

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2023-2024

Name of Institution: University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Donde Plowman, Chancellor

Name of Units:

Advertising and Public Relations

Name and Title of Administrator:

Elizabeth Foster, Professor and Director, Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations.

Journalism and Media

Name and Title of Administrator:

Courtney Childers, Professor and Interim Director, School of Journalism and Media

Date of 2023-2024 Accrediting Visit: February 4-7, 2024

Date of the previous accrediting visit: February 12-15, 2017

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation


Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Lucy Dalglish, Professor

Organization/School: Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland

Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: Jessica Pucci, Senior Associate Dean

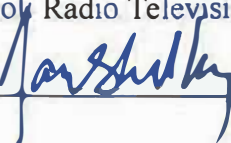
Organization/School: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University

Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: Dan Shelley, President and CEO

Organization/School: Radio Television Digital News Association

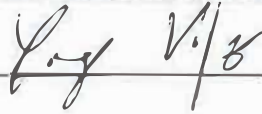
Signature 

Team Member

Name and Title: Yong Volz, Professor

Organization/School: Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri

Signature _____

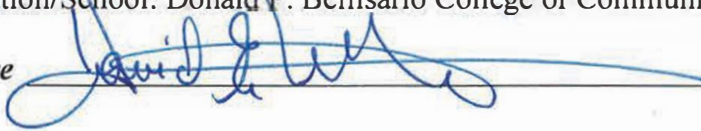
Handwritten signature of Yong Volz in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Team Member

Name and Title: Dave Wozniak, Assistant Professor

Organization/School: Donald P. Bellisario College of Communication, Penn State University

Signature _____

Handwritten signature of Dave Wozniak in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

PART I: General information

Name of Institution: The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Name of Units: School of Journalism and Media; Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Year of Visit: 2023-2024 (February 4-7)

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.

The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862

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: February 12-15, 2017

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1955

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

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations (adopted March 2023)

The College of Communication and Information is a community of scholars and creators devoted to the study of communication and information and their related processes and technologies. This mission is achieved through excellence in research/creative activity, teaching and service. The college shares the values of intellectual pursuit, diversity, international and intercultural awareness, engagement and other core ideals of the University of Tennessee in the land-grant tradition. The Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations applies the college's mission to its programs and does not have its own separate mission statement.

Values

CCI and the Tombras School are committed to diversity and foster a sense of collegiate and social community. The culture of the College of Communication and Information and the Tombras School includes an emphasis on the ethical responsibilities of access to information and the exercise of freedom of expression. CCI and the Tombras School promote new knowledge creation through research and creative activities.

The College and the Tombras School believe in and cultivate the following values:

- Intellectual curiosity and critical thinking
- Leadership
- Global and intercultural engagement
- Freedom of expression, independent media and democracy
- Diversity and inclusion
- Ethics, honesty and integrity
- Innovation and creativity
- Service, community responsibility and engagement
- Integration of theory, practice and knowledge
- Interdisciplinary and relationship building

School of Journalism & Media (adopted February 2018)

The mission of the School of Journalism & Media is to contribute to the evolving world of media and journalism, to instill in students an appreciation of journalistic ethics and professionalism; one that enhances the quality of news reporting and dissemination. Writing, editing, graphic design and production skills, along with critical thinking, ethics, media literacy and research skills are given both interdisciplinary and media-specific emphases. The School is dedicated to continuously ascertaining and serving the needs of its students and of media organizations with print, broadcasting, online and mobile communication platforms.

The School recognizes that teaching is the core of the University's mission of education. In our teaching, we provide majors with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their careers and to become responsible media professionals. This includes both hands-on professional skills as well as a well-rounded academic background. This background features critical thinking skills, information, and expression skills needed for success in life as well as in a career. In an era when careers evolve and change on a regular basis, we provide not only basic skills, but also the knowledge and abilities to adapt to whatever opportunities arise throughout a career.

The School's goal is to hire and retain faculty members who are active in the profession through scholarship, creative activity, and service. In doing so, we not only contribute to society at large and stay active and involved with the field as instructors, but we demonstrate to our students the value of continued learning and inquiry. As our field changes and evolves, we not only recognize and integrate these changes into the curriculum, but also we strive – through leadership and excellence in research, creative activities, and service – to influence and to shape that evolution.

The School is a diverse and inclusive community that affects change by inspiring our students and pursuing scholarship and engagement that makes a difference. We shape socially conscious, ethical leaders who tell stories, solve problems, and serve as the foundation of an informed and responsible media industry in the U.S. and globally.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 15 weeks
Number of weeks in summer sessions: 10 weeks
Number of weeks in intersessions: 5 weeks

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

Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Ph.D. degree (Communication and Information)

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

B.S. Advertising
 B.S. Public Relations
 B.S. Journalism & Media

10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:

120 semester credit hours

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

Advertising (internship): Up to 2 semester hours
 Public Relations (internship): Up to 4 semester hours
 Journalism and Media (practicum): 2 required semester hours
 Journalism and Media (internship): Up to 3 semester hours

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

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Person in Charge</u>
B.S. in Advertising	Elizabeth Avery Foster
B.S. in Public Relations	Elizabeth Avery Foster
B.S. in Journalism and Media	Courtney Childers (interim)

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

28,883 undergraduate students (Fall 2023)

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed. (Fall 2023.)

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Semester/AY Undergraduate majors</u>	
Advertising	Fall 2023	282
Public Relations	Fall 2023	246
Journalism	Fall 2023	469
TOTAL	Fall 2023	997

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.)

