

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program

2023–2024

Name of Institution: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: James T. Minor, Chancellor

Name of Unit: Department of Mass Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: Musonda Kapatamoyo, Department Chair

Date of 2023-2024 Accrediting Visit: January 21-24, 2024

Date of the previous accrediting visit: November 14-16, 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team: Re-Accreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Brad Rawlins, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Communication

Organization/School: Arkansas State University

Signature

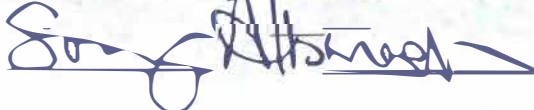


Team Members

Name and Title: Sonny Albara, Vice President, Arkansas Professional Chapter of SPJ

Organization/School: Society of Professional Journalists

Signature



Name and Title: Battinto Batts, Dean of Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Comm

Organization/School: Arizona State University

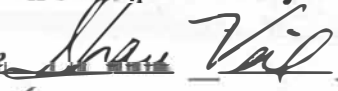
Signature



Name and Title: Shari Veil, Dean of College of Journalism and Mass Comm

Organization/School: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Signature



PART I: General information

Name of Institution: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Name of Unit: Mass Communications Department

Year of Visit: 2024

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

Higher Learning Commission

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

New England Commission on Higher Education

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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

Private

Public

Other (specify)

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

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville traces its origin to a recommendation in 1956 by the Southwest Illinois Council for Higher Education (SWICHE). The Council was convinced that higher education facilities were needed in the Metro-East part of the greater St. Louis area. Council members hired consultants, whose reports documented that need, and appealed to Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale to establish satellite campuses.

In 1957, SIU opened two "residence centers" in Alton and East St. Louis. The University expected to enroll 800 students but 1,900 applied. By 1959, the number of students had doubled to 3,800, greatly exceeding the physical facilities and demanding services faster than the University could develop and supply them. A planning team investigated sites in the Metro-East counties and selected one just south of Edwardsville.

In 1960, the Illinois legislature authorized a bond issue for construction of a new state university campus. Voter approval came in November 1960. After two and a half years of planning, University officials and area residents attended ground-breaking ceremonies for the first permanent buildings.

In the fall of 1965, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville moved onto its new campus: 2,660 acres of rolling land and woods dotted with lakes. Much of the land still retains its natural shape.

Today, SIUE is a major public university, offering a broad choice of degrees and programs ranging from career-oriented fields of study to traditional liberal arts. Students have an opportunity to interact with outstanding teachers and scholars, as well as with other students from all parts of the United States and the world. They enjoy excellent, modern facilities including extensive research laboratories, specialized equipment for professional preparation, and up-to-date classrooms.

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

Yes
 No

If yes, give the date of the last full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit: November 14-16, 2016

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1974-1975

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

The Department of Mass Communications at SIUE is committed to free expression and providing students with opportunities to meaningfully engage with the world around them through liberal arts education and professional skills development. We foster creative, critical, and independent thinking. We teach our students to tell compelling stories about people and communities that are fair, truthful, and accurate. We encourage students to be self-directed and entrepreneurial in an evolving media landscape. Students learn diverse perspectives, ethical practices, and a respect for democratic principles that guide media industries. Adopted on April 8th, 2016

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 16 weeks

Number of weeks in a quarter: Non-applicable

Number of weeks in summer sessions: Summer session: 5-9 weeks

Number of weeks in intersessions: 3 weeks

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

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

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

Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications

Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications

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

Candidates for the degree must complete a minimum of 120 hours of credit in approved courses. Students transferring from an accredited two-year institution must earn at SIUE, or at any other accredited four-year institution, at least 60 of the semester hours required for the degree. All candidates for the degree must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours in residence at SIUE.

<https://www.siu.edu/academics/undergraduate/policies/academic-policies.shtml?section=graduation>

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

3 credit hours of the internship course MC481 (Internship/Senior Portfolio) are credited for fulfilling requirements of the major

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Advertising and strategic media	Jason Yu
Journalism	Mark Poepsel
Media production	Shi Li

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

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Enrollment	10400	9942	9967	9321

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

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	193	172	169	158
<i>no specialization</i>	44	8	3	2
<i>Advertising and Strategic Media</i>	63	52	57	54
<i>Journalism</i>	23	34	30	27
<i>Media Production</i>	63	78	79	75

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 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.)

Term: Fall 2023

Title	Enrollment
MC 202, Section 001 - Writing for the Media	19
MC 202, Section 002 - Writing for the Media	20
MC 202, Section 003 - Writing for the Media	20
MC 202, Section 004 - Writing for the Media	17
MC 204, Section 001 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	20
MC 204, Section 002 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	20
MC 204, Section 003 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	2
MC301, Section 001 - Advanced Audio Production	14
MC323, Section 001 - Digital Publishing & Design	19
MC324, Section 001 - Advanced News Reporting	15
MC327, Section 002 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media	19
MC327, Section 002 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media	19
MC330, Section 001 -Advanced Broadcast Writing	18
MC331, Section 001 -Electronic Media Performance	18
MC332, Section 001 -Advanced News Production	11
MC333, Section 001 -Advanced Video Production	11
MC433, Section 001 -Advanced Video Directing and Producing	3

Term: Spring 2023

Title	Enrollment
MC 202, Section 001 - Writing for the Media	15
MC 202, Section 001 - Writing for the Media	14
MC 202, Section 001 - Writing for the Media	15
MC 202, Section 001 - Writing for the Media	10
MC 204, Section 001 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	13
MC 204, Section 001 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	16
MC 204, Section 002 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production	13
MC322, Section 001 - Copy Editing for The Media	16
MC323, Section 001 - Digital Publishing & Design	15
MC327, Section 001 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media	16
MC327, Section 001 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media	12
MC327, Section 001 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media	15

MC330, Section 001 - Advanced Broadcast Writing	16
MC330, Section 002 - Advanced Broadcast Writing	15
MC333, Section 001 - Advanced Video Production	16
MC433, Section 001 - Advanced Video Directing & Producing	6
MC443, Section 001 - Narrative Media Production	15
MC447, Section 001 – Photojournalism and Storytelling	12

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2023–2024 academic year:

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

Fiscal Year	Actual Dept. Expense
18	1038061.8
19	1051602.6
20	1110661
21	1134482.5
22	1189767.1

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

Professors	First Name	Last Name	Comments
	Suman	Mishra	
	Musonda	Kapatamoyo	
	Jason	Yu	
	Gary	Hicks	Sabbatical in Spring 24
	Elza	Ibroscheva	Associate Provost
Associate Professors	Undrah	Baasanjav	
	Shi	Li	
	Mark	Poepsel	
	Ashton	Speno	
Assistant Professors	Alex	Leith	
Instructors	Tom	Atwood	
	Cory	Byers	
Non-Full Time Instructor	Tammy	Merrett	

18. 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. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2024, also provide the spring 2024 adjunct list in the updated information.)

