

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation
Professional master's/Undergraduate programs
2023– 2024

Name of Institution: Arizona State University
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Michael M. Crow, President
Name of Unit: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Name and Title of Administrator: Battinto L. Batts Jr.
Date of 2023-2024 Accrediting Visit: November 5-8, 2023

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2017
Recommendation of the previous site visit team:
Undergraduate program: Re-accreditation
Professional master's program: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council:
Undergraduate program: Re-accreditation
Professional master's program: Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team:

Undergraduate program recommendation: **REACCREDITATION**

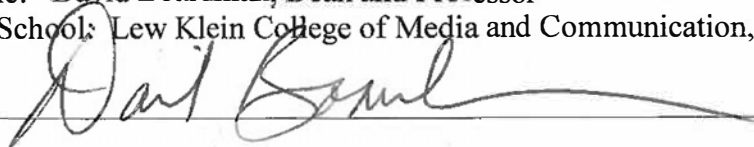
Professional master's program recommendation: **REACCREDITATION**

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: David Boardman, Dean and Professor
Organization/School: Lew Klein College of Media and Communication, Temple University

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Team Member

Name and Title: Keonte Coleman, Assistant Professor
Organization/School: Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

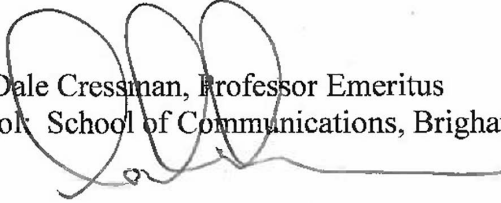
Signature _____



Team Member

Name and Title: Dale Cressman, Professor Emeritus
Organization/School: School of Communications, Brigham Young University

Signature _____

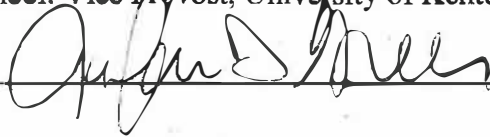


Team Member

Name and Title: Jennifer Greer

Organization/School: Vice Provost, University of Kentucky

Signature

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Team Member

Name and Title: Deborah Potter

Organization/School: Independent Consultant and Trainer

Signature

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PART I: General information

Name of Institution: Arizona State University

Name of Unit: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Year of Visit: 2023

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

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

On February 26, 1885 House Bill 164, "An Act to Establish a Normal School in the Territory of Arizona," was introduced in the 13th Legislative Assembly of Arizona Territory. The bill passed the House on March 6 and the Council on March 11 and was signed by Governor F.A. Tritle on March 12, 1885. Through a statewide initiative and a proclamation signed by Go. Ernest W. McFarland on Nov. 5, 1958, the institution's name was changed from Arizona State College to Arizona State University.

ASU is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission to award baccalaureate, masters, doctorate, and professional degrees. The University had its most recent reaccreditation site visit in April 2023.

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

- Yes
- No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit: January 22-25, 2017

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1973

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

The Cronkite School has one inclusive mission that unifies programs at all levels: We educate and empower communicators to create an informed and inclusive society, advancing understanding and connection among creators, audiences, industry and the academy. This statement was implemented for all Cronkite academic programs in April 2023.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 15 (Courses are offered in 15-week standard or 7.5-week compressed formats in two sessions)

Number of weeks in a quarter: N/A

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 12

Number of weeks in intersessions: N/A

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

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

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication

Bachelor of Arts in Sports Journalism

Master of Mass Communication

Master of Arts in Sports Journalism

Master of Arts in Investigative Journalism

10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: 120 semester-hour credits.

Credits hours required for a professional master's degree: Requirements vary; the three reviewed programs each comprise 36 semester-hour credits.

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

All undergraduate students are required to complete at least one 3-credit internship. Students may complete additional 1-credit internships, but only one may be applied toward the degree. Graduate students are not required to complete an internship; they may pursue one 3-credit internship for elective credit.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
BA, Journalism and Mass Communication	Jessica Pucci, senior associate dean
BA, Sports Journalism	Jessica Pucci, senior associate dean
Master of Mass Communication	Rebecca Blatt, senior associate dean
MA, Sports Journalism	Rebecca Blatt, senior associate dean
MA, Investigative Journalism	Rebecca Blatt, senior associate dean

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 145,489

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Fall 2023 total undergraduate majors
BA, Journalism and Mass Communication	505
BA, Sports Journalism	592
Total in accredited programs	1,097
Total in accredited and non-accredited programs	2,172

15. Give the number of graduate students enrolled on-site: 132

Number of master's students enrolled online: N/A (online graduate degrees are not accredited)

16. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2024 visits. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

[Fall 2023 skills courses](#) (on campus)

[Fall 2023 skills courses](#) (online)

[Spring 2023 skills courses](#) (on campus)

[Spring 2023 skills courses](#) (online)

17. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2023–2024 academic year: \$24,192,401

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years: 33%

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$5,943,972

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

Full-time faculty, Fall 2023

Name	Rank
Adams, Allysa	Assistant Teaching Professor
Allen, Craig	Associate Professor
Alvarez, Crystal	Instructor
Alvarez, Melanie	Assistant Teaching Professor
Arrillaga, Pauline	Professor of Practice
Batts, Battinto	Unit Administrator
Beelman, Maud	Professor of Practice
Blatt, Rebecca	Professor of Practice
Bramlett-Solomon, Sharon	Associate Professor
Byck, Peter	Professor of Practice
Carroll, Nicole	Professor of Practice
Chmouni, Elie	Teaching Professor
Cisneros Cabrera, Julio	Professor of Practice
Cohen, Sarah	Professor of Practice
Crane, Steve	Professor of Practice
De la Pena, Anna Maria "Nonny"	Professor of Practice
Diaz, Andres	Clinical Assistant Professor
Dieffenbach (Boivin), Paola	Professor of Practice
Doig, Stephen	Professor
Downie, Leonard	Professor of Practice
Driver, Alice	Assistant Research Professor
Foskett, Kenneth	Visiting Professor
Gilpin, Dawn	Associate Professor
Greenblatt, Mark	Professor of Practice
Hass, Mark	Professor of Practice
Hawken, Denise	Instructor
Hawthorne James, Venita	Professor of Practice
Hill, Gloretha	Professor of Practice
Hill, William	Instructor

Jacoby, Jim	Clinical Assistant Professor
Johnson, Richard	Associate Professor
Kane, Rachel	Professor of Practice
Kurland, Brett	Professor of Practice
Kwon, Kyounghee "Hazel"	Associate Professor
Landrum, Asheley	Associate Professor
Lozano (Leonard), Christina	Professor of Practice
Lozano, Emmanuel	Visiting Professor
Macias, Nicole	Professor of Practice
Martinez, Andrés	Professor of Practice
Matera, Frances	Associate Professor
Mays, Elizabeth	Teaching Professor
McClaran, Sharon "Nikki"	Assistant Professor
Misner, John	Professor of Practice
Moon, Young Eun	Postdoctoral Fellow
Mucciolo, Lauren	Professor of Practice
Mundel, Juan	Associate Professor
Nicoletti, John	Professor of Practice
Nikpour, Rodmanned	Teaching Professor
Parrish, Mi-Ai	Professor of Practice
Pellizzaro, Kirstin	Assistant Teaching Professor
Pucci, Jessica	Professor of Practice
Reed, Sada	Assistant Professor
Rhodes, Gail	Professor of Practice
Rodriguez, Rick	Professor of Practice
Roschke, Kristy	Assistant Research Professor
Russell, Dennis	Associate Professor
Russomanno, Joseph	Professor
Saucier (Santos), Fernanda	Professor of Practice
Sepessy, Celeste	Teaching Professor
Thompson, Julia	Professor of Practice

Thornton, Leslie Jean	Associate Professor
Timmermans, Jeffrey	Professor of Practice
Wallace, Julia	Professor of Practice
Williams, Catherine	Professor of Practice
Woods, Shemar	Professor of Practice
Zufelt, Abby	Clinical Assistant Professor

19. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2023. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2023.

Part-time faculty and faculty associates, Spring and Fall 2023

Ackerley, Jody	Heath, Chelsey	Post, Christine
Adeola, Elizabeth	Hernandez, Ceasar	Probst, Donnell
Altavena, Lily	Hinz, Krista	Quick, Jascelyn
Alvira, Zachary	Holmes, Malcolm	Revazova, Regina
Anglen, Robert	Hornberger, Lauren	Rhoden, William
Bennett, Jay	Huskinson, Harmony	Rivera, Steve
Blaylock, Sophie	Johnson, Dacia	Roach, Kelly
Blodgett, Thomas	Johnson, Weldon	Ruelas, Richard
Bock, Holly	Kehrberg, Amanda	Ryan, Jill
Bordeleau, Karen	King, Nicholas	Salazar Rebolledo, Grisel
Bosse, Rian	Knudson, Syleste	Sammis, Kathren
Bourque, Scott	Koester, Nicole	Scott, Dana
Bovio, Sonia	Kozar, Vincent	Shockley, Christina
Boyanton, Megan	Kraklio, Kirsten	Silversmith, Shondiin
Brodsky, Cari	Kresin, Molly	Skoda, Jason
Brown, Keegan	Lavelle, Christine	Smith, Nasha
Collins, Claudia	Liseblad, Madeleine	Spahn, Brandon
Cook, Mary	Loew, Morgan	Sridharan, Nisha
Cortez, Danielle	Longwell, Brad	Stephens, Imani
Cusimano, Lauren	Lopez, Carolina	Stevenson, Camaron
David, Paru	Macias, Al	Stone, Jason

Dineen, Nicollette	Madrid, Peter	Susel, Chierstin
Doig, Stephen	Magana Jr., Juan	Taylor, Angeline
Dunn, Heather	Mahrle, Amanda	Teeple, James
Dyer, Rebecca	Manning, Jason	Thorson, Bruce
Eaton, Heather	May, Erica	Totri, Anthony
Evans, Thomas	McBurney, Alex	Vaughn, Kelly
Faurel, Lucile	McConnell, Matthew	Vera-Phillips, Kristina
Faust-Collins, Claudia	McElroy, Quindelda	Warren, Jamie
Foley, Kevin	McGibboney, Ian	Watkins, Jason
Freeman, Taylor	McGlade, Caitlin	Witthoeft, Elida
French, Lynn	Merkow, Todd	Woodcock, Richard (Ryan)
Goodman, Kyra	Monahan, Kaely	Woodyard, Christopher
Goodykoontz, William	Mookadam, Martina	Yeager, Melissa
Grado, Gary	Mosier, Bailey	Young, Robert
Greisen, Elliott	Muench, Sarah	Younger, Jamar
Haller, William (Doug)	Olalde, Mark	Yurus, Matthew
Hamm, Jordan	Olsen, Edward	Zebrauskas, Adriana
Hardin, Sharkea	Olson, Lisa	Zimmerman, Kevin
Harris, Christopher	Padejski, Djordje	
Hawkins, Carlton	Pierno, Adam	

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

Undergraduate:

2022-23 academic year: 247

2021-22 academic year: 278

Master's students:

2022-23 academic year: 69

2021-22 academic year: 79

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University is widely regarded as one of the nation’s finest programs. Since becoming an independent entity and a cornerstone of ASU’s new Downtown Phoenix campus in 2005, Cronkite was hailed by journalists and educators alike as a leader and innovator. As the reputation of the program grew under Founding Dean Chris Callahan, so did its enrollment, its finances, and the size and prestige of its faculty.

In this decade, however, the School has encountered significant challenges, many of which it is still struggling to overcome. While the education and opportunities Cronkite provides its students remain excellent, that excellence is no longer a given looking forward, as this report will illuminate.

ASU offered its first journalism course in 1931, and in 1949 established the Division of Journalism within the Department of English. In 1973, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication was accredited by ACEJMC.

