is integrated into the university-wide program level assessment process. Updated in 2021 to reflect the revised ACEJMC Standards, the ***Southern Miss Six*** are outcomes aligned with the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies. Alumni and media professionals are involved each semester in reviewing portfolio reviews tied to capstone courses. The school has used data from assessment to revise multiple courses between 2018 and 2022 and update offerings during School events.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written diversity plan that has been implemented and discussed annually, for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse, culturally proficient faculty, staff and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit's definition of diversity, identify under-represented groups and articulate key performance indicators upon which the unit intends to focus and improve.

The school has had a comprehensive diversity plan since 2007 frequently reviewed and updated by the School's Diversity Committee. It was revised in 2014 and continued to be used through 2021 and updated April 1, 2022. The plan recognizes the need to be proactive in addressing cultural diversity in the study of mass communication and journalism. The school "embraces a broad definition of diversity that includes race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, class and disability." The plan that was in effect until 2022 included specific goals concerning the curriculum, attracting, and graduating a class of students from diverse backgrounds representing the region's ethnic diversity, hiring, and retaining a diverse faculty and staff including faculty members in tenure and professional-track positions, and providing students, faculty, and staff a supportive climate for working and learning that is free from discrimination.

The plan clearly was designed to organize the school's efforts to address those issues and continues in the 2022 update. The Diversity Committee reviews syllabi and assignments to be sure that diversity issues are covered regularly and systematically, it reviews graduation and retention rates, monitors hires and works closely with the Office of Affirmative Action/EEO.

The unit posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.
https://www.usm.edu/media-communication/socdiversityplan2022.pdf

(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.

Over and above the dialogue that occurs in curricular and co-curricular activities, the faculty has identified courses in the shared core and in each academic sequence that specifically reflect the school's efforts to foster understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (see *Standard 2: Curriculum*).

The **values courses** seek to improve students understanding of issues related to human diversity, media history, and other social and cultural factors in mass media. Students complete course assignments on diversity, history, and ethics-related topics.

The **MCJ core courses** provide an overview of the mass communication field and address issues related to media ethics, law, diversity theory and research.

The **Journalism courses** require students to report on stories related to cultural communication in many forms: stories about race, ethnicity, equality, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodivergence and all forms of cultural diversity.

Public Relations and Advertising courses teach students how to connect with a diverse group of consumers, locally and globally, using various media channels. Alumni spoke highly of the projects they worked on globally using Google Ads and Analytics in Public Relations and Advertising courses that broadened their opportunities to better understand the challenges of the workforce.

Every course syllabus reviewed reflects a statement about the importance of diversity and inclusiveness that the school seeks to embrace. There are assignments across the course offerings that deal specifically with issues of inclusion. Both faculty and students remarked that "they get it" on the importance of living and working in a global society. While USM's student population is diverse, the School's African American student population is higher, with 34.9 percent African American compared to 28.5 percent at the university; 54.4 percent white, .6 percent Asian, 4.7 percent Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent two or more races, and 1.3 percent international.

(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 school works closely with the Dean and the Provost to secure funds earmarked as "diversity cluster hires." While it has an aggressive recruitment process for faculty, the most recent hiring opportunity identified and made an offer to a minority candidate. That offer was not accepted. The school is reinstituting and broadening its two current searches in hopes of increasing its faculty of color.

(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 school recognizes the importance of competent advising and a supportive environment for student retention. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor at the time he/she becomes a major in the School of Media and Communication. Advising helps the school identify students who are not performing well academically and help them deal with problems at the earliest possible time. All these efforts should help maintain and increase the graduation and retention rates.

School faculty take their commitment to these one-on-one meetings with at-risk students very seriously. Students who are on probation or suspension because of their grades must meet with the director to fill out a contract specifying required improvements in academic performance. Students whose grades slip below a 2.00 grade-point average in any semester must meet with the director and University Advisement Center staff to complete an Academic Improvement Plan.

The Student Media Center offers several student employment opportunities, which helps students focus more on completing course work without the distraction of an off-campus job. The school also provides scholarships and fellowships for qualifying students. While the funding is limited, there have been several annual fundraising events to help raise money.

The school is highly effective at graduating minority students. According to the most recent six-year graduation rate data provided by the university's Office of Institutional Research, the graduation rate for African American students (n=63) who began in the fall of 2015 and whose major was in Journalism or Public Relations and Advertising was 66.3 percent, which is higher than the graduation rate for all African-American students at USM who began in the fall of 2015 (61.0 percent).