Part-Time Faculty	First Name	Last Name
	Rachel	Reynolds-Valdez
	Robert	Kelly
	Gary	Dotson
	William	Tucker
	Josh (Daniel)	Bovinette

**Same adjuncts will teach in Spring 2024*

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

	2021	2022	2023
Total Graduates	57	62	51
<i>no specialization</i>	29	11	1
<i>Advertising and Strategic Media</i>	13	20	20
<i>Journalism</i>	4	8	9
<i>Media Production</i>	11	23	21

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is one of two campuses in the Southern Illinois University System. The other is the flagship campus in Carbondale, about 100 miles southeast, that has a School of Medicine in Springfield. Although it started as a commuter college, today Edwardsville is a residential university that has a School of Dental Medicine in Alton and a center in East St. Louis. The enrollment grew to more than 14,000 students by 2018, but since then there has been a steady decline to the current number of 12,519.

The Department started in 1968 with a broadcasting program. A print journalism program was added in 1970. The Television-Radio program was first accredited in 1975 and the Print Journalism program followed five years later. The programs were denied accreditation in 1988 but regained it in 2004 as Mass Communications after extensive changes to curriculum, facilities and personnel.

SIU Edwardsville is composed of one college, six professional schools and a graduate school. The Department is one of 21 units in the College of Arts and Sciences. The degree has three emphases: Advertising and Strategic Media, Journalism and Media Production. The Public Relations emphasis is in the Department of Applied Communication Studies, which is not seeking accreditation. The Department also has a Master's program that is not under review.

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 Department's mission statement is found on its "About" page and its strategic plan:

The Department of Mass Communications at SIUE is committed to free expression and providing students with opportunities to meaningfully engage with the world around them through liberal arts education and professional skills development. We foster creative, critical and independent thinking. We teach our students to tell compelling stories about people and communities that are fair, truthful, and accurate. We encourage students to be self-directed and entrepreneurial in an evolving media landscape. Students learn diverse perspectives, ethical practices, and a respect for democratic principles that guide media industries. (Adopted on April 8th, 2016)

Strategic plans for the last three years can be found on the "ACEJMC Accreditation" page, along with its diversity plan and graduation and retention information. The plans are developed during the first department meeting of the year and identify where the Department will focus its efforts, including assignments given to specific faculty.

The plans address immediate needs and expected outcomes for each year. The 2022-2023 plan has five goals: curriculum development, recruitment and retention, facilities, accreditation, and faculty development. Specific tactics and outcomes are provided to help the department meet the goals for the current year. Since the Department does not have much of a budget beyond basic supplies and services, annual funding priorities for these objectives are not listed. The Department reports progress on strategic objectives in the annual report to the dean.

(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.

The Department chair is selected from among the Department's faculty for a three-year term, which is renewable. The chair is evaluated each year by faculty and the dean. The current chair is in his final year of his second term and the faculty will be discussing candidates for the new chair at the next department meeting.

The current chair is described by faculty and the dean as someone who is a strong advocate for the Department who has been successful in finding resources for several critical needs. Recent renovations to several rooms, the purchase of new cameras, and support for student activities are recent achievements. The faculty also remark on his ability to bring a collaborative and innovative climate that respects everyone's contribution to the program. The dean gave him high marks on helping the Department to be the college leader in several areas, such as diversity, alumni relations, retention and graduation rates. His affability and strong personal relations with key stakeholders on and off campus are seen as particular strengths. The easy-going nature of the chair is appreciated by faculty, and it has helped build relationships within and outside the university, but there were concerns that some areas could use more clarification, detail and formality.

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

The Department has updated its profile on the site.

(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.

This data is posted on the "ACEJMC Accreditation" section of the Department's website. Enrollment and graduation numbers are provided for the last 20 years, but retention and graduation rates are not provided. When these were requested during the site visit, the Associate Provost, who is a former chair and faculty member of the Department, provided numbers that are very favorable to the unit's retention (average of 90% over the last five years) and graduation efforts (six-year graduation rates over 70% over the last five years). The Department would benefit from publishing these rates on its website.

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

The Department has standing committees on tenure and promotion, annual merit, and curriculum and an executive committee to advise the chair. Through these committees—and others that organize and execute important functions throughout the year, such as Mass Communication Week and the Hearst Awards submissions—the faculty members have significant governance over the operations of the Department. Recommendations from these committees are forwarded to college-level committees, on which several of the Department's faculty serve. The Department holds a meeting with all faculty on the second Friday of each month, where faculty report that faculty opinions and participation in the unit's affairs takes place. Although the tenure-track faculty unionized since the last visit, faculty members did not comment much on the role of the union in achieving their strong sense of self-governance. It appears to be part of the academic culture of the Department.

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

Department Chairs serve a standard 3-year term, which is typically limited to two consecutive terms. Additional consecutive terms may be served, but this requires a recommendation from the majority of the Department Faculty and approval from the Dean. The chair is selected by the departmental faculty, typically from among the tenured faculty, and the candidate's name is submitted to the dean for approval. The dean performs an annual evaluation of the chair that includes solicited feedback from the Department's faculty.

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

The Department follows the grievance procedures outlined in the university's faculty and student handbooks. Faculty and staff are encouraged to bring their concerns to the chair to be resolved. If they are not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the faculty and staff members may initiate the formal grievance outlined in the handbook and that requires a formal grievance statement to the provost's office and a review by the university's grievance committee.

Students follow a similar process, with initiating the concern with the faculty member, then appealing to the chair. If not resolved, the students appeal to the Assistant to the Dean for Student Issues. Students can also follow a grievance procedure outlined in the student handbook that allows for a review by a grievance committee. All student concerns were resolved at the faculty or department level over the last six years.

SUMMARY:

The Department is esteemed by the college, university and several other units on campus as a leader in diversity, alumni engagement, fundraising and engaged learning in part due to the leadership and advocacy of its chair. The chair has helped the Department navigate several challenging situations over the last few years, including program restructuring and dealing with COVID. His leadership style has contributed to a collegial and inclusive culture, however attention to detail was cited as an area for improvement. The strategic plan is measurable and addresses annual needs, but there is little control over resources needed to meet its objectives.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(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.

SIUE students must complete a minimum of 120 credit hours, at least 30 of which must be completed at SIUE, and at least 60 of which must be completed at a regionally accredited 4-year institution. For students in the Department of Mass Communications, the 120 credit hours includes 42 hours in the major and a minimum of 72 hours in courses outside the Department. Students must meet SIUE's general education requirements and complete a minor (18-21 hours) outside the Department. During this accreditation cycle, the Department had one course approved for a general education requirement. However, the course is no longer being offered due to budgetary constraints and a need to cover requirements in the Department.

(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.