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Spring 2023

Advertising/Public Relations

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
ADVT 310.1	Advertising Design	18
ADVT 310.2	Advertising Design	18
ADVT 310.3	Advertising Design	16

Public Relations

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
PBRL 310.1	Public Relations Design	18
PBRL 310.2	Public Relations Design	18
PBRL 310.2	Public Relations Design	6
PBRL 320.1	Public Relations Writing	19
PBRL 320.3	Public Relations Writing	16
PBRL 420.1	Advanced Public Relations Writing	19
PBRL 420.2	Advanced Public Relations Writing	19

Fall 2023

Advertising/Public Relations

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
ADVT 310.1	Advertising Design	17
ADVT 310.2	Advertising Design	18
ADVT 310.3	Advertising Design	17

Public Relations

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
PBRL 310.1	Public Relations Design	18
PBRL 310.2	Public Relations Design	16
PBRL 310.2	Public Relations Design	16
PBRL 320.1	Public Relations Writing	18
PBRL 320.3	Public Relations Writing	19
PBRL 420.1	Advanced Public Relations Writing	6
PBRL 420.2	Advanced Public Relations Writing	18

School of Journalism & Media

Spring 2023

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
JREM 200.1	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.2	Multimedia Writing	19
JREM 200.3	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.4	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.5	Multimedia Writing	20

JREM 200.6	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.7	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.8	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.9	Multimedia Writing	17
JREM 220.1	Scriptwriting/Creative Works	17
JREM 220.2	Scriptwriting/Creative Works	19
JREM 230.1	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 230.2	Multimedia Reporting	13
JREM 230.3	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 230.4	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 260.1	Studio Production	17
JREM 331.1	Digital Content Creation	20
JREM 333.1	Media Editing	20
JREM 336.1	Video Production	20
JREM 336.2	Video Production	20
JREM 336.3	Video Production	13
JREM 360.1	Communicating On Air/Online for b'cast	20
JREM 375.1	Sports Reporting Across Media	20
JREM 380.1	Media Graphics	20
JREM 390.1	Photojournalism	20
JREM 411.1	Television News Reporting	20
JREM 415.1	Magazine Industry Workshop	13
JREM 430.1	Advanced Reporting	7
JREM 436.1	Advanced Video Production	9
JREM 446.1	Documentary Video Production	17
JREM 450.1/INSC 450.1	Writing About Science and Medicine	19
JREM 451.1	Environmental Writing	16
JREM 460.1	Advanced TV News Reporting/Producing	9
JREM 475.1	Sports Writing	12
JREM 490.1	Advanced Photojournalism	5

Fall 2023

<u>Course number</u>	<u>Course title</u>	<u>N of students</u>
JREM 200.1	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.2	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.3	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.4	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.5	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.6	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.7	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.8	Multimedia Writing	19
JREM 200.9	Multimedia Writing	20
JREM 200.10	Multimedia Writing	19
JREM 200.11	Multimedia Writing	15
JREM 220.1	Scriptwriting/Creative Works	15
JREM 220.2	Scriptwriting/Creative Works	7
JREM 230.1	Multimedia Reporting	19
JREM 230.2	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 230.3	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 230.4	Multimedia Reporting	20
JREM 260.1	Studio Production	10
JREM 331.1	Digital Content Creation	20

JREM 336.1	Video Production	20
JREM 336.2	Video Production	20
JREM 336.3	Video Production	18
JREM 360.1	Communicating On Air/Online for b'cast	11
JREM 360.2	Communicating On Air/Online for b'cast	19
JREM 375.1	Sports Reporting Across Media	19
JREM 380.1	Media Graphics	18
JREM 390.1	Photojournalism	20
JREM 411.1	Television News Reporting	16
JREM 436.1	Advanced Video Production	10
JREM 441.1	Entrepreneurship in Journalism and Media	18
JREM 450.1/INSC 450.1	Writing About Science and Medicine	11
JREM 451.1	Environmental Writing	16
JREM 451.2	Environmental Writing	12
JREM 456.1	Science Writing as Literature	6
JREM 464.1	Video Sports Production and Performance	20
JREM 475.1	Sports Writing	17
JREM 489.1	Creative Production Capstone	14
JREM 489.1	Creative Production Capstone	14

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

School of Journalism & Media: \$3,074,013
 Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations: \$2,265,611
 TOTAL: \$5,339,624

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

School of Journalism and Media: \$920,265
 Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations: \$999,064
 TOTAL: \$1,919,329

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.

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Oluseyi Adegbola, Assistant Professor
 Courtney Childers,* Professor
 Moonhee Cho, Associate Professor
 María De Moya, Associate Professor, Charles Tombras, Sr. Endowed Professorship
 Eric Haley Professor, DeForrest Jackson Professor
 Mariea Hoy, Professor
 Jeannette Iannacone, Assistant Professor
 Minjie Lie, Assistant Professor
 Christina Najera, Assistant Professor
 Michael Palenchar, Associate Professor
 Colin Piacentine, Assistant Professor of Practice
 Matthew Pittman, Assistant Professor
 Joseph Stabb, Assistant Professor of Practice
 Sifan Xu, Assistant Professor

*Currently interim director of the School of Journalism & Media

School of Journalism & Media

Julie Andsager, Professor
Stuart Brotman, Professor; Alvin and Sally Beaman Professor of Journalism and Media Law, Enterprise, and Leadership
Melanie Faizer, Distinguished Lecturer
Nicholas Geidner, Professor
Mark Harmon, Professor
Guy Harrison, Assistant Professor
Ahmad Hayat, Assistant Professor
Robert Heller, Professor
Tatia Jordan, Assistant Professor of Practice*
Barbara Kaye, Professor
Mark Littmann, Professor; Hill Chair of Excellence in Science, Technology, and Medical Writing
Catherine Luther, Professor
Michael Martinez, Assistant Professor of Practice
Mustafa Oz, Assistant, Professor
Martin Riedl, Assistant Professor
Amber Roessner, Professor
Shannon Scovel, Assistant Professor
Erin Whiteside, Professor
Shiyu Yang, Assistant Professor

*Teaches remotely in the online MS program only

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.)