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The school also graduates a higher percent of female students than university averages. The graduation rate for female students (n=152) who began in the fall of 2015 and whose major was in Journalism or Public Relations and Advertising was 76.0 percent, higher than the graduation rate for all female students at USM (70.1 percent).

A week-long program Multimedia High School Journalism Workshop was begun in summer 2021 and brings students to campus to be exposed to USM and its media programs. The school is working closely with the Office of Admissions to recruit students at college fairs and community colleges.

(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.

Overall, the school establishes and maintains a healthy climate by attracting faculty and staff who value cultural diversity and are committed to notions of equity, fairness, and social justice. The school informally monitors the climate and has not reported any problems. Several faculty have attended the ALLIES training program and are members of the Gay Straight Alliance at The University of Southern Mississippi. A few faculty and staff members participated in Green Dot training, which is a bystander intervention strategy that teaches skills and techniques on how to intervene in situations safely and effectively where violence is either a possibility, or a reality. More than half the faculty have participated in Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) training about cultural awareness and sensitivity that have helped them in their teaching and advising. Taylor Hall is wheelchair friendly.

The University of Southern Mississippi has a Diversity and Inclusion website that provides necessary information and resources for faculty, staff, and students.

https://www.usm.edu/diversity-inclusion/index.php

The university values "an inclusive community that embraces the diversity of people and ideas." We also value "a campus culture characterized by warmth and mutually-supportive connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni."

The website includes a timeline of African Americans at USM, academic programs and centers that address issues related to diversity and inclusion, offices and committees on campus, and related news and events.

The university has a Nondiscrimination Policy.

https://www.usm.edu/affirmative-action-equal-employment/aaeeo-policies.php

It also has an Office for Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Faculty are required to include a statement in the syllabus (see below).

https://www.usm.edu/student-accessibility-services/index.php

> *Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is Southern Miss's designated office to assist the University in its commitment to protect the civil rights of students with disabilities. SAS protects students from discrimination and offers reasonable accommodations to give them equitable access to university courses and resources. Disabilities covered under the ADA may include but are not*

limited to ADHD, learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic health disorders, temporary injuries, and pregnancies. If a student feels that they need classroom or housing accommodations based on a disability they should contact SAS by phone at 601-266-5024, by email at sas@usm.edu, in person by visiting the SAS office located in Bond Hall Room 114, or online at www.usm.edu/sas.

The university also has a Title IX Office to address issues related to discrimination on the basis of sex. All faculty, staff, adjuncts, and affiliates are required to complete training courses.

https://www.usm.edu/title-ix/index.php

The university also has an Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement, which offers leadership development training, networking opportunities and academic support for multicultural student leaders through annual workshops, programs, and initiatives. Some examples are Black History Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Celebration of Scholastic Excellence (COSE), The PRISM LGBTQIA+ Resource Center, Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement Multipurpose Center, Men's Summit, Kente Graduation Ceremony, etc.

https://www.usm.edu/inclusion-multicultural-engagement/index.php

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.)

Academic year: 2021 – 2022 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	1	12.5%	0	0%
White	2	25.0%	3	37.5%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	1	12.5%	1	12.5%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	0	0%	0	0%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	0	0%

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

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	1	20%	0	0%
White	0	0%	2	40%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	0	0%	0	0%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	2	40%

SUMMARY:

The school prides itself on its diverse student body, faculty and staff, and inclusive learning environment. While it has worked closely with university administration to secure funds for targeted hiring efforts, those efforts were not successful in 2021, when there was one position open. As a state university serving the southern part of Mississippi and surrounding states with a diverse population, diversity, equity, and inclusion play an important role in its Mission and Five-Year Plan. Faculty scholarship and creative activities focusing on diverse issues enhance the programs.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

In Fall 2022, nine full-time faculty have the primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity, and service. These include two one-year visiting faculty positions. The school uses very few part-time faculty members. At the time of the site team visit in Fall 2022, only six part-time faculty members were on the payroll, compared to just four in Spring 2022 semester. Those part-time faculty hired are mostly long-term adjuncts. In the 2021-2022 school year, 81 percent of the core and required courses were taught by full-time faculty. That's down from 92.3 percent of the core and required courses in 2020-2021.

(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.

Seven of the School's nine full-time faculty have Ph.D. degrees. Four are certified by the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). Many have attended workshops on the course management system Canvas, Quality Matters for Online Instruction, and other teaching-related topics. One of the local television news directors was complimentary of the school for one of its broadcast journalism faculty taking part in the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters Faculty Fellowship Program in 2022. In that program, the faculty member was embedded in the local television newsroom for an entire week to gain insight on the day-to-day processes of developing news content and programming. Another faculty member was a Visiting Professor with the ANA Educational Foundation in 2022. These are just some examples of faculty keeping their expertise current through professional development opportunities.