In AY 2018-2019, the Department introduced curriculum changes to reflect industry standards and address concerns during the last accreditation review. The Department collapsed the following four specializations (Corporate and Institutional Media, Journalism, Print and Electronic media, Radio and Television) into three specializations (advertising and strategic media, journalism, media production) and updated course titles and descriptions to reflect these changes. Additionally, learning outcomes in the courses were updated to reflect ACEJMC values and competencies. Upon review, about 75% of syllabi provided to the committee listed the ACEJMC values and competencies. Very few syllabi incorporated the values and competencies into the learning outcomes on the syllabi.

According to the self-study, in AY 2022, the Department started another curriculum review to better align offerings with ACEJMC. However, the only curricular change approved according to faculty meeting minutes (Feb. 2022) was to move MC327 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media from the required core to an elective option for media production students. While not in the self-study, the assessment report states that writing and podcasting have been incorporated into MC327 in response to the assessment data. However, students indicated the course is on coding and website design with very little writing required. The syllabus for spring 2024 lists three writing assignments.

According to the faculty, syllabi file and strategic plan, new courses, including data visualization for storytelling, social media analytics and women in mass communication have been developed and are being offered as graduate courses however they are not cross listed for undergraduates. Faculty noted there isn't much room in the curriculum to develop new courses, so the focus must be on continually updating current courses to address changing technology and expectations. Faculty confirmed they go through the assessment report each spring to discuss changes they need to make in the curriculum. However, notes were not consistently available for these meetings to indicate what changes were proposed and approved.

The Department offers a range of theoretical, conceptual and skills courses as part of the Department Core. The required introductory and advanced core courses for all majors melding theory, concepts and skills include:

Introductory Core Requirements (9 hours)

- MC 201 - Mass Media in Society
- MC 202 - Writing for the Media
- MC 204 - Introduction to Audio and Video Production

Advanced Core Requirements (15 hours)

- MC327 - Writing and Designing for Digital Media
- MC401 - Media Law & Policy
- MC403 - Cultural Studies in Media
- MC455 - Media Ethics
- MC481 - Internship/Senior Portfolio

All students must also complete 15 hours in an area of professional specialization, including two required “anchor” courses and three elective courses from a pre-approved list. Students complete an additional three credits in an open elective course within the Department. According to the self-study, students achieve the ACEJMC competencies through the core, with each specialization providing additional emphasis.

Advertising and Strategic Media: Advertising and strategic media is listed as a single professional specialization, but there are two tracks within the specialization which require different anchor courses.

Advertising Anchor Courses

- MC325 - Fundamentals of Advertising
- MC389 - Media Planning

Strategic Media Anchor Courses

- MC402 - Media Management
- MC422 - Strategic Media Writing

Students then choose three electives from the list of specialization electives, in consultation with their adviser.

Specialization Electives

- MC321 - Feature Writing
- MC323 - Digital Publishing & Design
- MC326 - Advertising Copyediting & Design
- MC334 - Commercial Production
- MC342 - Digital Imagery
- MC421 - Advertising Campaigns
- MC440 - Visual Media Analysis
- MC441 - Advanced Writing and Designing for Digital Media
- MC449 - Media Psychology
- MC451 - Research Methods in Mass Media

The specialization is designed to give students flexibility and allow them to “choose their own adventure” and focus in the area of advertising and strategic media that most interests them. However, this means students are not required to take a balance of theory, concept and skills courses beyond the core and anchor courses. Particularly concerning is that students who choose the advertising track can graduate without taking a writing course beyond the core.

Journalism: Journalism has the smallest enrollment of the three areas of specialization in the curriculum, but based on the syllabi, courses appear to be demanding and connected to the needs of today’s industry. As with the other emphases, the unit requires two anchor courses and a choice of three specialization electives.

Journalism Anchor Courses

- MC322 - Copy Editing for The Media
- MC324 - Advanced News Reporting

Specialization Electives

- MC321 - Feature Writing
- MC323 - Digital Publishing & Design
- MC330 - Advanced Broadcast Writing
- MC332 - Advanced News Production
- MC341 - Sports Journalism
- MC342 - Digital Imagery
- MC424 - Literary Journalism
- MC447 - Photojournalism and Storytelling

The two anchor courses are taught by an adjunct and a part-time instructor. The anchor courses contain a balance of theory and skills, based on the syllabi. The syllabus for Advanced News Reporting includes ACEJMC’s Values and Competencies but doesn’t indicate how course objectives match them. The Copy Editing for the Media course contains no mention of the Values & Competencies, nor does it spell out course objectives.

Journalism students do not have a required course beyond the general education statistics requirement to meet the standard for effectively and correctly applying basic numerical and statistical concepts.

Media Production: Media Production is the largest emphasis and seems to be the strongest identity of the Department. Most of the skills electives are media production oriented. The Media Production Anchor courses provide a balance of theory and practice, while the electives are almost entirely skills and production oriented. Students choose three electives from the specialization and have a free elective they can take that could be either theory or skill. The courses in the emphasis include the following:

Media Production Anchor Courses

- MC330 - Advanced Broadcast Writing
- MC402 - Media Management

Specialization Electives

- MC301 - Advanced Audio Production
- MC331 - Electronic Media Performance
- MC333 - Advanced Video Production

- MC334 - Commercial Production
- MC423 - A, B Advanced Topics in Writing for the Media
- MC431 - Freelance Media Production
- MC433 - Advanced Video Directing and Producing
- MC435 – Media Postproduction
- MC440 - Visual Media Analysis
- MC441 - Advanced Writing and Designing for Digital Media
- MC443 - Narrative Media Production
- MC454 - Documentary Media Production

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

The foundation of the Department and each specialization incorporates aspects of social media, web design/development/publishing, and the use of photos/video. According to the self-study, in many cases, expectations are placed on the students to use their own smartphones to gather information and to create content. However, recent investments in field cameras have increased student access to equipment.

All students have access to the Adobe Creative Cloud applications to manipulate, edit and prepare professional looking and sounding content. Students indicated that the editing lab computers are outdated and crash when they are editing large files, which hinders their ability to produce quality products on deadline.

Advertising and Strategic Media: The advertising and strategic media specialization is predominantly a commercial media production emphasis with foundational courses in advertising/media planning or media management and strategic writing. Because students have flexibility in the electives they choose, they can complete the specialization with different skills than their classmates. According to the internship coordinator, this lack of consistency in the preparation of students graduating with the advertising and strategic media specialization has not been detrimental to student success in internships. Students in the specialization have had little difficulty finding internships or job opportunities and reviews from internship supervisors have been positive.

Journalism: About half of the electives in this specialization focus on writing, photography and design for digital media. The rest of the electives concentrate on writing, including nonfiction, feature writing and writing for broadcast. All of the electives have photo and/or video requirements, according to the syllabi.

Media Production: The hallmark of the curriculum's pedagogy is the emphasis on hands-on learning and engaged learning. This is very evident in the Media Production emphasis, where students regularly work on audio, video and multimedia projects. According to the self-study, students are learning basic HTML5 and CSS standards in MC 327 (Writing and Designing for Digital Media). Media Production students, who in the future will not be required to take MC327 will be expected to work on Web-ready video and audio projects.