In 1984, the program was named in honor of legendary CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite, and was elevated to School status under another college. In 2005, the Cronkite School became a standalone institution. Three years later, Cronkite moved into its current 223,000-square-foot, \$72 million facility. The years that followed saw steady ascension, as Cronkite created new initiatives, added many faculty – including high-profile journalism practitioners – attracted out-of-state students and scored significant grants.

With a new decade, however, came new, unanticipated challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Dean Callahan announced his departure to become president of the University of the Pacific. At the same time, Kristin Gilger, the senior associate dean who had long been Callahan’s right hand, was preparing to retire, and the associate dean, Mark Lodato, left to become dean at Syracuse.

In March 2020, ASU announced the hire of a new Cronkite dean, Dr. Sonya Duhé of Loyola University of New Orleans. Almost immediately, a storm ensued, as allegations about inappropriate comments and behavior by Duhé at Loyola surfaced and both faculty and students at ASU pushed back passionately against her appointment. In June 2020, the provost withdrew the offer to Duhé and Gilger was appointed interim dean while a new search ensued.

The controversy over Duhé – concurrent with the “George Floyd summer” that led to turmoil on many college campuses – led to difficult conversations about racial/cultural issues at ASU and Cronkite. Gilger appears to have handled that period artfully, launching a year-long exploration of the School’s culture and inclusivity practices. The result was an initiative that aims to elevate diversity, equity and inclusion even more prominently in a unit that had been previously recognized as a leader in that space. Gilger also did a laudable job in keeping the Cronkite ship steady and moving forward in the stormy seas.

In July 2021, Dr. Battinto Batts, an executive at the Scripps Howard Foundation, became the new dean of Cronkite. In interviews with faculty, staff, administrators, colleagues, alumni and industry professionals, reviews of Batts’ tenure to this point are quite mixed. Some credit the dean with taking what one faculty member called a “deliberate, intentional and systematic” approach to the School’s challenges, many of which they say he inherited, while others describe Batts as being “uncommunicative” and “absent.” In general, the research-oriented faculty speak more highly of the

dean than the profession-oriented faculty, although some of the latter support the dean. (Because of the large size of the faculty, the site team did not interview all members.) There has been extraordinary faculty turnover in recent years, with a third of the faculty leaving since 2021.

Given that Batts followed a legendary, charismatic and highly effective founding dean, some degree of criticism would be inevitable for any successor. And the headwinds this dean faces are stronger than when the School was smaller, the building and equipment newer, and there were fewer financial challenges. But it was clear to the site team that this new dean is on a learning curve and requires – deserves – ample support from above and from the faculty and staff. At the same time, even his ardent supporters say, the dean could do a far better job in communication, both in listening to the concerns of faculty and staff and in helping them understand his and the School’s priorities. One person expressed a concern expressed by several: “There are so many priorities that nothing is a priority.”

Cronkite, through its history and today, has far less infrastructure and support for shared governance and faculty promotion than any ACEJMC-accredited program this team has seen. Even with about 70 full-time faculty, there are no academic departments and few committees. Those that do exist have inconsistent activity.

Under Dean Callahan, given the nature of his leadership and the internal support he built, this system – what another ASU dean with a similarly minimal structure admitted is “messy” – largely worked. But at a different point in Cronkite’s history and under a different approach to leadership, with less communication and support, this system is problematic. In particular, the two senior associate deans carry enormous burdens, some of those related to the dean’s style and leadership, and some related to these structural issues. Dean Batts and the provost indicated they are working to build a system that would better support faculty-shared governance, though the progress appears slow. The site team opted to address related shortcomings not in this standard but in Standard 5, Faculty, which we found out of compliance.

Dean Batts notes, fairly, that because the previous ACEJMC site team cited no issues with the Faculty standard, there was no need communicated that the administration should address this immediately as a priority related to accreditation.

We considered non-compliance also on Standard 1. But given the convergence of both internal and external events, the extraordinary challenge of following an extraordinary leader, the incremental progress we saw, the direction we heard clearly from the provost, and – most importantly – the overall quality of the education provided to students at Cronkite, we opted for a finding of compliance.

The Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication remains strong. Its faculty is superb, its students are engaged, its facilities spectacular, its commitment to the principles of ACEJMC unwavering. While it faces significant challenges, it deserves re-accreditation.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, meaningful short-term measurements, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit. The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website. Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented,**

plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?

The mission of Cronkite begins with the ASU Charter, which is prominently displayed in the Cronkite building and across campus. It states: “ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.”

Cronkite itself has a Vision/Mission/Future State statement, displayed on its website:

- **We are guided by the following VISION:** We believe in the power of media to inform and inspire society to solve challenges big and small.
- **That vision is inspired by this MISSION:** We educate and empower communicators to create an informed and inclusive society, advancing understanding and connection among creators, audiences, industry and the academy.
- **We seek this FUTURE STATE:** The Cronkite School is the global leader in educating and empowering communicators. Our programs are scaled to meet the needs of society and accessible to students and learners of all levels and all backgrounds. We purposefully create experiential and immersive learning, outreach, community engagement and research opportunities to maximize impact in the world. Our students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners form one inclusive and global Cronkite Nation, united by a heartbeat of shared goals and values.

In Fall 2021, Dean Batts initiated a strategic planning process designed to create five-year goals and actions. The process began in an inclusive manner, with all faculty and staff receiving assignments and most participating. This process produced 179 recommendations, many of which were integrated into Cronkite’s strategic plan, designed to guide decisions for the next five years. The primary goals of the plan are these:

- Increase our commitment to serving the critical needs of students
- Increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment on-campus and online
- Update facilities, technology and infrastructure
- Communicate broadly and effectively
- Strengthen financial position
- Strengthen faculty and staff

The plan also includes what are called “strategic actions,” though the site team felt that those fell short of the clear definition, metrics and timetables necessary to make a plan truly effective. (The dean says the leadership team has identified Key Performance Indicators for the plan, but the leadership does not share that reporting broadly.) Clearly, while the progress made so far is impressive, the strategic plan is still a work in progress. The dean indicates his strong commitment to the process and to the continued inclusion of faculty and staff.

Notably, the provost indicated that strategic plans at ASU are often quite different than those at other institutions. Because the president puts a premium on being nimble and responsive, such plans may be less tied to specific actions than is normally the case.

(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?

As discussed in the preamble to this section, Dean Batts’ leadership is also a work in progress, as he himself concedes. He came to the position from outside higher education and having never led a large, complex organization. He is working on communicating more regularly and widely, and has established “Coffee with the Dean” sessions that are open to all. Unfortunately, he says, the same small group of people have attended those sessions.

The dean clearly has the support of the provost and of his fellow deans, particularly those whose schools share ASU’s Downtown Phoenix campus with Cronkite. They say they have found him to be highly collaborative and they are excited to build interdisciplinary ventures with him.

Dean Batts is a strong advocate on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion. He also is clear-eyed about the changing nature of the professions for which Cronkite trains, and the need to evolve the curriculum to keep up with those changes. Dean Batts came to ASU from a position in philanthropy, and he reports that he has leveraged that experience and his relationships to help the unit raise nearly \$15 million in his time at Cronkite. Especially impressive has been his vision and support for the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, which has done important, award-winning work. The dean was central in securing a \$3 million grant renewal for the Center, as well as an additional \$1 million grant to provide investigative reporters new opportunities to learn how to use artificial intelligence in ethical, appropriate ways.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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.

Cronkite operates under bylaws adopted by the faculty in 2008 and updated in 2016. As cited above, those policies are being revised and reviewed with a goal of allowing for more faculty governance.

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

The decanal selection process is typical of large public universities. The dean reports to the provost, who evaluates the dean every four years. The School's bylaws prescribe an annual 360-degree review for the dean and associate deans, but that has not occurred.

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

Yes, there are clear guidelines for this.

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

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

The School does not have a separate written mission statement for its Professional Master's program, but it is integrated clearly into the overall document for Cronkite. There is a separate and impressive strategic plan for the program.

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

Yes, but as discussed in Standard 5, there is need for more faculty governance.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

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

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.

Although Cronkite offers multiple undergraduate degrees, several of which are online, the two under review here are the BA in Journalism and Mass Communication (the School's long-standing in-person major) and the BA in Sports Journalism (a relatively new in-person option that has experienced significant enrollment growth). Both degree programs require students to meet Arizona State University's General Studies requirements, which encompasses five core areas: Literacy and Critical Inquiry (6 total credits); Mathematical Studies (6 total credits); Humanities, Arts and Design and Social-behavioral Sciences (15 total credits between the two areas), and Natural Sciences (8 total credits). Within the core areas, ASU requires students to complete at least one course in each of three awareness areas: Cultural Diversity in the United States, Global Awareness, Historical Awareness. Cronkite also requires students to complete additional coursework either inside or outside those General Studies areas in 10 categories, including English composition, statistics, economics, psychology/sociology, history and foreign language, for example. The courses often also fulfill the General Studies requirements, which allows students more time for electives in their 120-credit degree program.

Students also complete a collection of courses for at least 12 credits in a "related area," which can be a collection of classes in one area (such as political science, for example) or a collection of themed courses (climate change or fashion, for example, cutting across programs). Students interviewed really enjoyed the requirement for a "related area" outside of Cronkite and said it broadened their knowledge base while giving them flexibility to pursue their interests.

In total, students take roughly 72 credits outside the accredited unit, giving them a strong liberal arts and social sciences perspective when they graduate. Courses offered at Cronkite (totaling 48 credit hours) also contribute to this foundation in liberal arts and social sciences. Both required and elective courses delve into history, sociology, philosophy, psychology. Examples include courses such as History of Mass Communication, Digital Media Literacy, Latino and Transnational Issues, Political Communication, and Race, Gender and Media.

In addition, it should be noted that seven Cronkite courses are designed to serve not only the School's own majors but all ASU students as part of the General Studies requirements: History of Mass Communication (satisfies Social-behavioral Sciences and Historical Awareness); Media and Society (satisfies Social-behavioral Sciences); Sex, Love and Romance in Media (satisfies Social-behavioral Sciences); International Mass Communication (satisfies Global Awareness); Visual Communication (satisfies Humanities, Arts and Design); Political Communication (satisfies Social-behavioral Sciences); and Race, Gender and Media (satisfies Cultural Diversity in the United States).

(b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills

courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student values and competencies listed by the Council.

The site team was impressed with a visual display of ACEJMC's values and competencies, which is painted on a wall (measuring about 8 feet long) for everyone to see when they exit the elevator on one of Cronkite's main student floors. This display reminds all – students, faculty, staff and visitors – that Cronkite students graduate with command of these values and competencies. The ACEJMC values and competencies also are found throughout syllabi and often form the basis of learning outcomes, especially in required courses. In curriculum mapping, courses are tied to the values and competencies as well. Cronkite does an exemplary job in this area in that their courses (and evaluation of those courses) are linked to these – but the program goes the extra mile by ensuring that all in the community are reminded of what they are striving to achieve every day.

Although Cronkite is considered a global leader in hands-on learning and known for its “teaching hospital approach” to professional preparation of journalists and media practitioners, the School's required and elective courses for the two undergraduate majors under review represent a mix of courses rooted in understanding context and foundations and courses focusing on skill development. Of course, many classes blend theory and practice, as the two are complementary, especially in capstone courses. Students interviewed called out this balance as something they liked most about the program. While they knew they would be immersed in professional settings at Cronkite, a few said they were surprised with how much they enjoyed the more discussion-heavy courses, which they say contributes to their ability to critically analyze their own work (and those of others) in the professionally oriented courses.