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Allison Bagwell
Angie Dobbs
Ellie Amador (Dougherty)
Becky McCrosky Huckaby
Tatia Jacobson Jordan
Josh Lively
Rebecca Long
Mallorie Mendence
Jennifer Sickling
Dustin Thomas
Kevin VanWalkenburgh
Kellie Ward

School of Journalism & Media

Lola Alapo
Hayden Antal
Annie Carr
Brooks Clark
Summer Dashe
Clinton Elmore

Isaac Fowler
Thomas Fraser
Steven Friedlander
Scott Greeves
Shiela Hawkins
Phillip Kaplan
Alan Lesar
Bradley Lyle
Katharine Mahalic
Rachel McClelland
Aman Misra
Joel Moroney
Gerhard Schneibel
John Shearer
Bennett Smith
Bradley Stringfield
Sam Swan
Melissa Sykes
Brittany Tarwater
Teodora Trifonova
David Winstrom
Gerald Witt

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

2021-22 academic year:

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations – 122
School of Journalism & Media – 84
TOTAL – 206

2022-23 academic year:

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations – 143
School of Journalism & Media – 99
TOTAL – 242

Student data for Tables 1-3 are linked [here](#).

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Overview

The School of Journalism and Media (JEM) and the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations (ADPR) at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK) are excellent programs in an extraordinary college. The halls of the communications building hum with energy and enthusiasm from faculty and students alike. That energy cascades down from the university's top administrative levels.

UTK is Tennessee's flagship university. It has a long and strong history of preparing communications-related professionals. Journalism was first taught at UTK in the English Department in the 1920s. The news-editorial and advertising sequences were first accredited by ACEJMC in 1955 when they were located in the business school.

The two schools sit in a prime location on campus, shadowed by Neyland Stadium on one side and the university's administration offices on the other. They play an intrinsic role in the life of the greater university. The Schools benefit from strong leadership at the College and School levels. The Provost's and Chancellor's offices are steps away from the College of Communication and Information. The Provost, in particular, is highly supportive of programs in both Schools.

The College and the Schools have relatively new leaders who are forward looking. Faculty and staff inside and outside the classroom are highly engaged and spoke of feeling supported and connected to each other. Students said they feel prepared to enter communications professions. The university's location adjacent to downtown Knoxville allows faculty and students to be good university and community citizens.

Campus leaders, faculty members and students acknowledge that there is little racial diversity on the faculties and in the student body. A new access and engagement outreach program operated by the university focuses on recruiting students from 38 public high schools. The "Tennessee Flagship High Schools" are located across the state. Many of those schools are in West Tennessee where family incomes tend to be lower than in East Tennessee and there are larger populations of Black students. Faculty and other recruiters will be deployed to those schools to identify potential enrollees early in the secondary school careers.

There is a culture of assessment and program improvement at both Schools. ADPR has an assessment program that is functioning very well with ample evidence of "closing the loop." In contrast, it was difficult to evaluate the assessment program in JEM. Among other issues, there was not enough evidence that assessment leads to better learning outcomes for students.

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?

Mission Statements

Both the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations (ADPR) and the School of Journalism and Media (JEM) have up-to-date strategic plans that outline a mission and vision for the units. They are not identical, but both are consistent with the university's strategic plan. The plans lay out clear goals. The ADPR plan has extensive metrics that appear to be achievable and adhered to. The JEM plan outlines "Actions" to be taken in response to Goals. There are not as many metrics/benchmarks, but the goals and actions reflect the situation on the ground in the School. It is clear that the University and College are directing resources to the Schools so that they are able to achieve their goals. The strategic plans also reflect instruction using the latest technologies.

The strategic plans and mission statements are easily available on websites managed by the Schools. Faculty members participated in writing the strategic plans and mission and vision statements under the direction of the School directors.

(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?

College Leadership

The Schools and the College benefit from strong leadership. The Dean was appointed from outside the university in 2021. His energy is infectious. He has managed a new "Responsibility Centered Management" budget process introduced by the university that has led to substantial additional financial support for the Schools. Enrollment in the two schools is growing. This has been financially lucrative to both programs under the RCM model. Alumni, faculty and university leadership have praised the Dean's innovative changes. Two examples that directly benefitted students were moving the student advising center from a corner in the basement to a suite of offices adjacent to the front door of the College. He also brought student media, including the student newspaper and radio station, under the auspices of the College.

Campus leaders told site team members that the Schools are frequent campus collaborators. Strong campus relationships were most apparent in the Colleges of Public Policy and Education, Health and Human Sciences. The two Schools have high profiles on campus. Alumni are engaged in many ways – both formally and informally. Many local professionals are alumni and many serve as adjuncts, particularly in JEM.