Access to professional-grade media production cameras and editing software help the students be prepared for their first job. Students are successfully being placed in markets close to the university, including radio and TV stations in St. Louis. The need for better equipment in the

studio control room needs to be addressed to give students an experience closer to what they will find in professional spaces. There is no capability for live-streaming or broadcasting video content from inside the studio. This is documented more in Standard 7: Resources.

(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.

Faculty attend and participate in regional and national professional conferences and workshops, including Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, International Communication Association and Global Fusion. The Department's alumni board also meets with the faculty periodically. The Internship Coordinator communicates regularly with internship supervisors who relay their hiring needs. External constituents praised the Department for their engagement in the industry. The Dean indicated that the Department is a model for other units for how to engage with alumni and industry partners.

(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.

Student-faculty classroom ratios for skills classes, as presented in the self-study, do not exceed 20-1. In the last year, most skills classes averaged 15-1. Even seminar courses, such as media ethics, are capped at 25 students. Per the dean, the Department has held fast to these course caps, requiring some students to delay graduation to the summer.

(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).

Three hours of internship are required as part of the advanced core for all students in the Department. Students are required to work at least 175 hours at the internship site, submit a professional portfolio and assessment letter.

The Internship Coordinator said internships for journalism and advertising and strategic media have been plentiful while media production internships have been more difficult to identify. The addition of a new broadcast engineer hired from industry has been instrumental in helping to place students in internships within the St. Louis radio and television market.

Internship assessment letters are predominantly positive. Students indicate they felt well-prepared for their internship experiences and were able to apply what they learned and expand their portfolio through the experience.

SUMMARY:

The Department renamed and restructured the professional specializations since the last accreditation review. Faculty review the assessment report each spring to determine if changes are needed in the

curriculum. With limited faculty resources, adding new courses to respond to industry trends is challenging.

The Department identifies how it meets the ACEJMC competencies through the core and general education requirements (statistics). Because students have the flexibility to build their program of study primarily through electives, a student could graduate with a specialization in advertising without taking an advanced writing course or in journalism without taking an advanced core that applies basic numerical and statistical concepts.

Each professional specialization boasts an impressive list of electives available to students. Faculty and administrators indicated that as enrollment has declined in the last several years, elective courses have been canceled in favor of more viable required courses. Students commented that it's sometimes difficult to get into required courses and prerequisites due to course caps and limited sections.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit devoted additional energy and focus toward the assessment process in the wake of its last ACEJMC site visit in 2016. The Department enhanced its Assessment Plan to better assess students' learning outcomes. In 2017, the four professional sequences of the Mass Communications program were restructured into three concentrations — Journalism, Media Production, and Advertising & Strategic Media.

The self-study explains how the Assessment Plan provides an outline of how and when the Department assesses student learning outcomes, echoing the standards of ACEJMC, and how the assessment data are used to improve student learning by modifying curricula, service and programmatic elements.

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

The assessment plan was readily available on the unit's website, and easy to download and view. It can be found [here](#).

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

In Spring 2017, the Department adapted the ACEJMC values and competencies into the Department's goals for learning. These learning objectives built the basis for its subsequent assessments “that ensure that the graduates acquire the knowledge and skills critical to their career success, life-long learning and growth,” according to the self-study. A review of course syllabi found that about 75% of them included the values and competencies, but often at the end of the syllabus rather than as a way to indicate how the course was meeting these outcomes.

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

A review of the Assessment Plan and interviews with those tasked with leading it, reveals a 7-part plan that is a mixture of direct and indirect measures, a process faculty, students, alumni and local professionals say has been instrumental in student preparation. Industry professionals interviewed said the students and graduates are ready to “jump right in” on assignments and handle the tasks they are given.

The components of the plan:

1. Freshman-Senior Entry-Exit Exams (Direct Measure). The data are collected every semester. A cohort analysis of the data for the four years between the entry exam and the exit exam is conducted annually. The exams measure student knowledge in the values and competencies and a few other specialized areas.
2. Senior portfolio evaluation (Direct Measure): Every graduating student creates a senior portfolio of their work that demonstrates what they have learned in the program. A student must get an

overall minimum score of 70 on the portfolio to pass. The portfolio includes a resume and short reflections on their incorporated work. Portfolios are evaluated by at least two external reviewers.

3. Internship evaluation (Direct Measure): Every student is required to secure an internship and Internship evaluations are analyzed annually. The Department uses the evaluations on an aggregate basis to monitor the level of student preparedness and performance in professional work settings. The aggregate analysis can reveal strengths and weaknesses related to curriculum and instruction.
4. Senior educational experience exit survey (Indirect Measure). The Department evaluates the quality of students' educational experience through a series of self-reported measures. The exit survey data — or senior assessment letters — are collected every semester. The survey data and the assessment letters are shared with the entire Department faculty every year, so each faculty member reflects on the senior feedback on his/her teaching.
5. Student awards (Indirect Measure). Student success can be an external indicator of the quality of the educational experience, whether originating in classes or through student media. The Department compiles student awards, ranging from research presentations in the university's Student Undergraduate Research Forum to national competitions such as the Hearst Journalism Awards and Broadcast Education Association competitions. The compilation, comparison, and analysis of student success over time can offer insight into the effectiveness of the instruction and experiences provided to students.
6. Alumni survey (Indirect Measure). Alumni have the ability to assess their educational experiences with the benefit of perspective. The regular compilation, comparison and analysis of alumni responses can show patterns over time of alumni judgment about curriculum, instruction and student learning and patterns of the short-term and long-term usefulness or relevance of what they learned. Alumni survey data are collected by the SIUE Foundation and University Advancement.
7. Advisory Board (Indirect Measure). The faculty meet with the Advisory Board to get their input on curriculum once a year or as often as suggested by the Board. Most board members also speak to classes or visit during Mass Communications week, further providing an opportunity to give feedback.

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

Journalism and mass communications professionals are directly involved in senior portfolio evaluation. Before Spring 2020, senior portfolios were evaluated by professionals and a committee of the Department's faculty. Starting from Summer 2020, all portfolios are judged by professionals only via Qualtrics.

(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.