Both majors start with three one-credit courses (Grammar, Coding, and Diversity and Civility). Both have four required core values courses. The two degree programs share Principles and History of Journalism and Mass Communication Law and require an ethics and diversity course (with one tailored to sports majors). The fourth required values course differs for journalism majors (choosing either the Business and Future of Journalism or Principles of Strategic Communication) and sports journalism majors (Advanced Issues in 21st Century Sports and Media). Both programs have four required skills courses, which are mostly shared (News Reporting and Writing, Multimedia Journalism, and a choice of editing, videography or video storytelling). Only the second-tier reporting class differs for the skills courses required – sports journalism majors have their own class. Both require a three-credit internship. Therefore, 30 credit hours of required major classes for the two majors are virtually identical (outside of two sports specific classes for the sports journalism majors). Sports journalism majors must take one sports-related skills-based elective (which allows them to focus on television, depth reporting or marketing for sports) and upper division electives from other required categories. Journalism majors take the electives from the required categories (either one or two classes from advanced skills, mass communication courses, major electives).

The crown jewel of Cronkite has been and still is the required capstone experience, which brings together everything undergraduate majors have learned throughout their time in the program. These experiences are the epitome of the “teaching hospital model” for which Cronkite is known. Students work full days in a professional setting, supervised by a team of professionals and producing content for public consumption. These experiences are touted as students’ “job before their first job.” The programs not only provide hands-on experience while honing skills, they also challenge students to apply the values and competencies while teaching professionalism. The two largest capstone experiences are

Cronkite News, a multiplatform newsroom affiliated with Arizona PBS, and the Cronkite Agency, a new integrated communications agency that serves real clients and is the preference of a growing number of students focusing on strategic communication. Cronkite News includes options for students in Phoenix, Los Angeles and Washington and also can be the vehicle for students participating in other experiences, including the Phoenix Sports Bureau, Spanish-language news coverage, innovation and entrepreneurship, health reporting and other specialty capstone experiences. The Cronkite Agency offers a Public Relations and Digital Audiences Lab options. Two other newer capstone options launched during the review period are The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism and the Los Angeles Content Studio, both of which serve fewer students.

(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.

All evidence viewed by the site team, from the self-study to interviews with faculty and students to reviews of the syllabi to course visits, showed a curriculum that is current, vibrant, responsive to the industry needs and student interests and of exceptionally high quality. The curriculum is taught by well-trained faculty members who are highly connected to the industry and many of whom are full-time professionals (note concern about ratio of full-time/part-time instruction in Standard 5). Discussions with employers and those supervising internships say students come prepared with the skills they need to hit the ground running. Two employers noted that students from Cronkite sometimes come with higher technical skills than some current employees because they have access to technology and software programs not routinely found in all media outlets.

The self-study provided examples of curricular advancements in terms of adding new programs and courses as well as refining existing courses to ensure they are relevant to the changing industry needs. One such example is the revision of the reporting sequence. Students could take either an intermediate reporting, sports reporting or broadcast reporting class, but faculty teaching the capstone experiences found differences in preparation based on what course students took. The School reviewed the issues and decided to create one platform-agnostic Intermediate Reporting course dedicated to refining the reporting and interviewing skills for all majors. Classes are now introducing segments on generative AI as a tool (and a caution), and content creation is encouraged across emerging platforms. Students praise the currency of the curriculum and say they feel fully prepared upon graduation for their professional careers.

One area where several students raised concerns to the committee was related to the “demanding” nature of the curriculum. These concerns were in two areas: 1) overly rigid policies about precision, deadlines, and mechanics that result in harsh penalties (a zero on an assignment, for example), and 2) the workload demands of the capstone experiences, which require two full days in a newsroom, for example, but only generate three credit hours toward graduation. While students praise most faculty for being flexible, they noted that some rigidly enforce such policies, which has led to conflict that has had to be reported to the dean’s office for resolution. Students appreciate the high levels of expectations in the program and know it prepares them well. They encourage, however, examination of the workload in the capstone experiences and policies that could read as overly rigid and not reflective of the work world.

(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.

Answers to the three questions above indicate that connection to the industry is a strength of the faculty and administrators at Cronkite. Faculty routinely receive professional training and often are lead trainings for journalists. Some faculty to have been hired primarily with the responsibility of outreach to journalistic communities or to lead public-service oriented programs. One such example is the training provided to journalists by the professor of practice who leads the National Center on Disability and Journalism. All faculty during the review period were encouraged to engage in professional development by attending conferences. Until recently, all were provided at least \$2,500 for these activities – and additional funds were provided if available if faculty needs exceeded that limit. Faculty who are devoted to grant-funded outreach projects also participate in training other faculty in their areas of expertise.

(e) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses. Except for campaigns courses, the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.

During the review period, all skills classes adhered strictly to the 20-1 ratio, as the School's tables indicated. In fact, some experiences, in particular those related to the capstone courses, were far under that ratio, with intensive hands-on instruction provided by multiple faculty members. For example, in Fall 2023 (the semester in which the team visited), Cronkite News Phoenix has a ratio of 8 faculty members supervising 29 students enrolled in the course. While these numbers are fantastic for an intensive learning environment – a positive for curriculum – these ratios could raise issues in other areas for a program, including allocation of faculty workload in the face of limited financial resources. In Spring 2023 the Cronkite News ratios were 7 faculty for 50 students in Phoenix; 1 faculty member for 3 students in Los Angeles; and 1 faculty member for 1 student in Washington. It should be noted that these faculty also may have been supervising graduate students in separate course sections of these capstone experiences. These faculty also may be teaching other courses, possibly online. These low ratios are noted because they stood out to the site team.

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

All Cronkite undergraduate students in both programs under review are required to complete a 3-credit, 400-level internship course. Students must complete 215 work hours for the 3-credit class. Many students complete more than one internship, which can be taken for one credit hour if desired. However, only one internship can count as credit toward their degree requirements.

Students work at dozens of outlets, from local non-profits to national and international conglomerates. There are no shortage of opportunities for students to choose from and a career services team hosts multiple opportunities for students to find the internship that works for them. Students identify for-credit internships in three ways: Internship Interview Days (speed-dating-style internship events hosted by the Cronkite Career Services team), posts on the Cronkite website, and internships acquired directly by

students. The School encourages paid internships and continuously works to increase them. In Spring 2023, 74% of for-credit internship opportunities were paid, up from 56% in Spring 2022. The School lists unpaid internships in a separate category on its website for transparency, but some students opt for unpaid internships that better fit their schedules or align with their interests.

Prospective internship employers are vetted to ensure supervision by a professional and an experience that applies the knowledge gained in the classroom. Students complete a learning agreement and supervisors complete a placement agreement. At the end of the internship, employers complete an evaluation on a variety of skills and verify the hours worked. Employers also answer whether they would hire the student, whether the student is ready for an entry-level position and whether the student demonstrated the ACEJMC values and competencies.

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.

According to the self-study, during the review period, Cronkite's Career and Professional Development team supervised more than 2,600 for-credit internships. "The undergraduate internship course—taught asynchronously by the Director of Career and Professional Development Services—includes coursework that develops students' professional brands and supports their internships: Students complete readings-based quizzes, optimize their LinkedIn profiles, perfect their professional portfolios, and write a mid-term and final reflection of their internship experience." The supervisor's evaluation accounts for 40% of the final grade in the internship course. Clearly supervision is provided by both inside and outside of Cronkite.

The fact that the for-credit internship supervision is provided by a staff member (who reports directly to a senior associate dean) rather than by members of the faculty is not in and of itself an issue. This provides efficiency and frees faculty for other classes. The site team did find, however, that faculty members were unsure of the contents of the internship course and how the academic credit was being awarded for this experience. Faculty involvement in the process and the experience at some level is the norm at other accredited programs.

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

The capstone experiences, including Cronkite News (connected with ASU's PBS station) are all set at 3 credits each.

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

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

The three professional master's programs under review are the Master of Arts in Mass Communication, the MA in Sports Journalism, and the newest program, the MA in Investigative Journalism. All these programs are clearly professional, with most classes focused on skills. All three of master's programs

require 36 total credit hours. In the Investigative Journalism program, 23 of 36 credits are in professional skills courses; in the Mass Communication and Sports Journalism programs, 26 of 36 credits are in professional skills courses. Required courses include, for example, Journalism Skills, Data Journalism and Depth Reporting. Courses include more theory and conceptual courses like Media Law, and History, Philosophy and Ethics of Journalism.

Students interviewed in all three programs said they came to the programs for professional expertise with an eye toward a career in journalism. They said the programs have fulfilled their expectations and they are well prepared for the professions. They praise the hands-on experience and the professional expertise of their faculty. Many of the graduate students also get involved in the optional capstone experience courses and programs available to undergraduates.

Students in some programs, the investigative journalism program in particular, expressed concern about the rigidity of the one-year programs, not allowing time for exploration because of highly proscribed pre-built semester schedules. One student called the structure “both a benefit and a detriment.” One unintended consequence of such a schedule, they say, is that doing an internship during the semester is nearly impossible. If they want to do an internship, it may add time toward their degree. One of the appeals of the professional master’s programs is their accelerated pace, students say, as they are able to complete the degrees in one year.

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

Students in the graduate programs under review complete almost all their courses in graduate-only courses. Graduate students, in fact, say they feel like they are almost a separate population than the undergraduate students at Cronkite.

The graduate programs are taught at an accelerated pace and courses reflect more advanced and rigorous requirements. In terms of pace, the programs are designed to allow master’s students to go from novice to expert in just three semesters – and students who had no journalistic training or experience prior to coming to the program confirmed such to the site team. The programs also place an emphasis on leadership development, with courses like 21st Century Media Organizations and Entrepreneurship. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate greater depth of learning. For example, master’s students complete nine credits of an immersive capstone experience (versus the undergraduates’ three-credit requirement), and they are expected to produce content that is deeper and more ambitious than undergraduate work. Interviews with students, faculty and graduate students confirmed that all saw a clear differentiation between the undergraduate and graduate programs. Students who did both their undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees at Cronkite said they were able to grow both in depth and breadth of knowledge by staying for the master’s degrees.

For classes that are open to undergraduates and graduate students, courses are modified to ensure graduate students are working at a higher level. For example, students in the optional graduate internship course complete all the requirements of the undergraduate required internship course but also complete a semester project designed and completed in collaboration with their supervisor.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

The undergraduate curriculum under review for this visit is contemporary, rigorous and steeped in the professional world. The School clearly includes ACEJMC's values and competencies in all it does – beyond just proudly proclaiming them on the wall. Faculty are in touch with industry advances and changing needs, students feel they are prepared for careers and employers tout the work-ready nature of the graduates from Cronkite. Although the curriculum has grown over the years and might benefit from an overall review to look at synergy and efficiency in face of growing degree programs, changing enrollment patterns and use of faculty resources, this curriculum is strong and a wonderful representation of the teaching hospital model for our professions.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

(Professional Master's)

The three master's programs under review here all prioritize professional skills and preparing students for journalistic careers. The curriculum is rigorous, demanding and focused on preparing work-ready master's graduates who can work at a higher level in a professional environment. Again, the teaching hospital model is front and center, with students completing a capstone experience and optional internships to build portfolios. Student satisfaction is high, and students say they are getting skills they need to compete on the job market upon graduation.

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

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

The School has a written assessment plan that includes the ACEJMC professional values and competencies. The assessment plan is displayed prominently on the website on the About page in the “program assessment” section. The school’s assessment plan systematically addresses various academic issues through analyzing class evaluations, project portfolio and capstone reviews, among various measures.

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

The School not only defines the goals throughout their syllabi and in their assessment rubrics, but the values and competencies are prominently displayed throughout the building, including in artwork spanning a hallway wall leading to one of their newsrooms.

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

The School supplied multiple direct and indirect assessment measures linked to key courses throughout the curriculum pattern.