School Leadership

ADPR and JEM also have strong School leaders. JEM has an interim director who is from the ADPR faculty. According to the dean, a successor for the permanent JEM directorship has been identified and is undergoing the campus tenure process.

Directors of both schools manage a strong curriculum. Recent retirements of senior tenured faculty have allowed both schools to hire several assistant professors who are clearly excited and motivated by strong leadership in their units. New faculty members praise the care and attention they are receiving from the directors and their colleagues.

The Tennessee Legislature has considered laws related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. So far, the only legislation that has been adopted involved a ban on “teaching divisive concepts.” The University has changed job titles and programs from “DEI” nomenclature. From now on programs and job titles will use “Access and Engagement” in their titles.

Leadership at the college and school level report that they have not stopped teaching DEI concepts and the role of the person in charge of diversity programming has not changed, even though the job title has changed. This was confirmed by a review of syllabi and discussions with students.

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

Data for ADPR and JEM are found on the ACEJMC searchable “lookup” database.

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

The schools collect enrollment, retention and graduation data. The information is posted on the College website, as well as on the websites for the schools. There is an opportunity for the schools to make better use of the data.

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.

Faculty members have primary responsibility for curriculum and oversight of programs. The policies are found in the UTK Faculty Handbook and in the bylaws of the Schools and the College. Curriculum modifications go through a layered process originating in the curriculum committees of each of the schools. The proposals are then forwarded to the College curriculum committee, which sends them to the University’s Undergraduate Council for approval. Final approval is made by the Faculty Senate.

Faculty members provide input on a range of activities, including tenure-track hires and annual evaluations of the dean and School directors. Tenured professors meet annually to vote on retention for tenure-track assistant professors. Numerous faculty members from the Schools are actively involved in campus governance via the Faculty Senate and various task forces and committees.

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

The process for selecting and evaluating administrators is outlined in the UTK Faculty Handbook. Directors of the Schools within the College are chosen after a faculty-driven search process. Faculty members meet and draft a statement for the dean outlining expectations consistent with the unit's vision. The dean decides whether to conduct an internal or external search. The majority of the committee members are tenured faculty. The search committee is required to follow institutional equity procedures. After consultation with the search committee and faculty members, the dean appoints the director to a five-year term, serving at the will of the dean. Directors may be reappointed. Faculty members participate in annual reviews of School directors through surveys. The dean meets with each director annually to discuss job performance. The discussion is based on results of the faculty surveys and the dean's own evaluation. The dean provides a summary assessment, including goals for the coming year, which is available for inspection by faculty.

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

The university has procedures for dealing with complaints from faculty, staff and students. Faculty complaints originate at the college level and if a resolution cannot be found, informal grievances can be addressed by the university ombudsperson. If informal methods fail, the complaints can be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee. Likewise, staff and students have formal and informal appeals procedures.

In an effort to handle concerns informally, the dean has created four committees to give him feedback. The committees give advice and counsel on a broad range of topics. The committees are the Dean's Faculty Advisory Council, The Dean's Staff Advisory Council, The Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Council and the Dean's Graduate Student Advisory Council. The dean may request meetings with these councils and vice versa. Some council members are elected by their constituencies and others are appointed by the dean. Council members serve one-year terms.

Formal complaints, such as discrimination and harassment claims, may be lodged with the university. At the time of the site team's visit, there were no such claims pending in the Schools.

SUMMARY:

The Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations and the School of Journalism and Media benefit from great leadership and experienced, energetic faculty members. The governance structure is clear and strong. The strategic plans from both schools are forward-looking and adhered to. The student experience is front and center at both schools.

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.

B.S. Advertising students complete 31 credits in the major; B.S. Public Relations students complete 34 credits in the major; and B.S. Journalism & Media students complete 42 credits in the major. Students' remaining credits are used across a variety of electives and a revised general studies program that supports a strong liberal arts education.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, the University implemented a new general studies program, replacing the general education requirements that endured throughout the review period. Under the new program, students are required to complete 15 credits across the university in three core areas: Effective Communication, Engaged Inquiries and Expanded Perspectives, which emphasize within them three subcategories: Global Citizenship, Applied Oral Communication and Written Communication. The Advertising and Public Relations programs each offer four courses—all required for majors—that each fulfill at least one of the new standards, while the Journalism and Media program offers 10 courses that meet the standards.

Advertising and Public Relations students take required coursework outside the College such as Introduction to Business Management for Non-Business Majors, Marketing and Supply Chain Management and Organizational Management. Journalism and Media students complete an economics course and two political science courses. Though minors are not required, many students in the College pursue one.

(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.

Across the College, students praised the curriculum's harmony of theoretical and skills courses—often taught together, rather than in separate courses—embracing it as a professional differentiator. One Advertising student said, “The blend of design and research has been special, and I think I’ll be glad I have that balance when I’m on the job market.” The ACEJMC Values and Competencies are emphasized in multiple courses throughout all three curricula (though neither School articulates where the concepts are introduced, reinforced and/or mastered). During the review period, the programs prioritized change to law and ethics: Previously, all three programs required the School of Journalism and Media's Communications Law and Ethics course; today, advertising and PR students each have a program-specific law and ethics course dedicated to those fields' nuances. The College also continues to underscore the importance of culturally proficient communication through an increasing array of study abroad opportunities, which now include an advertising program in Rome; a public relations program in Siena, Italy; a news reporting program in Brussels and Luxembourg; and a sports communication program in the United Kingdom.