In the last monthly faculty meeting of the academic year, assessment data are reported to the entire faculty followed by faculty discussion and decision making regarding what needs to be changed or improved going forward in the curriculum and student learning. These discussions continue throughout the year to implement data-driven decisions. The assessment plan has been used as a catalyst for change and updating the curriculum, improving the student experience and hiring, including for diversity and

inclusion, over the course of the review period, according to the self-study and interviews with faculty and students. The assessment plan has been credited with inspiring a number of changes or improvements to the program, including:

- Curriculum revisions: MC327 (Writing and Designing for Digital Media) was dropped as a required course following multiple requests from students in their assessment reports. This has made room in the curriculum for other production electives that have digital and online production components. And the following courses were made requirements: MC401 (Media Law & Policy), MC403 (Cultural Studies), MC455 (Media Ethics) and MC481 (Internship/Senior Portfolio). The approval process to change the requirements for the Media Production sequence is under review.
- Advanced writing: Writing and podcasting is incorporated into MC327 (Writing and Designing for Digital Media).
- Integrate theory and skills: In the Journalism sequence, MC324 (Advanced News Reporting) and MC322 (Copy Editing) now integrate theory and skills. In the Advertising focus, MC325 (Fundamentals of Advertising) and MC389 (Media Planning) now combine skills and theory. And in the Strategic Media focus, courses have evolved to include project management, marketing and production elements.
- The Department moved to Adobe CC production software and away from AVID due to student and internship provider feedback of what was current in the professional workplace.

SUMMARY:

The Department has taken what was a weakness in the last site visit to become a strength with a solid assessment plan that gathers direct and indirect data, reports the data to the faculty, evaluates learning experiences and makes changes to the curriculum and co-curricular activities.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit has a diversity plan and diversity statement that meet the requirements and are connected to those of SIUE and the College of Arts and Sciences. The unit's diversity plan is structured into four parts: Diverse Student Body, Diverse Faculty, Diverse Curriculum and Supportive Climate. Each part includes actions or steps designed to achieve the stated objectives.

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

The diversity plan is easily accessible on the unit's website. It can be found [here](#).

(b) The unit's curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit's curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.

The syllabi include the diversity statement, and the students and professors report that there is a culture of inclusivity and diversity where they feel valued and supported. The unit draws students from across a very diverse region, including the St. Louis and Chicago metropolitan areas. The faculty's composition is highly diverse from an international perspective.

(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.

Though the unit is diverse, the number of African American faculty does not align with the ratio of students. African American students make up 18.9 percent of the unit's enrollment, while there is only one African American faculty member, representing 8.3 percent of the faculty. The unit's efforts at increased diversity may be hampered by a lack of hiring since 2019. The faculty has strong international representation, with nearly 60% of the faculty from international origins. Females make up 40% of the faculty.

(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit, retain and graduate a student population reflecting the diversity of the population the institution aims to serve.

The unit does not have a budget for recruitment, however, the cost of attendance at the institution and its proximity to a diverse population has enabled the unit to develop a diverse student body. The graduation and retention records are strong, and students report that they feel embraced by a culture of support, which helps promote their persistence. Cultural communications proficiency is a focus of many classes across the Department. It takes a cultural media literacy approach in its entry class MC 201 (Mass Media in Society), considering cultural issues across the media economy, media industries, and media impacts on society. The elective course MC351 (Women in Media), which is cross listed with WMST 351 (Women in Mass Communication) explores women’s relationship to media with a focus on history and intersectionality. Professors bring in diverse women from various media backgrounds to guest speak about topics ranging from workplace issues to juggling motherhood and work. The required course MC 403 (Cultural Studies in Media) is dedicated to sharpening cultural communications proficiency, engaging in issues of media’s role in a democratic society, media and representation (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class) and media and consumer culture. Students learn to critically analyze ethical and diversity issues facing media consumers/practitioners. In 2019, an anonymous student’s letter provided constructive feedback in the assessment letters concerning the students’ gender relations during mass communication production processes. The Department discussed the issue in a couple of meetings. In consultation with the Title IX Coordinator, the Department made a deliberate effort to hire a female broadcast engineer for the first time. The top three candidates for the position were females in the search process, and the position was offered to a woman, who accepted the offer. She has become an integral part of the production courses by advising students, helping them find internships, and placing them after graduation in competitive media companies in the St. Louis metro area.

Table 4. Area Population

Population	Percentages
Black/African American	14
White (not of Hispanic origin)	79
Asian	1
Indian and Alaskan Native	0
Hispanic, Latino (any race)	3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
Two or More Races	2

Undergraduate Student Population as of Fall 2021*

	Male	Female	% of total in unit	% of total in institution
Black	20	12	18.9	13.8
Hispanic	4	2	3.6	6.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	0	1.2	2.4
American Indian or Alaskan native	0	0	0.0	0.2
White	65	48	66.9	68.6
2 or More Races	4	6	5.9	4.0
Non-Resident Alien	2	3	3.0	2.6
Unknown	0	1	0.6	2.1

(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.

In addition to the diversity statement, the syllabi include a statement about the Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support Center (ACCESS) on campus. Faculty and instructors discuss ACCESS on the first day of class, communicating its commitment to working with ACCESS to ensure that all students get the assistance they need. They encourage students to register their needs with ACCESS throughout the semester. In 2020, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) named SIUE a host location for a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center. The Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion leads the anti-racist task force. One of the center’s immediate actions is a new reporting system for any Bias Incidents Reporting (BIRT) on campus.

We confirmed that the unit’s Promotion & Tenure committee annually reviews course syllabi and ensures that each syllabus includes the university’s statement of diversity and inclusiveness, as stated in the self-study. Interviews revealed that faculty members are encouraged to attend workshops and conferences where fresh ideas of how diversity can be further integrated into the curriculum are presented and discussed, as reported. These training, workshops, Diversity, Equity & Inclusive (DE&I) services, and course development are evaluated in annual faculty review processes. Several faculty members’ research and teaching pursuits are rooted in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion issues.

Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the laws of the countries in which non-U.S. institutions are located.

Table 6. 2022-2023 Full-time Faculty Populations

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female	% of Unit	% of SIUE
Black	1	0	8.3%	6.6%
White	4	1	41.7%	73.4%
Asian	1	3	33.3%	11.2%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0.0%	0.1%
Hispanic	1	0	8.3%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0%	0.5%
Two or More Races	0	1	8.3%	1.2%

Table 6. Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Part-Time/Adjunct faculty

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female	% of Unit	% of SIUE
Black	0	0	0%	8.3%
White	4	1	100%	84.2%
Asian	0	0	0%	3.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0%	1.7%
Hispanic	0	0	0%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0%	0.8%
Two or More Races	0	0	0%	0.8%

SUMMARY:

The student body of the Department reflects the ethnic diversity that one would expect to find in a region located on the outskirts of a major metropolitan area like St. Louis, and at a university that is considered the most affordable in the Illinois state system. In fact, the unit’s student body actually overperformed the region in terms of African American undergraduates for the study period. That same level of domestic diversity is not present among the faculty, although there is quite a bit of international diversity among the group. It should be noted that, due to budget constraints, the unit has not had a full-time hire since prior to the pandemic. That clearly makes it impossible to further diversify the faculty.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Curriculum and instructional policies are made through a faculty-determined process that begins with a departmental decision. The Department also has a curriculum-monitoring committee tasked with studying proposed curriculum changes, making recommendations and exploring and presenting long-term ideas for moving curriculum forward. The committee is also responsible for monitoring students' input to propose changes to the faculty. Faculty indicated an understanding of research/creative activity and service expectations and their ability to modify those expectations through faculty governance.