Direct measures:

- **Grammar proficiency diagnostic tests** are given to first-year students in a 1-credit asynchronous class. Students take a grammar test at the beginning of the course to measure competency and at the end of the course to measure their learning. Students must earn an 80% or better to pass the class.
- **Internship evaluations** are completed by internship supervisors. All undergraduates are required to take a 3-credit semester-long internship. The evaluation asks the supervisors to rate the students based on the ACEJMC values and competencies and several other job-readiness items.
- **Portfolio reviews** are conducted by media professionals and members of the Cronkite School’s Endowment Board of Trustees. A sample of student portfolios taken from the senior capstone classes are reviewed annually. Two professionals review each portfolio for job-readiness measures and the ACEJMC Values and Competencies.
- **Capstone prerequisite skills assessment** occurs during the first portion of the capstone experience to evaluate students’ skills connected to outcomes from prior courses. The capstone faculty evaluates the skills using a rubric that aligns with the ACEJMC Values and Competencies and job-readiness values.

Indirect measures:

- **Graduating student exit surveys** are administered by the ASU Office of Evaluation and Educational Effectiveness for all undergraduates. The surveys provide details on the students' overall satisfaction with the campus and their majors. The University provides the results to Cronkite for their majors.
- **Alumni surveys** are periodically conducted by the School to get alumni feedback on their experience and satisfaction.
- **Student awards and professional publications** are calculated at the end of each year. The School has made a concerted effort to enter published student work into local, regional and national student/professional competitions, which are largely judged by industry professionals and JMC scholars. The School also captures the number of items students get published into professional publications.
- **Employment data** is being collected by the School to track undergraduate and graduate students' career paths. The School updated its survey method during the collection period to better analyze the data collected.
- **Student course evaluations** are required by the university. The School allows students to assess ACEJMC Values and Competencies taught in the course by including the measures in the survey.
- **Teaching observations** are conducted by the senior associate and assistant deans of new faculty each semester. They observe the faculty and get feedback from the students.

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

Direct measures:

- **Portfolio reviews** use industry professionals and alumni to evaluate a random selection of students' work in their final capstone class. The School had 76 professionals evaluate 195 portfolios during the review period.
- **Internship assessments** are conducted by more than 200 industry professionals each semester.

Indirect measures:

- **Student awards and professionally published student work** are used as indirect measures because some of their student work is being reviewed and published by professional news organizations, and the awards are being judged by industry professionals and JMC scholars.
- **Investigative project reviews** are conducted by industry professionals on the investigative projects completed by graduate students in the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism.

(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 self-study provided ample and impressive evidence of how the School uses assessment data to close the loop and improve teaching. The assessment data as described above is largely collected, maintained and analyzed by the team of associate deans, assistant deans, the curriculum and assessment analyst and faculty liaisons. The team is responsible for creating evaluation rubrics and working with the faculty to

identify the assessment artifacts to collect the various measures from the identified courses. The team supplied a separate document from the site report to show a list of the faculty liaisons they work with to implement the assessment process. The University recently invested in creating an assessment analysis dashboard that is incorporated into the learning management system. The School volunteered to be an early adopter of the system and has used the data to help them close the loop in recent years.

One such example involves the grammar proficiency exam. The team described above noticed lower than normal scores from the grammar proficiency exam for three fall semesters following the pandemic. The initial assumption was to attribute the drop in scores to lower incoming GPAs, financial need and other factors normally associated with academic challenges. However, the curriculum and assessment analyst looked more closely at the data, and the site report mentioned “those who were failing the exams were more likely to be white, from out-of-state, not first-generation, not Pell-eligible, first-time first-year (not transfer), men, sports majors and students with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher. Further, just under half of the students did not take or did not pass the midterm, which usually means failure in the course itself.”

This deeper analysis encouraged the team to close the loop in several ways. The assistant dean spoke to all of the students about the importance of the grammar module, and spoke specifically to the underperforming students individually about implementing successful strategies before they repeated the course. Also, the asynchronous grammar module is now connected to a first-year journalism course so there is an in-person resource for the students.

The School also adjusted the pacing and structure of the course. The program plans to implement adaptive learning technology to help bolster the module in the future.

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

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

The School displays a separate assessment plan on its website for the master’s program, and has a separate written matrix on required competencies. The School supplied access to multiple secured online folders where the compiled direct and indirect measures were analyzed for this review period.

The master’s program assesses its graduate students by conducting capstone project reviews, journalism skills reviews, and capstone prerequisite skills assessments for their direct measures. The master’s program fulfills its indirect measures through administering exit and alumni surveys, calculating student professional publications and awards and conducting course and class observations.

Master’s students are responsible for completing a 9-credit immersive capstone experience that assesses their media skills and the ACEJMC Values and Competencies. The students work with a faculty member in a newsroom for four full days a week during a semester. The students complete a capstone project that’s designed to meet professional standards, and they are tasked with taking on leadership roles where they oversee undergraduate students. The reviewers are tasked with evaluating the students’ contribution to knowledge appropriate to the communications profession.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

The School has created and implemented a sound assessment plan. The team is working together to use the supplied data to continue to push their curriculum forward and help their students achieve the desired learning outcomes that are mapped to the ACEJMC Values and Competencies.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

(Professional Master's)

The assessment team has created a sound plan that includes a closing-the-loop approach for each of the measures cited in the report.

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

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 Cronkite School posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website. It defines diversity as “all variations of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and gender identification, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, religion or political affiliation.” The School further seeks to “create a sense of belonging for everyone by encouraging advocating and demanding the empowerment of diverse voices and perspectives in all learning and working environments.”

The plan, revised and adopted in 2022, states that the School assesses the effectiveness of its success through both “regular review and special inquiries” that invite “rich dialogue” and generate suggestions for continued improvement and celebrate accomplishments in the following areas: curriculum, emphasizing diversity in storytelling, making professional partnerships, making global engagements and maintaining DEI as a core value. Unclear to the site team is whether such discussions are actually occurring on a regular basis.

Diversity is inherent in ASU’s charter, which states that it is a “comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed.”

(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.

Students with whom the site team met demonstrated fluency with and passion for diversity and inclusion. The curriculum includes required instruction on diversity, inclusion and civility. In order to reinforce the Cronkite’s principles of diversity, equity and inclusiveness, the School uses the Canvas LMS to ensure diversity principles are in each syllabus, along with standardized rubrics intended to prevent unconscious bias. The introductory class includes a series of units on civil rights, gender representation and Spanish-language press.

Throughout the curriculum, there are authentic efforts to include diverse voices and faces in news coverage and strategic campaigns. Significant examples of ongoing news projects would include: the Borderlands project, which has students covering the southern border; investigations through the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and child sexual abuse within Indigenous communities. The School also has a partnership with ICT (formerly known as “Indian Country Today”) and the National Center on Disability and Journalism. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsors a health-reporting initiative that has students reporting on health disparities in English and Spanish.

Especially impressive are the student organizations (discussed in Standard 6) that support multicultural students, including the nation's first student chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, one of the first student chapters of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Indigenous Journalists Association, the Asian American Journalists Association, the National Association of Black Journalists and the Association for Women in Sports. Since 2020, these student chapters have joined together as the Multicultural Student Journalists Coalition.

Other resources appear to be underutilized. Cronkite Global hosts around a dozen international journalists each year, but those Humphrey Fellows reported that they had had little if any interaction with students. (In previous years, the School reported, the Fellows did present to first-year classes.) Likewise, students told the site team that there are significant barriers to participating in studying abroad.

(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.

As noted in Standard 1 of this report, the Cronkite School has emerged from a traumatic transition in leadership, when in 2020 the university withdrew its offer to a candidate for dean in the midst of very public accusations of racial insensitivity. The incident was covered by student journalists and further amplified on social media. After the job offer was withdrawn, Kristin Gilger served as an interim dean. During this period, the Cronkite leadership team was made aware of concerns surrounding discrimination and possible harassment from its own students and faculty, as part of a year-long inquiry into the climate at ASU.

At Cronkite, the result was a study called The Cronkite Experience. While it was originally intended to investigate and respond to students' concerns, the project also led to a wider inquiry, with many points of focus emerging organically. The project began immediately in the summer of 2020 with 14 listening sessions with the School's key constituencies. By January 2021, committees reported back with recommendations resulting in the establishment of a timeline for implementation of proposals. The final report described these areas: curriculum and instruction, faculty cohesion, external experiences, professional experiences, student experiences, recruitment and retention and faculty and staff. A modest sample of a very extensive list of actions taken include:

- The creation of a full-time position for director of diversity initiatives and community engagement
- A faculty and staff retreat related to DEI
- A project to track gender representation and sourcing on Cronkite News
- Redesigning the introductory course to prioritize civility and inclusiveness
- Introduction of a new required class, "Diversity and Civility," to be a part of each Cronkite student's immersion during their first semester
- Seeking more diverse speakers of color
- The introduction of rubrics intended to minimize unintentional bias in grading

- An audit of student grades to check for discrepancies along race or gender lines
- A Spanish pronunciation workshop for faculty
- Increased incentives to attract graduate students and partnering with an HBCU to create a pipeline to the graduate program
- Creation of a partnership with the University of Oklahoma to grow and share coverage of Indigenous communities
- Appointment of a new advisor to revive the LGBTQ+ student club

The full-time faculty is 38% nonwhite, significantly higher than the 27% in the last review.

The site team was told that one faculty member believes she is the only Black faculty member to have been on tenure track in the Cronkite School in more than 30 years. The site team was told that no woman or underrepresented minority in the history of the school has ever sought promotion to tenured full professor. One woman, a professor of practice, was appointed as a tenured full professor, as she holds a Knight Chair, which stipulates appointment at the tenured professor rank. Another female associate professor, an underrepresented minority, has submitted her dossier to be considered for appointment to full professor this coming spring.

(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.

Access is a key value of ASU. The admission process is “proudly nonselective.” All who meet the admission criteria are admitted. Recently, Cronkite stopped requiring the GRE exam for graduate applicants and has made standardized tests optional for undergraduate applicants.

In 2017, at the beginning of the review period, the Cronkite School was recognized with AEJMC’s Equity and Diversity Award, citing its attainment of measurable success in increasing equity and diversity. The self-study indicates that the award spurred an increased effort to focus on creating an inclusive culture.

In 2022, ASU was designated as an Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), which is defined in Title V of the Higher Education Act as an institution of higher learning with a full-time equivalent of undergraduate enrollment that is at least 25% Hispanic. Cronkite’s undergraduate student body consists of 24.6% Hispanic/Latino and its graduate cohort is 27.3% Hispanic/Latino.

Since 2014, the School has hosted the annual Katherine Schneider Journalism Award for excellence in disability reporting. The School says this is the first and only journalism contest devoted exclusively to excellence in disability reporting. In 2021, the School launched the Shaufler Prize in Journalism, recognizing the nation’s best reporting on issues related to underserved people in society—communities of color, immigrants and those identifying as LGBTQ+.

The School’s efforts in diversity appear to have borne fruit in recruitment. The number of nonwhite students continues to increase. Currently, the School reports that students of color represent 43.1% of undergraduates, up from 39.5% in 2016.

(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.

Several faculty members with whom the site team met identify with the LGBTQ+ community and felt that the climate is now better than ever and that there seems to be more awareness among their colleagues of their needs. One faculty member felt that LGBTQ+ students seem to now feel freer to “be their authentic selves” and that they no longer hesitate to suggest story ideas about gay or transgender issues. Likewise, a faculty member opined that gay faculty members have indicated they feel more welcome.

While generally satisfied with their Cronkite experience, a few students who met with the site team expressed feeling unsupported. Specifically, Latina students expressed the difficulty of adjusting to the Cronkite culture. “It’s very hard to come here from a Latino population,” said one. In particular, she found that, while she supported the idea of meeting assignment deadlines, it was “an adjustment” to adapt to a concept not given heavy emphasis in her community. One Latina student said one of her favorite instructors was a Latina associate professor, but “she didn’t last.” Members of the NAHJ student chapter indicated they do not feel sufficiently supported. Growing the chapter was hard, said one student, and could use some additional faculty support. One student who represented herself as queer said she hasn’t had any negative experiences, while another from the LGBTQ+ community tearfully described Cronkite as a “cis-hetero-patriarchal” environment that lacked faculty representation. In general, the students who spoke with the team appreciated the Cronkite School but would like to see greater representation from their communities (particularly Latino and LGBTQ+).