Students voiced affinity for project-based coursework: They're proud of the media work they produce, as are their faculty. Their work—from news reporting and broadcasts to podcasts and short films—often

is not published or distributed to broader audiences. Faculty are eager to increase publishing partnerships with organizations inside and beyond the University.

B.S. Journalism & Media: A 10-course core forms students' theoretical, conceptual and practical foundation, with coursework in media history, writing, global communication and more. Two courses—Mass Communication Law and Ethics, and Media, Diversity, and Society—specifically advance learning in journalistic values, though syllabi and instructors indicate that values thread throughout courses. Students are also required to complete the Creative Production Capstone or Enterprise and Leadership in Media course in which students unite theory and skills in real media practice, advancing a significant project. A menu of concentrations—recently optimized and expanded to five—allows students to specialize in News, Creative Media, Leadership and Enterprise, Sports and Science Communication, and complete 15 credits of specialized coursework in each. In those courses, too, theory and practice are balanced. For example, in the Sports, Media and Society course, students explore community and inclusivity issues in addition to athletic subjects, and apply their learning in hands-on work: For example, students have produced a multimedia project on the history of Black coaches at the University, and a podcast on the experiences of women athletes.

B.S. Advertising: A core of 11 courses (including Advertising Principles, Advertising Research and two strategy courses) form students' theoretical and conceptual foundations; a new course developed during the review period, Advertising Issues, is dedicated to ethics, inclusion, law and regulatory guidelines. Students develop skills in courses such as Graphic Design and Advertising Management. Skills, values and theory collide in the Advertising Campaigns class, the program's climactic learning experience.

B.S. Public Relations: Twelve courses comprise the public relations core, including Public Relations Principles and Public Relations Research. In Public Relations Cases, students explore the profession's key issues and landmark examples, and advance their values studies in the new Legal and Ethical Environment of Public Relations course. Students complete three writing courses and a graphic design course to advance their skills before reaching the Public Relations Campaigns course where they apply their skills and knowledge in practice; the course is designated by the university as a service-learning course that advances the land-grant mission through community impact.

(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.

Faculty are enthusiastically committed to keeping the curricula rigorous and current, and collaborate with professionals and each other to make regular updates. Courses across both Schools prepare students for the demands of modern media work, and highlight current tools and techniques used across the professions (and many now include discussions of the implications of artificial intelligence). To complement disciplinary skills learning, all three majors require a one-credit professional seminar course that develops strong workplace skills and professional habits. Students say the rigor level is fair, and syllabi indicate that courses are challenging yet not overwhelming.

The College has also introduced several minors during the review period to address emerging professional opportunities in the media space: For example, the School of Journalism and Media developed during the review period a successful Social Media Analytics minor, which emphasizes the media industry's growing importance on audience data. More new minors are in the works, including some in collaboration with other University units, such a minor in Corporate Event Strategy and another in Packaging Design.

B.S. Advertising: Students voiced that the Creative Strategy course was among the toughest, but were grateful for how it prepared them for applied work. Students and faculty alike praise the Advertising Campaigns course, which always includes professional campaign work but continually adapts to meet current expectations; students are currently exploring text-image AI platforms such as Midjourney and Dalle-3. The Tombras School regularly introduces new courses, such as Sports Communication and Branding, to address student interest and career opportunities.

B.S. Public Relations: Students are challenged by the PR Research course, yet realize its value in their applied campaign work. Students develop specialized skills and familiarity with current tools across their courses; for example, they use the social listening platform Sprinklr in their social media analytics coursework. New special topics courses, such as Event Planning and Management, allow students to explore new career pathways. Professionals help ensure the curriculum stays relevant by reviewing students' campaign projects and pitches.

B.S. Journalism & Media: Faculty say they maintain rigor by upholding high standards for student work; those high standards also encourage students to harness the School's modern media tools and techniques. Students have free access to the Adobe Creative Suite; use Audacity audio software; and access CNN Newsource feeds. Faculty regularly update courses to address professional expectations: For example, the Media Editing course has been transformed to include verification, SEO and content creation; the Sports Media Principles and Practices course is now taught through the lens of newsletter production. The program's five concentrations also allow for even more specialization and advanced skill development.

(d) The unit demonstrates efforts to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

The College emphasizes professional standards, as evidenced by increased financial support for faculty professional development (\$10,000 per year for the first three years, at least \$6,000 thereafter) and initiatives designed to facilitate connectivity.

School of Journalism & Media faculty are active in their respective academic organizations (e.g., AEJMC, BEA) and professional groups (e.g. Association of Healthcare Journalists, National Press Club). Tombras School faculty, too, are active in academic organizations (e.g., ICA, NCA) and industry groups (AAA, PRSSA), and also visit the nearby Tombras Agency once each semester for a full day of continuing education with agency team leads. Each school also boasts its own alumni advisory board, which review courses annually and offer feedback on industry expectations. (One member of the School of Journalism and Media advisory board noted, "I saw the direct result of a discussion in a board meeting in the very next semester.")

Faculty have participated in workshops offered by the University's technology office to improve their skills. (Some faculty, however, did not realize that they could use their development funding to advance their media skills or improve their teaching, such as through software training.)

Finally, faculty say the schools' widely regarded, well-attended student professional development trips to New York City and Washington, D.C. (among others) serve as much to educate faculty as they do students: Following each trip, faculty report industry insights in faculty meetings.

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

The self-study indicates that in Spring 2023 and Fall 2023, all skills classes in both schools met the 20:1 ratio, and computer labs provide only 20 computers. Students praised the college's small class sizes and high contact with faculty.