(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.

Full-time faculty have an average of 4.5 years of industry experience and 13.5 years of teaching experience. All tenured and tenure-track faculty have a Ph.D. and instructors have an M.A. Part-time faculty have an average of 30 years of industry experience, with some still working full-time in industry. Faculty are engaged in scholarly and professional associations and have participated in multiple professional development opportunities, mostly on teaching and technology, but also on industry evolution. Students consistently praised faculty and engineering staff industry experience.

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

SIUE follows the teacher-scholar model. Faculty members in the Department are expected to demonstrate mastery in teaching, presentation and publication of scholarly or creative work, and provide a commitment to service to the university, community and profession to remain as a faculty member and to earn tenure and promotion.

Tenured or tenure-track faculty are on a 3-3 teaching load with apportionment allocated at 60 percent teaching, 20 percent scholarship or creative activities and 20 percent service. Full-time instructors have a teaching load of 4-4 per semester. The workload is typically 80 percent teaching with 20 percent service and/or creative activities.

Most faculty feel their research and creative activity is supported and rewarded. While there is limited funding available for travel, faculty can request funds from the graduate school to travel to one conference a year. The dean's office has been able to provide some additional funding for international travel. Faculty have taken advantage of the faculty development policy to advance their research and creative activity. These sabbaticals were encouraged and supported.

Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear and tenure track faculty felt well prepared when going up for promotion to associate professor. The workshops offered by the associate dean of the college have been helpful, and multiple faculty referenced the strong mentorship program in the Department. Faculty felt they could call on their mentor and receive timely and helpful feedback when needed.

Faculty who went through the promotion process from associate to full professor did not feel as well supported as the assistant professors. Some faculty indicated that the management of the actual promotion process lacked direction and communication.

(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.

While travel funding is limited, faculty do present their research and/or creative activity at regional, national and international conferences and competitions. There is some effort to promote research and creative productivity in the Department as well, but the bulletin board is not regularly updated.

Publication quality and quantity varies widely across the Department. The two most recent hires (in 2017 and 2019) have brought new energy and excitement around research and scholarship. Most faculty have continued to produce quality work post-promotion.

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

Feedback from external constituents is overwhelmingly positive. Several faculty have spent their entire academic career in the Department and at SIUE. They are well-known across campus and serve on college and university committees. They are engaged in the community and, according to the dean, are a model Department for how to engage with alumni. Alumni are proud of their alma mater and employers love hiring students from the Department because they already know how to use the equipment and they are “work-ready.”

(Please include the scholarship table with this section.) See next page.

SUMMARY:

Despite limited financial support for professional development, faculty feel their research and creative activity is supported and encouraged. They are involved in faculty governance and have a collegial, student-focused and industry-engaged culture. As enrollment has declined, opportunities to teach innovative and advanced courses have been reduced. Rotating teaching responsibilities of required and elective courses will be important for maintaining an engaged faculty, particularly once all tenure-eligible faculty have been promoted.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, research, and creative activities of full-time faculty undertaken between 2016 and 2022 is summarized in the table below.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	TOTAL	Leith	Speno	Baasanjav	Li	Poepsel	Hicks	Kapatamoyo	Mishra	Yu	Atwood	Byers				
	Sub-total	Assistant Professors (2)		Sub-Total Associate Professors (3)			Sub-total Professors (4)				Sub-total	Instructors (2)				
Awards and Honors	109	3	1	2	3		3	9	2		7		3	94		94
Grants Received Internal	13	3	1	2	5	3	1	1	4		1	3		1		1
Grants Received External	8	3	1	2	4	2	1	1	1		1			0		
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	0	0			0				0					0		
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	1	0			1		1	0						0		
Books Edited	1	0			0			1			1			0		
Book Chapters	11	1		1	5	1	1	3	5	2	1	2		0		
Monographs	0	0			0				0					0		
Articles in Refereed Journals	29	10	4	6	9	4	2	3	10	1	1	7	1	0		
Refereed Conference Papers	76	22	11	11	22	10	5	7	32	1	12	14	5	0		
Invited Academic Papers	0	0			0				0					0		
Encyclopedia Entries	7	1	1		1		1	5	3		2			0		
Book Reviews	0	0			0			0						0		
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	0	0			0			0						0		
Juried Creative Works	24	0			0			0						24		24
Non-juried Creative Works	92	0			0			0						92	5	87
Other (please specify)	15	2		2 (white paper, workshop booklet)	6	4 (conference proceedings)	2 (book translations)	2 (conference proceeding)	5		1 (conference proceeding)	3 (white paper, professional blogs)	1 (conference proceeding)			

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Perhaps the best way to describe how well the Department of Mass Communications supports students is to quote the chair of the Department of Applied Communications, who praised the unit as “student-centered.” The director of the advising office for the College of Arts and Sciences echoed that appraisal by noting “the faculty have a good rapport with the students and have a level of expectation which prepares them for positions after graduation.”

The Mass Communications Department supports students through an early alert and tracking tool that connects faculty, advisers and students to aid in course selection and timely completion of studies. The unit complements this service with informal faculty advising, career fairs, seminars and other resources. Faculty connections to the professional community in the region also help students find internship and employment opportunities.

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

The advising office for the College of Arts and Sciences currently assigns two degree advisers to the Department, and a third is in training. Students meet with advising office staff before declaring Mass Communications as their major. The advisers assigned to the unit, with faculty consultation, help guide declared majors in selecting their preferred track — Advertising and Strategic Media, Journalism or Media Production.

Students noted that understaffing in the college’s advising office has been a big issue in recent semesters. One student noted she was behind a semester because her adviser had changed each semester for two years. The head of the advising office acknowledged that sudden turnover after the pandemic in 2021 reduced his professional staff from eight to four. The office is just now getting back to full staff, he said.

Most students, however, expressed satisfaction with the professional advisers with whom they worked. One student said “their knowledge of the classes” helped guide her to the courses she needed when she needed them. A transfer student from India said her adviser helped smooth the transition before she arrived on campus.

Faculty maintain regular office hours and welcome students’ inquiries and consultation, and students praised professors and instructors for their willingness to help. “Professors go out of their way to help and let you know about internships or jobs,” one student said.

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

The unit routinely provides students with information about departmental activities, policies and requirements during a semester via a listserv, newsletter, its website and social media. Individual faculty members also let students and other faculty know about new courses, events and other details via emails.

(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 available to Mass Communications students include a student-run newspaper published twice weekly online and in print, a nonprofit public radio station and NPR music affiliate, a student-produced news and entertainment cable TV show called Global Village and a web radio outlet. The Department also hosts a Film Society that screens foreign films and encourages discussion of the diverse cultures and viewpoints seen in the movies. Students also take advantage of opportunities to work in the university's Athletic Communications Department. Students often help other departments with promotional or marketing campaigns.