Overall, the School appears to be making authentic and mostly effective efforts to create a welcoming environment.

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.

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

Provide a brief discussion of Indicators (a) through (d) as they apply to the professional master’s program.

These indicators are identical to those described in (a) through (d) above.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

The School has increased diversity in both the undergraduate student body and the faculty. The university is now designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Leadership and faculty have emerged from a tumultuous leadership transition that involved concerns related to race. However, the School has stabilized and has used the experience to further increase its diversity efforts. Despite this significant progress, Latina and LGBTQ+ students yearn for increased representation on the faculty and stronger support from the School. Cronkite Global and studies abroad appear to be underutilized.

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

(Professional Master's)

The graduate cohort is more diverse than it was in the previous review. Reporting initiatives demonstrate a strong contribution toward the School's diversity goals.

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

Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	3	4.2%	3	4.2%
White	26	36.6%	18	25.3%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	1	1.4%	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	4	5.6%	7	9.9%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	3	4.2%	1	1.4%
Other race (not disclosed)	1	1.4%	0	0%
International (any race)	1	1.4%	4	5.6%

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 recent years, the percentage of undergraduate classes taught by full-time faculty at Cronkite has declined significantly. Over the past three academic years, full-time faculty taught 40% of all Cronkite undergraduate courses, down from 51% in 2014-15. In the 2022-2023 academic year, full-time faculty taught 43% of required courses and 37% of advanced skills courses at the School. There are three primary drivers of the School's reliance on part-time faculty: First, dramatic growth in both undergraduate and graduate Sports Journalism programs has exceeded the full-time faculty's capacity and expertise; second, offering enough sections to maintain small class sizes has required tapping part-time instructors; and third, several faculty have unusually light teaching loads compared to most ACEJMC-accredited programs.

Full-time faculty in the unit are a mix of professional (or "career-track" faculty) and traditional tenured/tenure-track faculty. The faculty mix is much less on the tenured/tenure-track path (16 faculty – two full, 11 associate and three assistant, using Spring 2023 faculty rolls) than the professional track (46 faculty in Spring 2023 – not including two visiting full-time faculty and a postdoctoral fellow). In the career track, most Cronkite faculty are "professors of practice" (32 in Spring 2023), although ASU's leadership is now making changes in the non-tenure faculty titles and ranks, indicating that "professor of practice" is a title that will be used less often. Other career-track faculty titles include Clinical professor (2 in Spring 2023), teaching professor (8), lecturer/instructor (3), and research professor (1). In the previous accreditation cycle, the unit was more "balanced," with 17 tenured/tenure-track faculty members and 28 professors of practice/lectures (not including visiting and post doctoral).

Faculty numbers have surged since the last site visit. At one point in the self-study, it is noted: "As of spring 2023, it now has 66 full-time faculty members, up from 48 in 2016." On the next page, the self-study places the number of full-time faculty at 71. This discrepancy is likely because of a significant number of hires and departures occurred in the faculty ranks in a relatively short period.

Turnover of full-time faculty has been a major issue, especially in the past two years. The self-study places faculty turnover since 2021 at 33.3%, although some in the unit place the number at closer to 40%, as the exact number depends on timing of data capture and counting people who came briefly and left during the data capture. Faculty interviewed say the consistent turnover is straining the remaining faculty who must take on teaching assignments, pick up service commitments and participate in multiple ongoing faculty searches. Faculty say morale has suffered.

The self-study notes: "The School has hired 25 full-time faculty since Spring 2022 to backfill departures, fill select open positions and address increased enrollment demands, in some cases at higher salaries to recruit qualified talent. During those searches, which sometimes stretched over a full semester, the School relied on part-time faculty to deliver instruction. The School continues to work to hire full-time faculty when possible, prioritizing open faculty lines for areas of growing student demand: sports media, strategic communication, visual storytelling and digital marketing."

Faculty and administrators cite several reasons for this unprecedented volume of faculty departures and hires. Several faculty were nearing retirement age, and Covid-related burnout moved up that departure date for some. In other cases, high-performing junior faculty were courted with better offers at other programs. And, inevitability, some people chose to leave in a leadership transition, especially with the departure of the long-term founding dean who hired many of the faculty during his tenure. Upper administration indicated they are aware of faculty turnover and are working with Cronkite leadership to address this issue. All agree that the pace of recruiting and hiring new faculty is not sustainable.

The self-study cites the faculty turnover as the primary issue that most of the undergraduate classes are now taught by part-time faculty. In the three years leading up to the self-study, three in five classes (60%) were taught by part-time faculty. However, the lack of full-time faculty undergraduate teaching courses was an issue far before the acceleration of turnover began in Spring 2022. Full-time faculty taught 39% of all undergraduate classes (and 41% of required classes) in 2020-2021, 37% of all classes (35% of required) in 2021-2022, and 43% of all classes (43% of required) in 2022-2023. It should be noted that in the previous accrediting cycle, full-time faculty were responsible for teaching 51% of all undergraduate courses in 2014-2015 and 46% of all courses in 2015-2016. So while this program has a history of part-time faculty teaching a sizable portion of undergraduate courses (and values the real-world experience they bring to the classroom), current data shows that reliance on part-time faculty is increasing, which is concerning to the site team.

The self-study instructions read: “If full-time faculty have not taught and are not teaching the majority of core and required courses, the unit should explain how its staffing plan accomplishes the goal of reserving the primary responsibility for teaching to the full-time faculty.” The School, in its self-study, answers this question by describing the process of hiring and training qualified part-time faculty members but does not go beyond that in explaining what could be seen as a major deficiency in the program. Even programs with a heavy reliance on part-time faculty can show faculty oversight for curricula with a strong faculty-led curriculum review process, faculty course coordinators and regular faculty review of courses and their assessment data. As this was not clear in the self-study, the site team sought to gather information during its visit. The site team did not find strong evidence that faculty were fully involved in all these ways.

The Curriculum Committee appears to be functioning well and is working within its scope of program curricular development. Because the Curriculum Committee’s charge does not include individual course approvals or revisions, there is no formal stated process for that review. Individual faculty members reported working directly with associate and assistant deans on course development and revision.

Full-time faculty coordinators of courses with multiple sections are in evidence, and these coordinators populate the Canvas shells and include assignments and rubrics. The coordinators also meet with part-time faculty as needed to ensure consistency. However, faculty interviewed said that this coordination isn’t always consistent. For example, part-time faculty teaching a solo section work only with one of the associate or assistant deans who supervise part-time faculty. And one part-time instructor described their first time teaching a course with multiple sections. When asked whether they met with a course coordinator, they explained that all the new instructors mainly relied on each other, starting a group chat to walk their way through the semester with peer support.

The onboarding for part-time faculty is coordinated by an associate dean, and the process is well organized and helpful, instructors say. Still, students say they do notice when an inexperienced teacher is struggling in the classroom. Multiple students, both graduate and undergraduate, mentioned issues with first-time, part-time instructors who “didn’t know how to teach” or were unresponsive. While these examples were the exception, they said, they had to go to the associate deans to deal with the issues, and these negative experiences stuck with them. That said, students said most of the professionals who came in as part-time instructors were a true asset and reported wonderful experiences.

Faculty clearly have the primary responsibility for research and creative work and are actively involved in service, especially in the form of outreach and service to the professions. Service is an ample part (20%) of the stated load of all faculty members, although some faculty members said they had no assigned service to the School and did not serve on any committees. Committees mentioned in the School’s bylaws are not all active. For example, the Dean’s Leadership Council, which is to serve as an advisory board to the dean, has not been meeting regularly. Much of the service that is traditionally carried out by faculty committees in other programs is conducted by the team of deans (assistant and associate). Faculty note this as well – saying it is well known that much is delegated to the team of assistant and associate deans by the dean.

As the Cronkite leadership team is performing many of the traditional faculty service tasks, which was the case under the previous dean’s leadership, the bylaws call for faculty votes on appointments of assistant and associate deans and annual full faculty evaluations of those serving in that capacity. All agree that these reviews are not occurring. Faculty recall doing this evaluation once for the previous dean but they do not recall ever evaluating the assistant and associate deans. A faculty and staff committee has been appointed to revise the dated bylaws, which should bring stated rules and practice in line. The site team, however, can look only what has occurred in the time period under review.

(b) The unit’s faculty (full- and part-time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.

The Cronkite faculty are clearly outstanding, as evidenced by student feedback, evaluations and the performance of graduates. Faculty maintain connectivity to the rapidly changing industries in a manner that contributes to the professional success of their students. During the review period, faculty used the funds to attend industry conferences such as IRE and ONA and to travel to newsrooms and agencies to learn and observe. Faculty also maintain their ties to academic associations and routinely present research and scholarship to the academic community. All faculty said this work was encouraged and fully supported by upper administration. They praise the School’s leadership for this level of support – and cite ample monetary support and release time to continue these connections, although a guaranteed annual stipend of \$2,500 for such activity has been suspended for budgetary reasons.

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

Faculty and administrators alike agree that there is a strong system for rewarding faculty productively of all types. What defines excellence, however, is not defined in any formal way. All policies are governed by the School's bylaws, which were last fully updated prior to 2008, when the School was much smaller and the composition of the faculty (and administrative structure) was significantly different. As noted above, the School has appointed a committee to revise the bylaws to address these issues. Current bylaws include vague descriptions of what's required for tenure and promotion, with very few indicators for faculty members to point to as they build a dossier. Faculty currently on or who have been on tenure-track say they were not provided with these guidelines upon hire and guidance was limited to help the build their understanding of the requirements. Faculty interviewed said external reviewers have often commented that the standards are insufficient guides as they are trying to render judgement on tenure and promotion. Some associate professors interviewed said faculty who achieved this rank stall in part because of this lack of clarity and the "chilling effect" of past unsuccessful cases for promotion. This group of faculty, however, sees positive signs with the appointment of the bylaws revision activity and the new dean, who they say has taken a strong interest in scholarship and the promotion of tenured and tenure-track 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.

As the chart shows below, faculty are active in presenting scholarship, juried and non-juried work, and producing both academic and professional publication to serve the industries and the academy. The faculty are well respected and maintain high profiles.

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

The site team was able to discuss the overall impressions of Cronkite program with university administrators, other ASU officials and members of advisory boards. Although faculty members were not specifically the focus of these conversations, the community clearly views the School as a crown jewel at ASU and that this is a high-profile program. All spoke of the quality of graduates that the faculty produce and the rigor of the educational experience. The Cronkite School is a linchpin in the Downtown campus and is a good partner with other professional programs in the area (and on the other ASU campuses).

One issue that was mentioned not by those outside the unit but by faculty at Cronkite was a lack of understanding by other scholars at the university about the type of research performed by the faculty, particularly tenured and tenure-track faculty. One faculty member stated that there is an impression that scholarship by Cronkite faculty is limited to "depth reporting" and "investigative journalism" rather than peer-reviewed journal articles, books published by top academic presses and more traditional scholarship. This perception could cause issues when faculty at Cronkite seek promotion as the University promotion and tenure committee might not have full understanding of the nature of scholarship in the School. In the past 20 years, two cases for promotion to full professor went to the university promotion and tenure committee. One was denied and another had two negative outcomes before being approved on the third attempt.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (87)
		Full Professors (6)	Associate Professors (13)	Assistant Professors (4)	Other Faculty** (64)	
Awards and Honors	42	3	25	3	12	43
Grants Received Internal	52	0	12	15	25	52
Grants Received External	59	0	38	4	28	70
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	9	1	6	2	0	8
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	6	1	1	0	4	7
Books Edited	1	1	0	0	0	1
Book Chapters	33	1	22	10	2	35
Monographs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles in Refereed Journals	95	8	54	38	4	104
Refereed Conference Papers	108	4	54	48	5	111
Invited Academic Papers	8	0	8	0	0	8
Encyclopedia Entries	1	0	1	0	0	1
Book Reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	46	12	3	8	17	40
Juried Creative Works	7	0	0	0	43	43
Non-juried Creative Works	6	0	0	0	7	7
Other: Podcasts	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other: Reports	0	0	0	0	4	4

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

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

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

N/A -- Because the School’s graduate degree programs are professional, there are no specific ASU Graduate College criteria regarding which faculty members may be designated graduate faculty.