(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).

In the B.S. Journalism and Media program, a practicum (at least 150 hours of work) is required while internships (at least 300 hours of work) are optional; in the B.S. Advertising and B.S. Public Relations programs, internships are optional. Professional experiences receive some centralized support from the new Center for Career Development, but the schools administer them separately via faculty who serve as the instructors of record. The College and Schools regularly promote internship opportunities through weekly email communication, spreadsheet databases and in-class instructor announcements, and students eagerly pursue them. Professional experiences are eligible for internship credit only when students complete meaningful communications (and not administrative) work at the direction of a trained professional. Internships are not required to be paid, but many are.

Tombras School: Students pursuing the B.S. Advertising may earn up to 2 credits in an internship, while students pursuing the B.S. Public Relations may complete up to 4; internships are optional in both programs. Because internships are not required in either program, not all students pursue one; when they do, students do not always pursue them for credit. Thus, the School admittedly does not track every internship, but the School director approximates that at least 75% of Advertising and Public Relations students complete an internship. Recent for-credit internship sites have included communications and event agencies (LEO Events, Tombras Agency), private companies (Dermatology Intelligence, Benajah Clothing), public initiatives (Tennessee Valley Authority, Cameron Brooks for City Council), and sports organizations (Sprye Sports Group, Tennessee Athletics Commission).

School of Journalism & Media: Students pursuing the B.S. Journalism & Media must complete 2 credits in the Journalism and Media practicum (150 hours of applied work); internships (300 hours) are optional for students with senior-level status, and students may earn up to 3 credits. Between Fall 2020 and Summer 2023, more than 200 students completed internships or practicums at TV news stations (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC affiliates), newspapers (Knoxville News Sentinel, The Daily Times), media companies (Discovery, VFL Films, Jupiter Entertainment, athletic teams (Tennessee Smokies, San Francisco Giants) and other communications organizations. Supervisor feedback speaks well of the School's students: From Fall 2017 to Summer 2023, evaluations by 222 practicum supervisors indicate that 89.2% of supervisors would hire the student if a position was available, and 95.9% said they would recommend the student for a similar position elsewhere.

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.

Both schools demonstrate effective dual supervision by both faculty and professionals. In both the School of Journalism and Media and the Tombras School, a faculty member serves as the instructor of record for internships and practicums, collaborating with the College's central director of career development to nurture opportunities. Students ultimately secure their own internships, at which time

the faculty work with their supervisors to complete a form aligning on student work expectations. At the end of the semester, supervisors complete an evaluation on each student's performance, and students submit a portfolio (including a time sheet, resume and work samples) and a self-evaluation. Students' grades are based on the faculty's evaluations of both the student submissions and their supervisors' feedback.

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.

Advertising students may earn up to 2 credits in an internship; PR students may earn up to 4 credits in an internship; and Journalism and Media students may earn no more than 5 credits in the required practicum and optional internship combined. Thus, while some students choose to pursue these opportunities in the growing portfolio of media outlets managed by the College (such as The Daily Beacon newspaper and NPR affiliate WUOT), students cannot exceed (nor even approach) nine credits in such experiences.

SUMMARY:

Robust curricula support both preparedness for media and communication professions and a broad liberal arts education. Both schools' programs provide a strong balance across theory, concepts and skills, exemplified through both syllabi and student work. Faculty eagerly advance their own knowledge so as to advance their students', and — thanks to deep alumni and professional involvement — courses reflect the expectations of current professional work. Work experiences outside the classroom are actively encouraged and properly supervised. Skills courses mind the 20-to-1 student-instructor ratio.

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 assessment plan for the Tombras School (ADPR) was last revised in November 2023. The School of Journalism & Media (JEM) plan was implemented in January 2017.

The self-study asserts in great detail how each School's assessment plan has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues.

That said, given that it has been six years since the JEM plan was last approved, it is hard to see in the self-study, at least on the surface, how the assessment process has led to meaningful curriculum updates to keep pace with fast-evolving professional practices. JEM states in its portion of the self-study that its curriculum has been updated as a result of assessment, e.g., by addressing podcasting and other evolutions in the digital space, among other things; yet it also acknowledges in the self-study that many of the assessment-driven curriculum changes have been merely "cosmetic" in nature.

However, the site team was able to discern during its visit that there have been additional, meaningful curriculum changes as a direct result of assessment findings during the review period, although they were not documented in the self-study. For example, during the 2018-2019 academic year, several curriculum changes were made as a direct result of what the assessment process revealed. One faculty member told the site team that the JEM assessment committee was supposed to make formal revisions during the 2022-2023 academic year, but it was tasked with an inordinate number of other duties that made such a formal revision impossible due to time constraints.

With regard to ADPR, its assessment process is clearly up to date, forward-thinking and leads to concrete and comprehensive curriculum adjustments to better prepare students for vibrant careers in the professional world.

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

The unit's assessment plans are posted on each school's website, but one must spend considerable time searching for them. The site team was provided with direct links to the assessment plans, so they were easy to evaluate in that context.

(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 professional Values and Competencies of ACEJMC are integrated into both Schools' assessment plans, and there is evidence that both Schools' goals for learning include these competencies. However, the class matrices provided in the self-study, particularly regarding JEM, do not make it completely clear how curricula support students' ability to attain these goals. Both Schools are also beholden to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), as well as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). Thus, they must provide courses and other means by which to ensure the Schools and students achieve the outcomes desired for ACEJMC reaccreditation compliance *and* SACSCOC goals *and* THEC objectives, which may, from time to time, present

contradictions. Conversely, doing assessment work for SACSCOC does assist the Schools in evaluating learning outcomes relative to some, but not all, ACEJMC competencies and values.