Faculty members advise the web radio, Global Village television programming, the Film Society as well as The Alestle, the student newspaper.

Students who work for The Alestle as editorial or business staff are paid. On average, about half the staff are Mass Communications students, according to the student publications director, who also teaches in the Department. The public radio station, WSIE-FM, is staffed by student volunteers under a professional general manager. The radio station currently cannot hire students as interns, though the manager says he is working on changing that.

The unit cites its annual Mass Comm Week as its major extra-curricular offering. Held in the spring, Mass Comm Week features alumni and other media professionals as guest speakers and panelists on a variety of current media and journalism topics, usually centered on a specific theme. The 2023 theme focused on artificial intelligence. The week culminates with an alumni event at which honorees are inducted into the Department's hall of fame.

There are no student chapters of Ad Club, SPJ, RTDNA, NABJ, NAHJ or ONA. One African American student said she was disappointed to see there was no NABJ chapter and said she had considered trying to start one. The student publications director said the university's own rules on minimum membership requirements for student organizations can be a hurdle. The cost of membership is also a barrier for many students, she said.

The publications director noted that The Alestle has purchased student memberships in SPJ and organizational memberships in ONA, ACES, CMBAM, IRE, ACP, CMA and the Student Press Law Center. "That has helped tremendously" in giving students access to those organizations, she said. "We have what is basically an affiliate chapter to the St. Louis Pro Chapter of SPJ," she said.

Faculty report the lack of student journalism organizations is primarily because many students, especially first-generation and commuter students, often work full time to pay for their education.

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

Although the unit does not have in-house advisers, it uses responses from a senior exit survey, conducted since 2018, to inform decisions regarding course work and advising processes. The survey, which has a response rate of 100 percent, includes questions about student experience with advising. Faculty members review the survey data to address any identified shortcomings. The self-study cites an example where students identified aspects of the process that were unnecessarily confusing, which directly prompted improvements.

The unit posts graduation data to its website, but the self-study says it doesn't track retention because most Mass Communications students don't declare their major until their second year and because transfer students can declare a major as late as their senior year.

The site team, however, obtained data that shows the unit has had two year-retention rates and graduation rates significantly higher than the university as a whole. The data from the university's Office of Institutional Research and Studies is below:

Year 2 retention rates

Cohort AYR	FTFT	MC
2021	74.1	90.0
2020	78.0	89.5
2019	78.7	90.0
2018	75.3	91.2
2017	73.0	91.1

Year 4 Graduation rates

Cohort AYR	FTFT	MC
2019	37.3	68.3
2018	32.7	78.9
2017	34.5	71.4
2016	29.7	63.8
2015	32.8	67.9

Year 6 Graduation rates

Cohort AYR	FTFT	MC
2017	51.6	73.2
2016	49.1	65.5
2015	51.8	71.7
2014	48.5	71.4
2013	46.9	75.0

The self-study provided a comparison between 2021 and 2022 enrollment and graduation numbers. Enrollment dropped overall, but the Department's enrollment declined only 1.7% compared to the university's 6.5% and the College of Arts and Sciences' 2.6%. The Department's graduates in 2022 increased 8.8% over 2021, outpacing the university's 3.5%.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Mass Communications provides students with a strong support system of professional advisers from the College of Arts and Sciences and collegial, engaged instructors and professors who are committed to students' success. Adequate extra-curricular activities give students hands-on experience, but a lack of student organizations, especially, for students in the advertising and strategic media specializations gives them few structured opportunities for skill application and networking.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The Department prepares a budget annually that takes into consideration primarily personnel needs. Retirements, sabbatical leaves and other factors impacting budgeted lines are factored and recommendations are made to the dean. The Department has been successful in maintaining the number of full-time positions it needs to teach its curriculum and be active in scholarship and service, despite declining enrollment. The Department has 12 full-time faculty and a part-time instructor who is the student newspaper advisor to teach 158 students in the three sequences, however only 10 are currently in the classroom as one of the faculty members is a full-time administrator in the provost's office and another is on sabbatical. Still, this leaves a manageable 16-1 student to faculty ratio.

The Department reported a budget of \$1,189,592, which has increased approximately 5% from FY 2021 to FY 2023. Since nearly 98% of the budget is dedicated to full-time and part-time salaries, the reported increases are due to cost-of-living raises. The remainder of the budget is for supplies, equipment and maintenance and other overhead, leaving very little to address strategic goals. For example, the 2022-2023 plan has the objective of improving facilities and equipment, particularly cameras and the studio control room, but the unit does not control funds to address these needs. Funding requests go to the college and provost's office to address these projects. Additionally, faculty travel is managed outside of the unit; the Graduate School provides travel for research and appears to support most faculty needs, up to \$2,000 per travel request.

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

The Department and College have limited funds as a result of state funding cuts and increased reliance on tuition from declining enrollments. When the new chancellor started at the university, he immediately addressed the structural deficit of the institution and every program has had to tighten up. The Department is considered one of the signature programs in the college and has the support from the dean, who recognizes the current needs. The Department receives more than its fair share of funding support compared to the other units, but the college budget is spread among 21 units, including other resource-intensive programs such as music and art, and there isn't enough to address the Department's needs each year.

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

The Department occupies substantial space on three floors of Katherine Dunham Hall, which it shares with the Theatre and Music departments. The Department office, TV studio, master control room, Media Integration Lab, video editing lab, one classroom and several faculty offices are all found on the first floor. The second floor is home to more faculty offices, three more classrooms, a writing lab and a

conference room. The lower level (basement) of the building houses the audio production labs, a student lounge and WSIE radio station (operated by University Marketing and Communication).

The space provided to the program is sufficient for the number of current faculty and students. Every faculty member has their own office and are provided their choice of a Mac or PC computer that is on a four-year replacement cycle. Classrooms and labs are accessible and meet class scheduling needs.

(d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment, or access to equipment, and technical assistance needed to support student learning, curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty

The large 2,800 square-foot TV studio would be the envy of many programs. It has a professional set that was recently renovated, a second mobile set, digital lighting board with 96 grid lighting dimmers, and three Hitachi studio cameras purchased in 2014 with mounted teleprompters and 12 audio outlets.

The control room is separated by a glass wall and features a Ross Carbonite switcher purchased in 2014, a Chyron Lex two-channel character generator that is on its last legs and occasionally goes out, an AVID AirSpeed server that cannot be serviced because of its age and lapsed AVID software license. The server has a mix of digital and analog components that have been rigged to work with each other, but productions cannot be broadcast or streamed live. Studio productions are saved on the server and students can download the videos to add to their portfolios or share via social media platforms. The new lighting board and a recently purchased Yamaha digital audio mixing board were much needed and appreciated additions, but almost look out of place with the other dated equipment. The Department has a quote and a request for purchasing the needed control room technology, estimated at around \$350,000, but the funding has not been identified.