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

The school expects faculty members to be effective teachers who are engaged in appropriate scholarly activities and routinely provide service to the school, university and/or profession. The school's faculty adopted Annual Evaluation Promotion and Tenure Guidelines that took effect in 2021. The process for the award of tenure and promotion is outlined in the *USM Faculty Handbook*, which calls for a pre-tenure review in the spring of a faculty member's third year in a tenure-track position. For promotion, the minimum period in each rank is normally five years. Promotion is not automatic nor guaranteed upon a given term of service. Tenure will normally be recommended in the candidate's sixth year to take effect at the beginning of the seventh full-time year of contractual employment. An award of tenure requires excellence in performance and the promise of continued excellence in teaching, research, and service. Non-tenure track teaching faculty are evaluated by the Personnel Committee in the categories of teaching and service (scholarly activities are optional). Adjunct instructors are evaluated by the director of the school, based on student evaluations as well as feedback from other faculty.

(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.

At the time of the self-study, faculty in the unit had presented 76 conference papers and produced 18 juried or non-juried creative works. Another eight faculty participated in invited panels or talks.

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

Campus partners from within the College of Arts and Sciences to those in other colleges such as the College of Business and Economic Development report positive outcomes from collaborative ventures with the School of Media and Communication. For example, students from the school were able to pursue a marketing/social media minor jointly offered with the College of Business and Economic Development. In that same college, faculty report positive collaborations with the School on their Media Sales Day. Faculty in the School of Humanities have experienced positive working relationships with the school and its radio station, WUSM-FM in producing digital humanities faculty projects using sound. University leaders in International Programs cited the strong leadership from faculty in the School of Media and Communication in the 47-year-old British Studies program. These exemplify the high regard in which the school and its faculty are held by those in the larger University of Southern Mississippi community.

SUMMARY:

Nine full-time faculty deliver the bulk of the instruction, participate in research and creative activity as well as oversee the curricula in the school. They are joined by six part-time faculty (in Fall 2022). The faculty adopted new Annual Evaluation Promotion and Tenure Guidelines that went into effect in 2021. In the period under review, faculty have presented dozens of refereed research projects at academic conferences. Faculty in the school are involved in a variety of collaborative partnerships with units around campus that reflect the high regard in which the school is held in the University community.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

| Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities | Total from Unit* | Individuals | | | | Totals |
		Full Professors (6)	Associate Professors (2)	Assistant Professors (2)	Other Faculty** (2)	(12)
Awards and Honors	33	6	6		21	
Grants Received Internal	8	5	2		1	
Grants Received External	10	5	2	2	1	
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	3	2	1			
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	2	1			1	
Books Edited	10	9		1		
Book Chapters	27	21	3	3		
Monographs	0					
Articles in Refereed Journals	45	23	16	6		
Refereed Conference Papers	76	44	24	8		
Invited Academic Papers	0					
Encyclopedia Entries	2	2				
Book Reviews	6	6				
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	0					
Juried Creative Works	3			1	2	
Non-juried Creative Works	15		1		14	
Other (please specify)	9	6 (invited panels and talks)		2 (invited talks)	1 (photos included in books)	

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

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The MCJ program is student-focused with an impressive array of student media opportunities in the Southern Miss Student Media Center, faculty-led advisement, substantial financial aid for students, student chapters of professional organizations, and annual career events.

Services that promote learning: Beyond the classroom, the extracurricular Southern Miss Student Media Center (SM2) provides rich learning experiences. SM2, overseen and housed and funded by the program, includes the campus newspaper, the Student Printz (print and online), WUSM-FM Radio with daily student-produced programming; SMTV television programming available on YouTube; the Creative Division, which live streams community events and produces graphic art for the center, and new this year, the Strategic Communication Division, in which students work on advertising sales, PR campaigns and social media for the Center and other clients. (For detail, see below section (d).)

Services that ensure timely degree completion: Academic advising, first by the university-wide Advising Center during students' first year and then by the unit's faculty in subsequent years, puts students on a road to achieving their degree. Faculty advisors meet with students, usually in person, to discuss progress and academic plans for the coming semester. (For more detail, see below section (b).)