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

Both ADPR and JEM have written plans that include direct and indirect student learning assessment measures.

ADPR'S plan clearly plots several direct and indirect measures. JEM's plan, as presented in the self-study, is muddled and a bit disorganized. This is a result of the fact the JEM plan hasn't been formally revised since 2017, despite the fact a revision was scheduled for the 2022-2023 academic year but didn't happen, and curriculum changes that have been made are hard to track and verify, although claimed in the self-study. (See more below.)

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

Both Schools involve journalism and mass communication professionals in the assessment process. Some curricula have changed as a direct result of input from professionals with regard to the skills students possess, or should possess but don't, when they enter the professional world.

Additionally, as included in the self-study and verified by the site team:

1. Practitioners sit on the Board of Visitors for the college and on school advisory boards that review a wide range of academic and professional issues (indirect assessment). They are asked to provide input on what students should be learning in coursework relevant to their area of expertise, as well as what they foresee on the horizon.
2. Practitioners regularly contribute to the teaching mission both as adjuncts/lecturers and guest lecturers (direct and indirect assessment, respectively).
3. Practitioners are occasionally asked to review syllabi and other educational materials to provide feedback on how well instruction fits with current practice in journalism and mass communication. This includes focus groups/interviews or other formal/informal research processes evaluating capstone projects, syllabi and other educational material (direct and indirect assessment).
4. Practitioners regularly contribute to reviewing capstone courses, especially in JEM's capstone courses; [and] often serve as the campaign client, and/or sit on a panel of professional judges in evaluating major capstone projects and presentations (direct and indirect assessment). In specific JEM skills courses, practitioners are asked to serve as judges/reviewers for student output on final projects prior to the capstone course.
5. Practitioners are asked to provide formal feedback about student practicums and internships (direct assessment). Their evaluations comprise an important component of the annual assessment reports that [ADPR] and JEM submit to the Institutional Effectiveness unit within the Provost's Office.
6. Practitioners regularly participate in professional field trips and provide feedback on student engagement and knowledge (indirect assessment).

7. Practitioners regularly participate in [university] and [college] job and internship fairs and provide feedback on their perceptions of student preparedness (indirect assessment).

(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.

ADPR is a shining example of how assessment should be practiced and how valuable it is to ensure, among other things, that curricula are current and that students are graduating from the School with skills and competencies to make them successful in the professional world. Here are just a few of the many examples of how ADPR closed the loop during the review period:

- The creation of courses related to social media for both majors, advertising and public relations
- The separation of two jointly taught ADPR design and research classes into two distinct courses, one for advertising majors and the other for public relations majors
- The creation of social media analytics class and a law and ethics class

Additionally, ADPR enacted three “significant program developments” as a direct result of the assessment process:

- The creation of a 4+1 master’s concentration to allow students to earn a master’s degree in only one year following the receipt of a bachelor’s degree
- The creation of a social media analytics minor
- The creation of an advertising and public relations minor

ADPR closes the loop in a number of other noteworthy ways, which were enumerated fully in the self-study and verified by the site team.

JEM is a different story. The School acknowledges in its self-study that its priority is to use assessment to ensure compliance with SACSOCS standards, which, it asserts, allows it to help assess the effectiveness of its curriculum relative to ACEJMC competencies. During the review period, the School used a series of student surveys – at the beginning of students’ school experience, in the middle and then finally at the end – that it now recognizes was insufficient. (It has revised its student surveys, thus moving toward improvement to the process, directly as a result of the deficiencies it identified during the self-study process. However, the site team is tasked with evaluating the School’s assessment plan that was in place during the review period.)

Specifically with regard to closing the loop, the School did present examples of curriculum changes that were made as a result of input from students and professionals, but those changes mostly occurred on an *ad hoc* basis. It became clear through the on-campus site team review that there is a disconnect between the School’s assessment and curriculum committees. While most of the curriculum changes that were needed to close the assessment loop did occur, it’s unclear if all changes were made, and there are no minutes or other documents from the curriculum committee to demonstrate that the changes that were made happened as a direct result of assessment.

SUMMARY:

This is a tale of two Schools within the same College that, during the review period, had different approaches to assessment – one successful, the other not as much, at least as reflected in the self-study and the site team’s on-campus review.

ADPR was spot on in terms of all aspects of conducting meaningful assessment and then using the data, as well as input from students, alumni and professionals to ensure its students were well-prepared for the professional world upon graduation.

JEM’s assessment plan was last formally revised in 2017, and while it has been informally updated since, the assessment committee wasn’t able formally to revise it when scheduled during the 2022-2023 academic year (when ADPR’s assessment plan was last revised) because it, or at least one of its members, was assigned other tasks that consumed too much time for the revision to occur. There is evidence that improvements are now being made to the JEM assessment process, but by the School’s own admission, in its self-study, they were not in place during the review period.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: NON-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 posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The College highlights DEI as part of its mission in its 2022-2027 Strategic Plan: “excellence in diversity, equity, inclusion, and community as core tenets in developing future volunteers.” The strategic plan is posted on the College’s website in a prominent place with a video further explaining the goals, including Goal 3: “to progress and sustain a nurturing College culture where diversity, equity, inclusion, and community are enduring sources of strength and core tenets in developing the next generation of Vols.”