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

In the three academic years before the site visit, full-time faculty taught between 65% to 71% of the graduate courses overall and between 74% and 88% of required graduate courses. Cohorts in the three graduate programs under review are relatively small, allowing full-time faculty to teach most required courses for these programs.

Faculty teaching the graduate courses are a mix of tenured scholars and decorated professionals. Students interviewed report strong connections with their faculty and say the faculty expertise is what attracted them to apply to Cronkite's graduate programs. Students say faculty have been helpful in helping them find professional connections and prepare for job searches.

Full-time faculty seem quite involved in the development and revision of the graduate curriculum. One such example is the evolution of the master's bootcamp, required in the first semester for all three master's programs. This course, an 8-credit Journalism Skills course, provides foundational skills in reporting and storytelling across text, photo, video and audio. The director of master's studies annually reviews the course based on the formal assessment results and conversations with faculty who teach master's students in their second and third semesters. Recent modifications include adding opportunities for students to produce documentary-style video storytelling and modules advancing numeracy and data analysis. Although this review could be conducted by a structured faculty committee process or even an ad-hoc formal review, as is common at other programs, the full-time faculty clearly are involved in the direction of the graduate programs at a much higher level than they are in the undergraduate programs.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

While the full-time faculty at Cronkite are of high quality, their role in the operation of the School does not meet the expectations of ACEJMC. Much of the curricular oversight of the undergraduate program, as well as significant academic-related service functions normally performed by faculty in a shared-governance model, are left to administrators. Further, the School lacks clear guidelines around evaluation, tenure and promotion, which appears to have had a negative impact on the health and longevity of the faculty body. These issues are at odds with the School's own bylaws.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:

NON-COMPLIANCE

(Professional Master's)

The same structural issues and faculty turnover that are hindering robust faculty involvement in the School surely do affect the professional master's programs under review. There is much stronger evidence, however, of meaningful full-time faculty involvement in curriculum development, review and assessment at the graduate level. The full-time faculty taught at least three-quarters of the required courses and about 70% of all courses in the graduate programs. This stands in stark contrast to the faculty involvement at the undergraduate levels.

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

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School uses University-wide tools to track student progress, including its digital portal, MyASU. Students can access a “major map” online that clearly summarizes required courses and grades, and when to take each course in the sequence. A degree audit reporting system (DARS) checks student progress against journalism program requirements, and advisers are notified to follow up.

During the review period, 94.77% of undergraduates reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the clarity of their degree requirements. The School does better than the University as a whole in four-year graduation rates, especially for Hispanic/Latino students.

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

Students are assigned an adviser upon entering the School and remain with that person until graduation. Every new student must meet with an adviser before registering for second-semester classes. Advisers work on course planning and registration and show students how to track their own progress. During the review period, the School added two full-time advisers, bringing the staff to a total of eight, and also brought on an assistant dean to oversee the “student success” team. One adviser deals only with master’s students; four support students in the undergraduate programs under review.

Faculty are required to be available to meet with students during office hours, but as a result of the pandemic, many do this virtually instead of in person. Of all recent graduates surveyed during the review period, 90% of undergraduate students and 91% of graduate students indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the level of faculty concern experienced during their program.

Students rate the quality of advising in the School slightly higher than the university average: 88.4% of Cronkite graduates say they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with academic advising in their major. A few students told the site team that some advisers have not been responsive to their needs and they had found it difficult if not impossible to switch advisers.

Career advice is provided by a separate three-person team (one more than in the previous accreditation period). The career office counsels individual students, reviews resumes, schedules recruiter visits and oversees all internships. The internship for credit, required of undergraduate journalism and sports journalism majors, requires them to produce a digital portfolio, which builds upon an established portfolio started early in their major.

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

Much of the information students need about School policies, including academic integrity, social media guidelines and course policies, is on the Cronkite School website. An extensive list of upcoming events is also on the site, linked from the home page, and prominently displayed on monitors around the building.

Students are also informed of activities through an email newsletter, ad hoc emails and the School’s social media accounts, using the dedicated hashtag #CronkiteNation. But the School’s success in retaining and graduating students is credited in part to its full-time director of student success, who teaches an introductory class for all first-year students and for many becomes their “go to” surrogate parent. She is often the first stop for struggling students and can refer them to counseling or go to bat for them with staff or faculty when they need support.

(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.

Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the program, providing students with the opportunity to report and produce news, sports and features outside of class. Student-run media include: The State Press, a digital news site updated daily and an associated magazine published quarterly, and Blaze Radio, a streaming station providing news, sports and music. Other opportunities include Downtown Devil, a hyperlocal news site; The Cut, a digital network where students produce a weekly entertainment show; Walter Cronkite Sports Network, which features digital sports coverage and play-by-play and a weekly YouTube program; another online sports outlet, Inferno Intel; and The Chic Daily, a fashion media outlet.

At the beginning of each semester, the School holds an evening event to introduce students to its extra-curricular and professional organizations and to encourage their participation. The School hosts nine student chapters of professional journalism organizations, including the Asian American Journalism Association, Association for Women in Sports Media, Indigenous Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, National Press Photographers Association, Public Relations Student Society of America, Society of Professional Journalists and Online News Association. Interested students may also join the Cronkite Foreign Affairs and International Reporting Club and the Multicultural Student Journalists Coalition. Despite the presence of these groups, some students from underrepresented groups told the site team they did not feel supported within the School and felt isolated in the culture.

To expose students to journalism and media issues and to develop their professional interests, the School hosts regular keynote addresses and in-person discussions with working journalists, media executives and experts in strategic communication, which are also live streamed. Special programs are organized in response to breaking news. The School’s website lists dozens of events throughout the year at which students can mingle with professionals, meet with recruiters and learn about everything from financial aid to scholarships.

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

The School describes its leadership team as data-driven, paying particular attention to retention analysis. A new staff position was added during the review period to focus on data. Persistence data is reviewed weekly to spot students who may be falling behind. This data can pinpoint students who need immediate intervention. At the end of each registration period, advisers are notified of students who have not yet registered; they can respond quickly with help to resolve any issues and get students signed up for classes.

During the pandemic, retention began to slip in the School and across the university, and data indicated financial pressure was at play. The School responded by creating a new position for a dedicated financial-aid counselor. It also assigned an assistant dean to develop a targeted first-year retention program. And it stepped up its student wellness services with additional programming and a wellness room in the building.

The School has outperformed the university as a whole in retention rates; its four-year graduation rate of 72.4% exceeds the university-wide average by 16.4 percentage points.

The advising process has been tweaked over the past two years to respond to issues with scheduling and registration. A new online calendaring system and “express” appointments were introduced for students

not needing a full half-hour block of time. Accelerated master's students now have one dedicated adviser.

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

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

During the review period, the School added a staff member focused on graduate recruiting who attends professional conferences to spread the word about the graduate programs. It expanded the pool and diversity of graduate applicants by adding scholarship funds and graduate assistantships, including two for Spanish-speaking students, one for an HBCU graduate and one for a student with interest in serving Indigenous communities. The School also offers a unique fellowship for a Peace Corps veteran.

In response to the pandemic, the School stopped requiring a GRE score from applicants to the master's programs. They must have a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of their undergraduate degree program. Applicants from other master's programs need a cumulative 3.0 GPA as well. Three letters of recommendation, a brief personal statement and proof of English proficiency are also required. This admissions policy is similar to other journalism master's programs.

All incoming graduate students in the programs under review are provided with a handbook outlining the requirements and a recommended plan of studies. Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA or be placed on academic probation; students seeking an accelerated master's must maintain a 3.25 undergraduate GPA before being officially accepted into the program. Students who do not earn a C or better in all journalism skills classes are automatically recommended for dismissal. Students must earn a B or better in the graduate capstone course.

The School also has clear policies covering grade and dismissal appeals, as well as academic integrity.

**SUMMARY:
(Undergraduate)**

The undergraduate experience at the School is enhanced by a vast array of optional activities, so many that some students can feel overwhelmed by their choices. Digital news, radio, sports, television — all of these are not only a focus in coursework but also at student-run media organizations. Services available to students include academic advising, career assistance and financial and wellness support provided by the School. Retention and graduation rates are more than acceptable and often exceed the ASU averages.

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

(Professional Master's)

Master's students in the School praise the program's experienced faculty and the hands-on approach to learning. Graduate students who met with the site team said they would have appreciated a little more flexibility in the curriculum and an opportunity to publish more stories during their year on campus. Overall, the program equips its students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in journalism.

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

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School's budget provides its allocations of resources and broadly describes the sources of its income. However, the relation to the strategic plan is unclear. As noted in Standard 1, the unit's strategic plan provides general goals while lacking clear and specific actions. As the provost told the site team, strategic planning at ASU is distinct from what is typical at many universities. Because ASU values innovation, strategic plans tend to be focused on short-term, mission-centered goals so as to allow units to be nimble enough to quickly make programmatic changes as needed.

(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.

Annual expenditures have risen from \$14.1 million in 2016 to more than \$22 million in the current fiscal year. However, this total includes programs that are not accredited and does not include costs for the School's Los Angeles programs, which are borne entirely by the university. This financial growth led the School to add new faculty lines and new degree programs during the review period.

Thirty-four percent of the School's budget comes from state appropriations or tuition, of which a portion is based on student enrollment (approximately \$8 million). Nearly 14% is accrued from online and summer tuition (\$3.76 million—up from \$682,000 in 2016). The rest comes from student fees, Cronkite and university initiatives, university capital funds, grants and development. Since 2016, the School has raised more than \$43 million in grants and gifts.

The self-study expresses confidence that Cronkite receives equitable treatment in terms of University allocations. In fiscal year 2022, the colleges of Business, Engineering and Liberal Arts and Science received a greater share of tuition spending authority than their percentage of overall University headcount, as compared to Cronkite, where allocation aligned with percentage of headcount. The provost and the president assured the site team that the administration would “never starve” the School, which administration considers a gem of ASU.

While Cronkite's revenue from online and summer tuition has risen from \$682,000 in 2016 to \$3.76 million currently, these unaccredited online programs have drawn significant faculty resources. Moreover, recent declines in online enrollment have contributed to a weakened financial picture. Costs for capital replacements and the loss of shared personnel (each discussed below) have also resulted in a significant financial shortfall. The university's public television station, which is housed within the Cronkite School and was previously administered by the dean, was administratively moved to the president's office shortly before the dean was hired. As a result, the School has had to absorb costs of what were positions that were previously shared with PBS.

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

In 2008, the Cronkite School moved into a new 223,000-square-foot, \$72 million facility that anchors the University's Downtown Phoenix campus. Even 15 years later, this is one of the finest facilities of its

kind in the world. The location provides students easy access to newsmakers, industry professionals and the living space for most Cronkite students.

The building features 19 large learning spaces—classrooms, newsrooms and labs. The university updated most classrooms during the pandemic to accommodate the use of Zoom for distance learning. Wi-fi capacity was increased and there are plans to make it even more robust in the near future.

The building also has a 141-seat lecture hall and three smaller lecture halls that hold up to 60 students each. There are seven conference rooms, the largest of which accommodates 65 people. The focal point of the building is the First Amendment Forum, colloquially referred to as the School's "living room." Recently, the School spent \$1 million to update the space's large video screens and digital signage and an additional \$100,000 on a video display in the building's lobby. (Given the School's financial challenges, some faculty and staff questioned the wisdom of those investments.)