Services that offer career advice and opportunity: The School sponsors two major events annually, one of them new this year, that put students in touch with professionals to learn about careers in mass communications and journalism. The first is the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters Day (MAB), which brings dozens of professional, many of them alumni, to campus for panels, presentations and career advising. Students can speak with news directors, other broadcast journalists and recruiters, and the professionals also offer portfolio evaluation. A recent USM journalism graduate said he owed his current position as a local news anchor to MAB Day: "That's how I got my job—I met my news director there."

The second event, new this fall, was the first-ever USM Strategic Communication (StratCom) Week, that brought to campus professionals in public relations, advertising, media sales and organizational communication for five days of panels and presentations on trends and career pathways in strategic communications. Resume and portfolio reviews were also offered, along with a workshop on networking, social mixers and luncheons with guest speakers.

Services that provide financial support: Last academic year, the university provided more than half a million dollars in financial aid. About half of students receive scholarships, with a median amount around $4,000 a year. The unit also grants about 20 scholarships from its own foundation, about $26,000 this year.

(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.
Beginning two years ago, the university's Advising Center assumed orientation and advising for first year and transfer students during their first semester in the unit. At the group orientation, the school's director provides a welcome, overview and introduction to the opportunities in the Student Media Center.

After the first year, students are advised by faculty members in their academic sequence, and students may request a specific faculty member as their adviser. The school requires faculty members to maintain regular office hours and participate in campus events. Advisement weeks are scheduled in October and March, students are notified ahead of time via various campus media, and faculty extend their office hours during these two-week periods. At those sessions with their faculty advisors, students review progress and degree requirements. Students are also encouraged to meet their advisors at other times as well. Advisement can also take place by email if detailed information is included via email.

Advisors and students also have access to SOAR (Southern's Online Accessible Records), which include a Degree Progress Report for each student. Advisors and students use this report to chart progress and ensure all requirements are met. Online tutorials for student and faculty also are available.

The school holds advisement training sessions and online tutorials regarding advisement for new and returning faculty members. This fall the school created an assessment and advising coordinator position to oversee the advising process and communicate with the university's Advisement Center.

Students with whom the site team met said some faculty members go out of their way to ensure that students not only get the courses they need to fulfill degrees requirements but also are able to meet other personal goals, such as a minor. Other advisors take a more passive role, simply ensuring that students meet requirements for their major. Students are assigned advisors by the program but can request a different advisor.

In addition to the registration process, the unit encourages students to meet with advisors at other times about academic issues and career counseling. Faculty are required to make themselves available to students and respond quickly to student communication. These requirements are part of the annual review of faculty performance. Senior exit surveys in the last six years have shown high satisfaction with faculty advising, with about 8 in 10 students agreeing or strongly agreeing that advisors provided helpful guidance.

When asked how the system might be improved, exiting students offered a range of suggestions, from clearer instruction on course rotation and catalog changes to more career advice during advising sessions. These suggestions were shared with faculty and have resulted in changes, including creation of an advising form, and advising training for faculty. In the most recent senior exit survey last spring, faculty got high marks for advising, curriculum development, and school-sponsored events.

(c) The unit keeps students informed about its policies, activities and requirements.
The school's director puts out a biweekly newsletter via email listserv called *Communication Station,* which includes information on a wide variety of topics, including meeting announcements, curricular information, career opportunities and upcoming events. Other time-sensitive announcements go out via listserv throughout the week. During the advising period, emails are sent to students reminding them to meet with their advisors, and faculty make announcements in class.

The school also uses TV screens in College Hall for announcements and news about the school, and it regularly posts information for students on Facebook and Instagram. For example, during this fall's new Strategic Communication Week, the unit posted frequently with the schedule and reports about speakers and events.

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

The Southern Miss Student Media Center (SM2), which hosts extracurricular student media, is a major strength of the unit and has evolved since the last accreditation review, reflecting both the changing structure of the school and increased importance of broadcast journalism in the unit.

New to SM2 is Southern Miss TV (SMTV), student-run television news programming available on YouTube and on digital screens in College Hall. Students shoot, edit and produce a weekly newscast, produced in the Charles Scarborough TV studio. SMTV is advised by a faculty member, who also advises the student newspaper.

 Also new since the last site team visit are two programs designed to benefit students in advertising, strategic communication and public relations:

—The Creative Division livestreams community events and serves as the production and graphics part of SM2. Students working in the division produce advertising for news and digital products. It is overseen by faculty member who also serves as technical overseer of the school.

—The Strategic Communication Division, launched this year, includes advertising sales account executives, social media managers and marketing directors. Students get hands-on experience working on paid media advertising placements, PR campaigns and social media management, both for the Center and outside clients. The school's director and a faculty member coordinate. the Division.