Cameras were listed as a critical need in the self-study report and had been addressed with a \$100,000 contribution from the provost's office just prior to the site team visit. The funding was used to purchase 10 Cannon XF605 field cameras and three Black Magic G2 studio cameras. Students expressed excitement and gratitude for the new field cameras. However, the studio cameras are not operable until the control room equipment is upgraded.

Students have access to a video editing lab, two audio labs, a Media Integration Lab and a writing lab. The video editing lab has 10 workstations connected to two large ISIS servers. The Dell computers are about four years old and are not capable of editing the 4K video captured on the new cameras. The two audio labs provide six stations with three-year-old Dell computers, microphones and sound mixing boards. The Media Integration Lab is managed by the university ITS department and hosts iMacs that were replaced last summer. The writing lab has 20 Dell computers that are also managed by ITS. Adobe CC, Microsoft Office suite and other support software are available on all of the computers. The writing lab has statistical software, SPSS and SAS, to support student research. The students also have access to Adobe CC software on their own computers.

Students have access to the new Canon HD video cameras, Nikon DSLRs, Marantz digital audio recorders, lavalier mics, tripods, light kits, a steadicam, a drone and four mobile media kits from the equipment checkout room. The equipment is well organized and sufficient to meet curriculum and entrepreneurial needs of students.

The two engineers work occasional miracles to keep the server and other dated equipment in working condition and provide a great deal of assistance to courses and outside student productions. They were often lauded by students and faculty for their expertise, availability and concern for student learning. Broadcast engineers are in short supply and high demand, and having a female engineer working with students has opened up the idea that female students can find a place in the technical side of media production, which has been dominated by males in legacy media.

Another asset for students interested in audio careers is the WSIE public radio station that resides in the building. While the station is not part of the unit, many students volunteer and produce shows and podcasts in its professional grade audio production studios.

SUMMARY:

The Department enjoys a good space for learning, including a large TV studio, multiple labs, and recently purchased cameras for field production. While the needs of the control room impact several areas of learning, including live productions, modern video graphics packages, and other experiences, the faculty and staff have patched together experiences that meet the market demands in media production. Without the recent investment in engineering staff resources to continuously find fixes to chronic equipment failure, the Department would not be able to meet its educational mission. Moving forward, the Department needs a sustainable plan for scheduled replacement of equipment.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Alumni of the Department remain connected to the unit and active. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences said the Department “is probably the best department in the college in working with alumni.” The college annually honors alumni by inducting them into its hall of fame, and every inductee since the awards resumed after the pandemic has been from the Department. Honored this past year were longtime St. Louis Post-Dispatch journalist Terry Ganey and comedian Kathleen Madigan.

In addition to communicating with its alumni via newsletters and social media, the unit brings alumni to campus each spring to its annual Mass Comm Alumni Night, held on the last night of Mass Comm Week. There, the Department holds its own hall-of-fame ceremony.

An active, seven-member Alumni Advisory Board meets at least once a year with faculty to discuss all aspects of the program and consult on ways to keep the curriculum relevant in today’s media environment. The unit’s permanent curriculum-monitoring committee works with the advisory board to follow through on recommendations.

The dean said Mass Communications is one of the few departments in the college with an advisory board. “Mass Comms just does it better,” he said. Members of the current advisory board include professionals from journalism, marketing and communications at all stages of their careers, including two who graduated in the 1970s; one each from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s; and two from the 2010s.

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

Faculty members in the Department are active in professional organizations, including the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, and the Illinois College Press Association.

Faculty also participate in a number of activities in service to the broader mass communications community and to communities in Edwardsville and outside the university. Some recent examples:

- Photography for a magazine and for a law firm’s marketing.
- Election judge for Madison County, Illinois.
- Speech and debate judge and coach for the Illinois High School Association.
- Interviewing job candidates for USAID secondary school teacher training in English, social studies, math and science.
- Regional Emmy Awards judge.
- Programmer, Sundance Film Festival.
- An appearance in a National Geographic documentary.

- Service on conference organizing committees for international groups held in South Africa, Ecuador and Zambia.
- President, Edwardsville Rotary Club.
- Edwardsville Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee member.
- Volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association
- Former president, Illinois College Press Association
- Chair of the College Media Association First Amendment Advocacy Committee.
- Judge of high school, college and professional journalism contests.
- Guest speaker, World Affairs Council of St. Louis.
- Member, Committee to Protect Journalists
- Judge of a high school entrepreneurship competition.
- Representative to the National Education Conference on issues affecting higher education.
- Secretary of the Mass Communication Division, National Communication Association.

Faculty regularly invite alumni and other professionals to speak to their classes or to groups of classes.

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

The unit's biggest service project/event is its annual Mass Comm Week. Each spring, the unit brings professionals representative of its three sequences to campus for a week of lectures, panels, workshops and events focused on a timely theme. A regular event during the week is the First Amendment Free Food Festival, co-sponsored by the student newspaper and the St. Louis Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. The festival offers students free pizza if they agree to give up all free speech rights during their meal and stay within a confined space on the Department's patio. While "confined," the students are treated to spirited discussions about and demonstrations of the importance of the First Amendment and free speech in a democracy.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

Two or three times a year, the director of Student Publications hosts visits from older scouting troops and media students from the East St. Louis Charter High School to meet with staff of The Alestle and learn how a student news organization works. The Student Publications director also has presented at a twice-yearly conference for St. Louis area high school students. In September 2023, the unit chair and one of its broadcast engineers provided hands-on lessons to students of the SIUE Charter High School about the work involved in informing and entertaining the public.

SUMMARY:

The unit's relationship with alumni drew high praise from the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. It has an engaged alumni advisory board. Faculty are involved in professional and community projects. The unit also engages with area high schools to introduce students to the possibilities of studying mass communications at the university.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS

1. A thoughtful, thorough assessment plan.
2. Highly engaged and collegial faculty and students.
3. A global faculty that broadens students' intellectual curiosity about the world beyond their community.
4. Hands-on, industry relevant curriculum and student experiences in journalism and media production.
5. Dedicated engineering staff that enhances experiential learning, student internship/career opportunities and equipment quality.

WEAKNESS

1. Declining student enrollment.
2. The flexible curriculum allows a path for some students to graduate with little writing or data literacy coursework.
3. Lack of a replacement plan to keep technology updated.
4. Lack of student organizations with ties to the industry.
5. Lack of recent hiring has hampered domestic diversity faculty goals.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

The unit was found in noncompliance on assessment by the 2016 site team. Since then, it developed a strong assessment plan that gathers direct and indirect data, reports the data to the faculty, evaluates learning experiences and makes changes to the curriculum and co-curricular activities. The unit has closed the loop.

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

The self-study was easy to read but could have benefited from more proofreading. Important details were omitted or listed differently in different sections of the self-study. The site team had trouble finding some needed information and had to ask for details and required documents more than once.