On most days, the Forum is a place for students to sit and study or watch television on the multitude of video monitors. On some occasions, it is used for guest speakers or special events. Adjacent to this central location is a suite of student services offices. The School also maintains facilities for the career and professional development staff.

Lab spaces include a 36-seat newsroom, as well as generous spaces for the School's Phoenix Sports Bureau, the Cronkite Agency, the TV production and graphics lab and a new media innovation and entrepreneurial lab. The School also plans to transform a space previously used as a Walter Cronkite museum into a lab in which all Cronkite students can freely collaborate on content production. There are also newsroom spaces that house grant-supported projects, such as Cronkite Global (ASU is the only school in the country to host Humphrey Fellows) and the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, which primarily serves graduate students.

The School leases approximately 500 Apple computers from Teq Lease. As those leases expire over the next two years, the School is considering transitioning to having students provide their own computers for classroom use, as many students had already started using their own devices during the Covid pandemic. All faculty and students have access to the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite, both in the building and on their own computers.

Newsroom computers have access to the Associated Press' ENPS platform, in addition to Microsoft and Adobe suites. The School maintains 34 edit bays which have access to Adobe applications and ENPS and are connected to a shared video server. Students have access, on a first-come, first-serve basis, to all 24 edit bays during regular business hours. Of these, a half-dozen are available on a 24-hour, 7-day per week basis. Students also have access to a range of digital analytics tools, including HootSuite, BuzzSumo, Keyhole, SEMrush and Google Analytics.

Cronkite also provides significant space in the building for clubs and independent student media, such as Blaze Radio and *The State Press*, the latter of which also maintains a newsroom space on the Tempe campus.

ASU maintains learning facilities in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Although the programs are still developing, as described in Standard 2, these facilities provide students professional opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students. The ASU California Center is located in the historic Herald Examiner building in downtown Los Angeles. There, Cronkite students have access to 20 workstations,

four edit bays and a broadcast control room and studio that connects to the main control room in Phoenix. Likewise, the School has a news bureau in Washington, based in ASU's Barbara Barrett and Sandra Day O'Connor Washington Center, a few blocks from the White House. This facility provides Cronkite with 3,500 square feet of workspace, which accommodates 15 newsroom workstations and two edit bays. Similar to the Los Angeles facility, its control room connects with the Phoenix studio.

Resources for master's students come via the tuition and fees. The School has used these proceeds for a dedicated graduate advisor and two recruiters, as well as equipment specifically for News 21, the Cronkite Borderlands Initiative reporting trips and the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, of which primarily serve graduate students.

In order to help make Cronkite accessible to as many students as possible, the School offers approximately \$40,000 in one-time scholarships for first-year students. Thanks to support from the Scripps Howard Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NBCU Academy and the Knight Foundation, graduate assistantship and fellowship funding has nearly doubled during the review period, from \$523,522 in 2016 to about \$1.1 million this year.

Normally, faculty receive \$2,500 each year to use on research, equipment, professional development, travel or other needs. However, in order to save money, those discretionary expenditures have been paused for this academic year. Nevertheless, if faculty have a specific need during this period — to travel to present research, for example — the dean can approve funding on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, the high faculty turnover, described in Standard 5, has allowed the School to defer some searches, resulting in savings of salary expenses.

(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.

Although most faculty spend significant amounts of time in newsrooms, the building has 89 offices for full-time and part-time faculty.

The School has an impressive collection of field equipment that students can check out — more than 3,000 items are maintained in the equipment checkout room, including:

- 150 Canon 4K video field cameras
- 50 Canon mirrorless cameras for photography and video (new as of last spring)
- Approximately 100 Canon DSLRs (approaching end of life and scheduled to be replaced with mirrorless cameras)
- 16 Canon cinema cameras (mostly used by advanced students, 10 of which are approaching end of life and are scheduled for replacement)
- All camera kits come with Manfrotto tripods with fluid heads, as well as a microphone (stick, lavalier, or wireless)
- A wide array of professional grade lens kits
- Dejero EnGo live transmitters (that allow for live remote reporting)
- DSLR gimbals, GoPro action cameras, lighting kits, audio recorders, headphones, smart phones, cables and batteries

Additional professional-grade equipment is maintained in the Los Angeles and Washington bureaus.

The School has six staff members overseeing technological needs: four IT specialists, a video production manager, and a shared broadcast engineer. These individuals also coordinate with employees at the PBS television station and report to the dean's office.

The Cronkite building hosts an impressive television studio for a student-produced, television newscast (which used to be, but is no longer, broadcast on the main PBS channel). The news set is professional-grade, as are the studio cameras, lighting system and control room. The Cronkite News operation is one of several studios in the building with professional-grade control rooms.

These studios — along with the rest of the building — have been well-maintained. However, much of the capital equipment has not been updated since the School moved into the building in 2008. While most of the equipment is in working order, nearly all of it has reached its end of life, making repairs either difficult or impossible. Any equipment failures, at this point, will cause significant disruption to student learning.

Among the items in need of replacement:

- Two video switchers (one of which may be automated)
- Video router (currently out for bid)
- Digital video playback server
- Audio board
- Studio cameras

One of the people responsible for making the replacements is a recent hire, whose first task was to evaluate the equipment and make recommendations on what needed to be replaced. What he encountered, he said, was a “tidal wave” of equipment needing replacement, putting the School in “first aid mode.” He indicated that the School was responsive to his recommendations and he hopes to complete these replacements over the next two years, depending on supply chains and vendor schedules. Updating this technology is expected to cost \$4.6 million beyond the annual technology budget. Consequently, the School has requested and received the full \$4.6 million from the university, of which \$2 million is a loan, which the School will repay to the university \$245,000 per year over the next 10 years.

The consensus opinion offered to the site team is that equipment should have been replaced earlier, but maintenance was deferred due to other priorities, then the pandemic and, finally, the lengthy process of hiring a new dean. Going forward, the School plans to have a staggered replacement schedule.

Student fees are used for annual updates to computers, software and equipment used by students. Undergraduate and graduate student fees increased from \$746,000 in 2016 to \$4.1 million this fiscal year, with graduate students paying \$1,000 per semester and undergraduate students \$540. ASU has sought to keep student costs affordable to increase access. However, the School is considering seeking additional increases to student fees to keep pace with the costs of equipment.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

The Cronkite School enjoys resources, facilities and equipment that would be the envy of any JMC program. The building and facilities are outstanding. However, the School does face significant financial challenges in the immediate future. The School needs a plan to replace equipment on a schedule that obviates the need to replace everything at once. The student-produced television newscast is no longer offered on the main PBS channel.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

(Professional Master's)

Graduate students have access to high-end cinema cameras, studios, and other field production equipment, as well as facilities in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism primarily serves graduate students, although some undergraduates are able to participate in projects.

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

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Alumni and working professionals are actively involved in the School as advisers, mentors and guest speakers. The self-study describes its alumni engagement as “proudly digital first,” having dropped its print alumni magazine in 2021. It now communicates with alumni using the hashtag #CronkiteNation on social media, and emailing a quarterly newsletter, launched in 2022, to more than 9,600 alumni. An alumni LinkedIn group has more than 5,000 members.

For 40 years, members of an “endowment board” of professionals, including many alumni, have reviewed student portfolios, hired interns, spoken on campus and helped to shape the curriculum. In 2021, the School launched an online networking series with alumni to discuss career options with students. Internship interviews are held eight times per year in a “speed-dating” format; about half are with alumni in hiring roles with local and regional employers. Nearly half of the volunteers in the School’s professional mentorship program for first-year and graduate students are alumni. One additional sign of alumni commitment to the School is the establishment during the review period of three new scholarships endowed by alumni.

The presence of two working newsrooms in the school’s building serves as a bridge between the academy and the profession, keeping teaching up-to-date and relevant. In line with the School’s “teaching hospital” model, it hosts Arizona’s PBS channels and ICT (formerly Indian Country Today), where students can work and learn. The relationship with PBS is more arm’s length now than in the past, however, since the station was moved under the auspices of the University President’s office. Three professional organizations are also headquartered in the building: the Arizona Media Association, the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing, and the Society of American Baseball Research.

Faculty involvement with the profession also helps to keep teaching current. Faculty members write columns, serve as newsroom consultants, and mentor working journalists; one serves as a fill-in radio anchor, another hosts a podcast, while another does pro-bono data analysis. Cronkite School faculty also serve as leaders in professional organizations such as the Associated Press, the Society for Professional Journalists and the Poynter Institute. Part-time faculty are mainly hired from the ranks of professionals in the Phoenix media market.

The self-study admits to some weaknesses in alumni outreach and in tracking alumni employment. Until 2022, this process relied mainly on information from social media and word of mouth, which was updated twice a year. The School has since introduced an alumni survey, to which the response rate was described as “unimpressive” but was boosted by personal outreach. The School was able to provide employment data for 85% of its 2020 graduating class.

(b) The unit provides leadership in the development of high standards of professional practice

through such activities as offering continuing education, promoting professional ethics, evaluating professional performance, and addressing issues of public consequence and concern.

The School promotes media literacy, business journalism, disability coverage and global connections through on-campus programs, research and outreach. Its efforts reach beyond the classroom to both the profession and the public. The School's News Co/Lab offers a free open course on media literacy in both English and Spanish and produces original research into misinformation and trust, among other current topics. A faculty member leads the National Center on Disability and Journalism, providing training and resources, including a style guide, on covering disability issues. The Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism also is housed on campus; Cronkite School students produce content for its website.

International journalists are represented on campus through the Humphrey Fellowships, which bring in mid-career professionals from around the world for 10 months each year. Fellows develop and share their skills in classes and public discussions, although there is a sense that they could be more involved. A global initiative sends faculty to train journalists from Africa to Asia, and a new grant-funded hire trains journalists and students in El Salvador.

To respond to the industry's training needs and to raise revenue, in 2022 the School announced a new professional development initiative for non-matriculating students, "CronkitePro." The initiative is under development, according to Dean Batts, who reports that discussions with partners are ongoing. These discussions have produced a formal MOU with a well-known partner in the journalism-training space, and the School is developing learning certificates in two areas of Cronkite's programmatic strengths. The plan is to develop CronkitePro as its own vertical, protecting faculty to focus on undergraduate and graduate students.

The School administers five annual awards for professional journalists, including the Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism, the Barlett and Steele awards for investigative business journalism, and the Katherine Schneider award for reporting on disability. During the review period, the School began administering the new Shaufler Prize for covering underserved communities, as well as assuming administration of the Human Rights Press Award in partnership with Human Rights Watch.

Faculty judge both professional and student journalism awards on a regular basis, including national and regional Emmys and the White House Correspondents Association awards, as well as student awards from the Broadcast Education Association and SPJ. Faculty also contribute to the profession by continuing their journalism work and by serving as expert sources for other journalists. The self-study process highlighted some inconsistencies in service effort among faculty. On paper, faculty are expected to devote 20% of their time to service. Some faculty told the site team they do not log their service hours; others said they are not required to do any service time. According to the self-study, the School has initiated an effort to fix this by limiting course releases and encouraging external service by all faculty.

(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.

Student work in capstone courses is one of the School's biggest and most visible contributions to the community. Cronkite News students report and produce news in both English and Spanish that is

distributed by more than 170 outlets, including USA Today and the PBS NewsHour West, which originates from the journalism school. A student-produced newscast airs on a digital subchannel of Arizona PBS four days a week, covering local news, sports and weather. Students in Cronkite programs in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles contribute content as well.

A new investigative newsroom, launched during the review period, produces semester-long investigations in collaboration with professional newsrooms. One outstanding example from the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, “Gaslit,” looked at unreported methane flares and was published by almost 200 outlets. Public relations students work on campaigns for national, regional and local clients through the Cronkite Agency, led by faculty and staffed by students.