Of long standing are the *Student Printz*, the campus's weekly newspaper, its affiliated website, and WUSM-FM 85, the community radio station. The *Printz,* founded in 1927, continues in print but has added a web site, video, and social media. It has traditionally served as the heart of student media and over the years has won many awards and launched many careers in journalism. It is advised by a faculty member.

WUSM-FM, launched in 1954, holds a non-commercial FCC license, and its 3,000-watt signal reaches six counties around Hattiesburg. In addition to its music format, the station hosts a variety of student-led programming, including a four-day-week news show and the Fourth Street Sports show. It is advised by a faculty member.

The unit also hopes to reestablish the full-time position of a Student Media Director that existed for a short time after the Center was founded in 2008. The position was eliminated in 2010.

At the beginning of each semester the Center also holds an open house, at which students can meet student leaders and discuss opportunities for participation. Students participate in SM2 media in several ways:

—Paid positions: Students, regardless of major, are welcome to apply. SM2he Student Media Center holds an open house at the beginning of each semester where students learn about the opportunities.

—Practicums: Some students enroll in practicum hours with one of the staff advisers.

—Work study: A number of students who are eligible for work study use those hours to work in the center.

—Volunteer: Many students find they do not have the time or are not eligible for the other options.

The unit also hosts active chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and the Southern Mississippi Association of Black Journalists (SMABJ), an affiliate of NABJ. PRSSA hosts speakers, forums, field trips or agency tours and meetings with a range of local and regional public relation professionals. SMABJ has organized several programs during the review period.

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

The school uses data regarding enrollment, graduation, and retention from the university's Office of Institutional Research for its annual program review. The results are shared with the faculty to help develop yearly priorities.

Enrollment in the school's accredited programs in Journalism and Public Relations and Advertising has fallen substantially during the last five years, according to data collected by the university. In the Fall of 2016, a total of 263 students were enrolled: 133 students in Public Relations and Advertising and 130 in journalism (96 in Broadcast Journalism, 20 in Photojournalism and 14 in News Editorial). In the Fall of 2021, a total of 164 were enrolled: 85 in Public Relations and Advertising and 79 in Journalism. The overall decline was 38 percent. Other USM schools have also experienced declines.

Increasing enrollment is a top priority of the school's director and the university's senior leadership. The School's Five-Year Plan sets a growth goal of two percent a year for the next five years. The plan calls for a program with local high schools and community colleges to promote the school and encourage campus visits. The school also seeks to increase retention by improving advising.

The average one-year retention rate has been steady over the last six year. The rate for the class entering in 2020 was 76.19 percent, compared to 69.13 percent for the university. Similarly, the School's four- and six-year graduation rates are higher than the university's. The four-year rate for the class entering in 2017 was 40.74 percent for the unit (34.39 percent for the university), and the six-year rate for class entering in 2015 was 60.47 percent (51.79 percent for the university).

SUMMARY:

Students are at the center of the School's Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations Program. The program excels in preparing students for careers, both through its outstanding student-run media and its career events on campus. Students served by the university's Advising Center and the program's faculty. Though there is some unevenness in faculty advising, the school is consciously working to improve advising. Enrollment has declined in the last six years, and growth is a major goal of the School's Five-Year Plan.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.

The budget is determined by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who acknowledges that the College's 14 Schools operate on an "historical budget model." This means academic units receive what they had the year before. For the 2021-2022 self-study year, the budget was $2.48 million, which was roughly the same amount as the budgets for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. While that number only includes the resources in the accredited units, it takes into consideration the University's reorganization in 2018. According to the school's director, the budget, if managed properly, is adequate to achieve the items in the unit's long-range, strategic plan. While additional revenue from sources such as advertising generated by the Student Media Center would help make "stretch-goals" in the Five-Year Plan a reality, some assistance from central administration would ultimately be needed. Unlike the budgets reviewed by previous site teams (2009-2010 and 2015-2016), the budget in the current self-study reflects careful planning that considers level funding from the College as well as increases in course fees that rollover every three years.

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

The School of Media and Communication's $2.48 million operating budget for 29 faculty and staff positions compares favorably to other units of similar size in the College of Arts and Sciences. For example, the School of Performing and Visual Arts has a total budget of $2.54 million for 25 faculty and staff. The School of Social Sciences and Global Studies has a budget of $2.82 million for 36 faculty and staff. According to the dean of College of Arts and Sciences, in terms of the overall operating budget, the School of Media and Communication falls in the middle of the 14 schools within the College.

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

As referenced in the last accreditation site team report, the 30,000-square-foot historic building known as College Hall has become one of the pride points for the University. As noted by the Interim Provost, the School of Media and Communication is a "very prominent unit at the university." This is reflected not only in the building, but also in the equipment contained within its learning spaces. Since the last accreditation team visit, additional funds from course fees have enabled the school to upgrade software and hardware facilities for students. The school has control of College Hall 201 and College Hall 202 (classrooms are equipped with LCD projectors and Internet), two computer labs (College Hall 203 and College Hall 205), as well as the Student Media Center on the third floor. CH 203 contains 20 Mini Macs and a printer. It primarily serves the lower skills courses to introduce digital media skills. Software available in the lab includes the Adobe Creative Suite. CH 205 is equipped with 20 Macs, five television screens, a projector, and one printer. The classroom is primarily used for upper-level video and sound classes. Software routinely used in both labs includes Dreamweaver, InDesign, Premier, Audacity, and Photoshop. Site team members were able to observe both a planning meeting underway in the Student Media Center and a Broadcast Reporting and Producing class practicing an edition of "Golden Eagle TV" in the Charles Scarborough Television Studio Suite on the third floor of College Hall.

(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

Most evident in the school's Equipment Room (dubbed the "EQR") available after-hours until 8 p.m. weeknights, the school has dozens of state-of-the-art digital cameras, microphones, and light kits. In the summer 2022, the school installed Zoom Q8N 4K video cameras in the interview studio for WUSM-FM. Located on the third floor of College Hall, the space doubles as instructional space for the MCJ 334 Radio Production course. Students can use one of the two identical voice-over booth stations that share a common vestibule with WUSM-FM's interview studio and engineering studio. In those voice-over booths, students produce audio lab class assignments as well as record voice-tracks for WUSM-FM's on-air presentation.

The Student Printz newspaper is also housed on the third floor of College Hall and includes five relatively new Macs, equipped with the Adobe Creative Cloud software suite. Student access to digital SLR and video cameras and other equipment enables them to produce multimedia stories for the newspaper's web site. Additionally, the School's television production facilities include a studio and control room where SMTV, a weekly newscast distributed on YouTube, is produced. Also located on the third floor are several small editing suites where media production and broadcast journalism students complete projects using Adobe Premiere Pro, which is part of Adobe Creative Cloud. Members of the site team were told that the University of Southern Mississippi still does not have a university-wide site license for the Adobe Creative Cloud, but students in School of Media and Communication were given access to the software from home for a limited time due to the pandemic. In their meeting with the site team, some students lamented the end of the at-home access.

Beyond software and equipment access to students, faculty in the school have had consistent access to travel money to complete research, with the option of applying for additional funds from the dean of the College of Arts and Science and grants from the Provost's office. The annual appropriation for travel during 2019-2020 was reduced from $1500 to $1,100 in 2020-2021 and remained at $1,100 in 2021-2022 in order to spread it out across more faculty members.

SUMMARY:

For the 2021-2022 self-study year, the school's budget for the accredited units was $2.48 million, which was roughly the same amount as the budgets for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. The school's director believes if managed properly, the budget allows for the achievement of items in the unit's Five-Year Plan. Since the last accreditation team visit, additional funds from course fees that rollover every three years have enabled the school to upgrade software and hardware facilities for students. Faculty in the School have had consistent access to travel money to complete and present research, with the option of applying for additional resources from dean or the provost.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Traditionally, alumni, many of whom live in Mississippi, have remained close to the unit, supported it, and been involved in campus programs. During the review period, the merger and then the pandemic affected alumni programming. The School's Advisory Board, made up of more than 40 professionals, most of them USM alumni, met at least once a year before the school's merger and reorganization in 2018, but it has not met since.

The meeting usually coincided with the annual Mass Communication and Journalism Day and MCJ Symposium every spring. Working practitioners were brought in to speak to classes, review portfolios, and participate in panel discussions and workshops. The Mass Communication and Journalism Day and the Symposium also have not occurred in the last several years. Some Advisory Board members continue to communicate with the school's director, faculty, and students. The school is currently restructuring the Advisory Board to reflect changes since the merger and intend to reactivate it with visits to the campus.

Alumni and other professionals continue to visit the campus for the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters Day (MAB), and faculty regularly invite professionals, most of them alumni, to speak to classes. In the capstone class for seniors, student portfolios are reviewed by professionals, many of them alumni.