As a member of the Carnegie-Knight national News21 initiative, the School supports a student collaborative that produces an in-depth multimedia report each semester. During the review period, News21 investigations of hate crimes and juvenile justice both won Robert F. Kennedy awards. Students in the School’s new-media lab have helped to produce immersive projects for professional newsrooms, including animations and augmented reality. Students in a documentary course tells stories of sustainability in the Southwest.

Undergraduates and graduates majoring in sports journalism are assigned to cover teams in the Phoenix area, working their way up from high school sports to the professional level. For a dozen years, students in the School have provided coverage of major league baseball spring training to professional newsrooms, including outlets in Denver, Kansas City, Milwaukee and San Diego, plus Sports Illustrated and MLB.com.

In addition to professional service noted above, faculty serve on the boards of national and community groups such as the Alzheimer’s Association, the U.S.-Mexico Foundation and the Arizona Charter School Board.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The School’s efforts in scholastic journalism are led by a dedicated high-school programs coordinator who visits schools across the southwest several days a week and delivers “Cronkite in your classroom” media workshops in both English and Spanish. The same workshops are also available on site for field trips that include a tour of the Cronkite School. The coordinator offers support to high-school journalism teachers, with a special focus on underserved communities, and sends them a regular newsletter.

For 20 years, the School offered three separate week-long summer camps for high-school students, focused on broadcast news, sports journalism or digital media. During the review period, camp was consolidated into one week but still offers all three tracks. More than a third of past campers have enrolled in Cronkite.

A faculty member serves on the board of the Arizona Interscholastic Press Association, which holds an annual program on campus. In partnership with the Arizona Latino Media Association and the United National Indian Tribal Youth organization, the School hosts separate one-day conferences for Latino and Native students.

The School participates in the biannual conferences of the Journalism Education Association and Student Television Network. Faculty judge scholastic journalism awards.

SUMMARY:

(Undergraduate)

The School's strong connections to the journalism and public relations professions, especially in the Phoenix area, help to keep the curriculum current and provide students with exposure to and experiences in the "real world." Student-produced journalism and PR campaigns are a visible indicator of the School's service to the community. An impressive effort to recruit diverse students from high schools across the state is a mark of distinction for the School.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

(Professional Master's)

Students in the master's programs under review praised the School for its rigor and professional orientation. A cohort that includes students with years of journalism experience as well as career-switchers produces strong content for publication, with training and support from highly-qualified faculty.

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

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team
of the undergraduate program
(A separate summary is required of the professional master's program)

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS:

- A talented, committed faculty team that takes great pride in the heritage and brand of the Cronkite School.
- An impressive student body drawn from across the country to the excellence of Cronkite.
- A superb home that is among the top facilities in the country for programs of this kind.
- Robust curriculum clearly inclusive of ACEJMC's values and competencies.
- A long-demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Extraordinary experiential-learning opportunities, both co-curricular and extracurricular.
- Myriad partnerships with industry and nonprofits.
- Strong academic and career advising, evidenced by graduation rates and outstanding job placement.
- A large and loyal alumni base.

WEAKNESSES:

- A relatively new leader still finding his footing, faced with following a legendary founding dean. In particular, communication is weak and decision-making processes unclear.
- The School lacks a framework and processes for effective faculty governance in academic matters, including curricular oversight and assessment.
- Too many classes are taught by part-time faculty without sufficient faculty oversight.
- The School lacks clear standards and processes for faculty promotion and evaluation, and promotions are exceedingly rare.
- A budgetary surplus has quickly become a deficit, and difficult decisions lie ahead.
- The School lacks a plan for scheduled maintenance and replacement of capital equipment.

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

Standard 5, Faculty

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.

The main deficiencies cited in *Standard 5: Faculty* are as follows:

- Faculty turnover. While the unit cannot control for unusual circumstances, greater stability in faculty ranks would address many issues, including the low percentage of full-time faculty teaching in the undergraduate programs. If faculty stability is not improved, the School must provide clear context and a more thorough explanation of these issues in its self-study.
- Faculty oversight of the curriculum. For the undergraduate program, full-time faculty teaching had dropped to 40% overall (down from nearly 50% of undergraduate courses in the last accreditation cycle). Evidence was lacking during the visit that faculty were fully involved in all aspects of the curriculum. The School should work toward ensuring that full-time faculty participate in course approval, revision, assessment and curriculum revision both through a strong curriculum committee and through other means, including faculty guidance (working with the administrative structure) in courses taught solely by part-time faculty.
- Faculty governance and operating inconsistency with the School's approved bylaws. As the School has grown and evolved, the administrative team has largely taken on responsibilities normally and ideally handled by faculty. Some faculty committees are dormant. This lower level of faculty governance in academic matters is inconsistent with stated evidences sought by ACEJMC and, equally importantly, inconsistent with the School's approved bylaws. The unit must show that its bylaws are current, reflect the will of the current administrative and faculty teams and are consistently followed.
- Clear criteria for evaluating and promoting faculty. The current bylaws contain vague criteria for evaluation, tenure and promotion of faculty. There are some guideless for traditional faculty but none for any of the "career-track faculty," who currently have no articulated path to promotion. Revised bylaws should more clearly state criteria for evaluation and promotion for all faculty types and ranks. These criteria should be clearly communicated to all faculty upon hire and throughout their careers at Cronkite.

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

NA

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

NA

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

The previous report identified no weaknesses.

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

This self-study was well-written and well-organized, but had some notable deficiencies that made the site team's task more difficult. There were several inconsistencies in charts and text, which caused the site team to seek clarification. For example, with the large number of faculty departures and hires immediately leading up to the submission of the self-study, the total number of faculty (and the exact composition of faculty) was inconsistent in a few places in the report.

More problematically, the site team felt the self-study was what one called "sugar-coated." Where issues and problems clearly exist, they were often glossed over. For example, the profound turnover in the faculty over the past two years was noted simply numerically, without any recognition of its impacts or any analysis of its causes.

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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS:

- A talented, committed faculty who take great pride in the heritage and brand of the Cronkite School.
- A superb home that is among the top facilities in the country for programs of this kind.
- Robust curriculum clearly inclusive of ACEJMC's values and competencies.
- Well-designed curricula with degree programs that are attractive to prospective students and serve them well once here.

WEAKNESSES:

- A relatively new leader still finding his footing, faced with following a legendary founding dean. In particular, communication is weak and decision-making processes unclear.
- The School lacks a framework and processes for effective faculty governance in academic matters.

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

None.

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

NA

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

NA

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

NA

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

The previous report identified no weaknesses.

Dear ACEJMC Accreditation Committee,

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication is pleased with the site team's recommendation that our program be reaccredited. The team's findings are both enlightening and affirming, as Cronkite was already engaged in the process of addressing some key matters related to our school's evolution and growth - prior to the site visit in November 2023. Since the visit, our leadership, faculty and staff, with the full support of the University administration, have been intently focused on continuing that process, using the report as an additional catalyst and roadmap. This correspondence is an update on our progress and plans related to addressing the deficiencies.

The site team found Cronkite to be out of compliance on **Standard 5: Faculty**.

Cronkite approaches the accreditation process with a measure of pride and seriousness, welcoming the review, and allowing the recommendations of our peers to guide the school's continuous improvement. We appreciate the current site team's acknowledgement that Cronkite's approach to faculty governance and oversight, now found to be out of compliance, was initially put into place by the school's founding dean. Although the previous accreditation and site team did not identify this deficiency, Cronkite understands the need to address these concerns now to achieve full compliance with faculty standards.

Admittedly, Standard 5 was an area of concern for us heading into the accreditation process. More than a year prior to the site visit, during the development of our self-study, we discovered that the number of Cronkite's full-time faculty teaching courses was below the 50 percent threshold, thus, putting us at risk on Standard 5. We began taking steps to correct this by reducing course release time and revising allocation of work in faculty contracts. That process is ongoing. Also, in the last 90 days, since the site visit, our efforts have focused even more intently on strengthening Cronkite's administrative oversight, enhancing faculty engagement and governance, and providing clarity in the tenure and promotion process.

The following is a summary of our progress:

Issue: Decentralization of Faculty Administrative Duties

Actions:

- **Revising bylaws:** The Cronkite School began the process of revising its bylaws for the first time in more than a decade in early August 2023. A faculty committee was appointed to oversee this work and delivered a draft of the bylaws revision to the dean in December 2023. The document must be reviewed by the provost's office and the University's Office of General Counsel before bringing the proposed bylaws revision before the full faculty for a vote, hopefully by the end of the spring semester.
- **Appointing faculty directors:** To improve faculty oversight of the school's curriculum and courses, in accordance with Standard 5, the dean will be appointing

six faculty directors to oversee the course assignment and supervision process. The appointments will be completed by the end of the Spring 2024 semester, with the directors assuming their roles in July, at the start of the new fiscal year.

Issue: Faculty governance

Actions:

- **Re-activating the Dean's Advisory Committee:** This committee, which had not in some time, held a meeting in January 2024. The committee is exploring the implementation of a faculty survey to develop insights and encourage increased engagement and oversight.
- **The Bylaws Committee's work continues:** The revision of Cronkite's bylaws is important to the school's continued growth, enhanced faculty engagement and oversight and ACEJMC compliance. The bylaws revision, commenced in August 2023, is expected to continue throughout the balance of the spring 2024 semester.
- **The Curriculum Committee work to commence:** This spring, Cronkite will embark on its first curriculum revision in more than a decade; a two-year process that will be led by the Curriculum Committee, will be composed of faculty members.

Issue: Faculty teaching courses

Actions:

- **Filling openings on faculty:** Cronkite has completed some recent hiring and currently has two active searches to fill strategic initiative roles funded by the university president or provost, backfill openings on our faculty, and to expand programs. We recently closed our search for the Ida B. Wells professor in investigative journalism, hiring a veteran journalist and educator, who recently served as a senior video producer for The Washington Post. We also recently hired an assistant professor from Florida State University to serve as our Southwest Borderlands professor, a tenure-track role. We are in the finalist stage for the founding director of the Center for Culture and Inclusion in Media, a tenured/research/leadership role. And we are actively searching for two professors in strategic communications to help launch our new master's degree in strategic communications. These appointments will add to our roster of full-time faculty available to teach courses.
- **Eliminating or limiting course release time for faculty:** Starting with the Spring 2024 semester, we began more closely scrutinizing requests for faculty release time from teaching assignments.
- **Clarity and consistency in allocation of work:** More than a year ago, we began addressing discrepancies or unclear language in faculty contracts and their allocation of work to address the need for faculty to spend more time in the classroom.

Issue: Emphasize needs of faculty recruitment, growth and development

Actions:

- **Associate Dean for Faculty:** Cronkite will appoint an associate dean for faculty from within its ranks. This person, who will begin on July 1, 2024, will be tasked with working with the dean to:
 - i. Standardize promotion and tenure process.
 - ii. Develop consistent pipelines of talent acquisition.
 - iii. Grow our leadership bench and capacity.
 - iv. Encourage talent retention.

Issue: Grow tenured faculty and strengthen research profile:

Actions:

- Hired Southwest Borderlands Professor from Florida State University (seek expedited tenure)
- Hired Asheley Landrum from Texas Tech University (Tenured)
- Searching for founding director of Center for Culture and Inclusion in Media (Tenure Track)
- Dr. Hazel Kwon will be reviewed for full professor in Spring 2024, first woman tenure track faculty at Cronkite to achieve full professor.
- Three other tenure track faculty are preparing to be reviewed for tenure within the next two to three years.
- By July 1, we also plan to appoint a director of research and hire a grant administrator.

The Cronkite School is committed to maintaining its status as one of the premier journalism and communications schools. Our continued growth and evolution have required us to dedicate additional energy and resources to that effort, and we are pleased to do so with the support of so many people on our faculty and staff, at the university and in the community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Battinto L. Batts Jr

Dean

Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Arizona State University