This fall the school hosted its first ever StratCom Week, featuring professionals in public relations and advertising, many of them alumni. Student groups, such as PRSSA and the Southern Miss Association of Black Journalists occasionally organize informal gatherings of alumni professionals. Senior capstone projects and portfolios are reviewed by professionals, many of them alumni, and faculty regularly invite alumni to speak in classes.

Prior to the merger, the school had an annual alumni newsletter, *MCJ Journal*. That newsletter was discontinued after 2017, and subsequent communication with alumni has largely been through social media on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

One of the goals in the School's Five-Year Plan, adopted in July 2022, is to "Expand school outreach to alumni to better serve students and improve school programming." Action items include re-establishing the alumni and professional advisory board that would meet twice a year, engaging alumni, community, and professional partners in annual school events, and publishing an alumni newsletter once a year.

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

Faculty members contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge in their fields and to the development of high standards of professional practice in wide-ranging activities with professional organizations and in

scholarly publications. These include reviewing articles for various scholarly journals and other publications, chairing various AEJMC divisions, serving on ACEJMC accreditation site-visit teams, making presentations and speeches at meetings, serving on editorial boards of scholarly publications, and moderating and participating in panels at scholarly meetings. Faculty are often in demand to speak at a multitude of academic and industry-related meetings.

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

The School's Student Media Center serves the local community— faculty, students, and staff, and the larger Hattiesburg community, by covering university and community news and events in the *Student Printz* newspaper and its website, the weekly SMTV newscast via YouTube, and local news and sports programming on WUSM-FM.

Another service of the Media Center, The Creative Division livestreams events such as the Hattiesburg Christmas parade, and the new Strategic Communication Division plans to provide advertising, social media and public relations services to local organizations and small businesses.

Individual faculty and staff member also contribute in many ways to the civic life of Hattiesburg through volunteer work in the community. For example, one faculty member chairs the Amateur Photography Competition for the Hattiesburg Arts Council and serves on the Greater Pine Belt Community Foundation. Another is a commissioner of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, and a third is a Board member of The Library of Hattiesburg and a volunteer for a Read Across America event.

The school regularly brings to campus distinguished speakers addressing issues of public consequence such as crisis communications in the digital world and embracing diversity through multicultural media. These presentations are open to the campus and the public.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

Since 2013, the school has been providing one-day workshops for high school journalists during the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association Day, which draws more than 350 high school students to the campus.

For the past two summers the school has sponsored week-long summer multimedia journalism workshops for high school students across the state. The school reviews applications from students and accepts about 15 for the workshop. The school's Five-Year Plan also calls for establishing programming with local high schools to encourage campus visits.

SUMMARY:

The unit has a large base of loyal alumni. Although activities were curtailed in recent years, the unit has recently initiated new programs engaging alumni, and the unit intends to reconstitute the Advisory Board and restart the newsletter. Faculty and staff are actively engaged in professional organizations and in the life of the Hattiesburg community. The unit has expanded its outreach to scholastic journalism in the last two years.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- Visionary, enterprising leader

- Ambitious, well advised, creative Student Media Center

- Learning labs with state-of-the-art equipment

- Solid Assessment Plan and ample evidence of "closing the loop"

- Faculty committed to student success

Weaknesses

- Declining enrollment

- Inadequate representation of African Americans among the tenure track faculty given the student population and the demographics of the region

- Uneven faculty advising

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.

From the 2015-2016 site team report:

The unit's strategic plan lacks feasibility, is outdated and is not being pursued*.*

As mentioned in this team's 2022 visit report, there has been much change on the USM campus. During the reorganization years, the strategic plan stalled but has continued under the current director, selected in a national search, since 2020. The current plan calls for meeting three important goals:

1) Stem the enrollment decline and grow by 2 percent per year through AY 2025-2026.

2) Reduce time to graduation overall by 4 percent by AY 2025-2026. The goal is to match or exceed the Mississippi percentage of black population of 38 percent.

3) Continue to raise diversity enrollment and retention.

To achieve these goals, the strategic plan focuses on student experience and outcomes in three primary areas: curriculum programming/student groups, and student media.

The plan closely aligns curriculum with the industries USM students will enter: the Strategic Communication major was developed to give students a broad understanding of earned, owned, paid, and shared media and then giving them options to specialize in one of four areas. The major also was formed in partnership with the College of Business, while providing sales courses as well as marketing and merchandising foundations for students. The Digital Journalism major was designed to give students a broad skill set in crafting ethically informed narratives across platforms while specializing in the latter part of their college careers in either broadcast or multimedia journalism. The school is working to expand its internship program, with an intensive outreach with companies and outlets in Mississippi and surrounding states.

Other curricular areas under study are:

1) Developing an online-only Digital Media major

2) Broadening the course offerings in partnership with other schools (Computer Science for motion graphics and animation and Athletics with a practicum in sports media production) and

3) Identifying industry certificates and implementing ways to both require and encourage students to achieve certifications before graduation.

The Student Media Center is expanding opportunities for students to explore their professions. In the past two years, SMTV was launched, there are expanded opportunities to work on WUSM radio, and a Creative and StratCom division has been added.

Student programming has been expanded, offering routine and regular access to industry professionals. However, as with most colleges and universities, the pandemic caused many efforts to be placed on hold or abandoned. Fall 2022 marks the first time the university is fully open and has no restrictions on gatherings. In Spring 2021, the school hosted a virtual panel for Sunshine Week and in October 2022 launched StratCom Week.

The school now has a coordinated leadership team structure that focuses on developing contacts and deep knowledge in the areas it needs to achieve the strategic plan. It includes a recruitment coordinator and advising/assessment coordinator.

The plan is workable and has specific timelines for meeting the school's needs.

Two years of embattled or temporary leadership preceding the site team's visit.

The school was merged in Fall 2018 and had an interim director from the Communication Studies faculty after the previous director and senior faculty member stepped down after three years to return to teaching. University policy dictated that all incoming directors of merged units would have an interim appointment. A different Communication Studies faculty member served as interim director while a national search was conducted. It was unsuccessful. Another national search was conducted in 2019-2020, and Dr. Ed Simpson was hired effective 2020-2021 academic year.

Inconsistent implementation of assessment findings to guide curricular changes within current courses.

The school assesses student learning through two direct measures (capstone courses and senior portfolio) and four indirect measures (alumni survey, internship evaluations, senior exit survey, and student competition/awards). The faculty revised the assessment plan in 2021 to reflect changes in ACEJMC competencies and values. It used its assessment data to revise the curriculum. New courses,

especially courses addressing digital and social media, were added. Existing courses were modified to better reflect industry trends. Research courses required more specific, individual assignments. The teaching of Law and Ethics was coordinated so that one faculty member taught all sections. The data was also used to improve the Student Media Center, which provides students with more co- and extra-curricular opportunities.

The failure of leadership to win college-level approval of needed changes to curriculum to make instruction more current.

While the school lacked a permanent director for two of the years of the self-study due to reasons beyond the unit's control, a permanent director was hired for the final two years of the period under review. The director is known across the university and has worked closely with the faculty to effect change: the accredited units had begun to develop curriculum revisions to take effect in 2019-2020, in 2020-2021, and in 2022-2023. The 2020-2021 curriculum was in effect during the self-study year.

The changes adopted combined the three previous journalism majors: broadcast, news editorial, and photojournalism into one. The advertising and public relations degrees were combined into a single advertising/public relations major. The media production major, which had been accredited through the 2015 cycle, was substantially revised by the Media and Entertainment Arts faculty, which decided to remove the major from accreditation to be able to expand the curriculum beyond the limits of the 72-hour rule and to emphasize skills and competencies other than those required by ACEJMC and to remove coursework that had been shared with journalism.

Small changes to the journalism curriculum in 2020-2021 were made to eliminate tracks and give students the opportunity to specialize in one area or the other with the consultation of their advisors. The decision to revise media production-which previously overlapped with journalism-led to a siloing of the journalism and production curricula and faculty. The 2022-2023 curriculum provides more overlap between these majors to reflect the reality of today's media work.

Lack of adequate equipment for production across sequences.

The school has substantially increased expenditures on modern equipment for its students funded primarily by increases in course fees and a redirection of Student Media Center resources since the last accreditation cycle. More than $100,000 has been spent since the last reaccreditation to update three primary labs for skills classes and after-hours projects. The school has spent $40,000 to upgrade cameras, teleprompters, and lights in the TV studio, as well as install video cameras in WSUM radio. The school now has a structure in place to make regular and routine upgrades, approximately $87,000 per year. While there are still challenges with the availability of computer lab times, faculty are engaged in discussions about moving some skills courses to evening schedules that would significantly free up space for courses that are becoming increasingly reliant on technology.

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

The self-study was well written and provided an accurate picture of the previous seven years as well as the current environment of the School of Media and Communication. However, because there had been so many changes (new College, new school name, new director, new curriculum, etc.) the team was particularly challenged to determine how and what programs complied with ACEJMC standards and guidelines. Many of those issues were explained in the self-study.