Both Schools have developed elaborate diversity action plans. The School of Journalism & Media’s plan defines diversity and inclusion broadly as “acceptance of all people regardless of race, gender, age, and sexual orientation, or societal, political, cultural, economic, spiritual, or physical differences.” The specific goals include language of attracting and retaining “individuals from historically underrepresented population.” The Tombras School’s plan, finalized in August 2023, does not have an explicit definition of diversity, but the language used in the first of the four main goals includes “students of underrepresented and marginalized communities.”

Both plans set out clearly objectives, actions, initiatives, timelines and benchmarks, and responsible parties. The college-wide Diversity Committee reviews individual school’s diversity plans and make recommendations. The progress of the plans has been regularly evaluated through exit interviews and surveys of students and other stakeholders as well as committee evaluations. Faculty interviews confirmed that DEI issues are discussed in nearly every faculty meeting at both schools. Individual faculty members are also required to report activities toward DEI objectives.

At the School of Journalism & Media, a committee on Diversity and Civility was created in 2019, and an assistant director for diversity position was created in 2021. The Tombras School established the Tombras Endowed Professor to actively engage with students of color and champion the School’s DEI efforts.

(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.

Both Schools holistically integrate diversity and inclusivity throughout required and elective courses. Through faculty and student interviews, it was evident that diversity-related issues are regularly addressed and discussed through readings, lectures, class discussions and various course assignments and exams. The fall 2023 and spring 2024 syllabi indicate that most include the University’s standard

civility statements and the College-adopted diversity statement, reflecting a collective commitment to foster an inclusive academic environment. Both Schools offer study abroad trips to Europe, which was described by students as “eye-opening” and “transformative.” Both schools have also made intentional efforts to bring guest speakers of diverse cultural backgrounds to their classrooms and events.

At the Tombras School, teaching guidelines that address DEI issues were developed and most recently updated in spring 2022. The School’s diversity committee conducts reviews of syllabi to ensure DEI content is thoughtfully integrated. Notably, the introduction of the new course, “Communicating in a Diverse and Global Society,” stands as an important step in aligning the School’s curriculum with ACEJMC learning outcomes. The self-study identifies 14 additional courses in the advertising and PR curricula, where cultural communication proficiency serves as a primary focal point. The Advertising Issues course is a prime example. It examines controversies related the cultural, economic, social and ethical dimensions of advertising. By prompting critical thinking on issues such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and LGBTQ community, this course is designed to foster social consciousness and cultivate cultural competence among students.

The School of Journalism & Media has enhanced its core curriculum since the last accreditation. Global Communication has been added as a requirement in response to the increasing need to educate students about diverse cultures and media systems within the global context. Media, Diversity and Society, now taught by a faculty member of color who specializes in gender and race identities, provides students with valuable insights into how social groups are represented in the media. The syllabi reveal that a majority instructors have incorporated diversity-related assignments or lectures in their respective courses. The School has also co-sponsored guest lectures featuring culturally diverse speakers. However, the self-study noted a particular concern: ensuring that part-time instructors, particularly those teaching skills courses, are sufficiently aware of the need to incorporate DEI in their courses. This recognition underscores the ongoing commitment by the School to enhancing the comprehensive integration of DEI across all facets of the curriculum.

(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.

Since the last accreditation, both Schools have made progress in recruiting and hiring full-time faculty from underrepresented groups. For the School of Journalism & Media, in 2017, the School had only one Asian American and one Hispanic American in the tenure line. Of the seven new tenure-track faculty hired since, one is African American and four are international from Austria, China, Turkey and Kuwait. In the Tombras School, three faculty from underrepresented populations were hired within the last three years, including the Tombras Endowed Professor. A Black woman was hired as the Tombras Program Manager. It should be noted, however, that between the two schools, there is only one Black professor on the tenure track and one on the part-time/adjunct line.

Both schools have made intentional efforts to attract and recruit diverse faculty. For full-time faculty searches, committee members complete STRIDE (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) training offered through the university. The schools have created a database identifying faculty from historically underrepresented groups. Position postings are widely advertised in diversity-related publications and websites. For recruiting adjunct/part time faculty, the schools, however, do not have a formal search process and seem to be short of specific strategies to increase the percentage of minority professionals.

The College and the two schools under review have taken a proactive approach to enhance faculty members' commitment and understanding of DEI objectives by organizing events and encouraging faculty to participate in professional development opportunities on DEI topics. Faculty members also participated programs offered through the University and outside organizations such as AEJMC's Institute for Diverse Leadership. The Tombras School allocates more than \$100,000 annually for programs to implement DEI efforts.

(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.

Based on the self-study, of the undergraduate student population, 15.7% are racial minority students at the Tombras School and 17.6% at the School of Journalism & Media (compared with 19.1% at the university level in fall 2023). Black/African students account for 3.7% and 7.3%, respectively, at each school. Still, these numbers are indicative of an improvement from the previous year, especially for the Tombras School, with a 40% increase in Black/African students, 12.5% increase in Asian/Asian-American students, and 11% increase in multiracial students from 2021 to 2022. Additionally, 30% are either first-generation, on a Pell grant, or both.

The College is keenly aware of the lack of Black and other students of color. During the faculty and leadership interviews, reasons provided include the competing universities in Alabama, Memphis and North Carolina, the uneven distribution of racial minorities with the state, especially in eastern Tennessee, as well as how journalism, advertising and PR have not been recognized as viable career pathways for students from historically underserved communities.

The College joined the University's effort in targeting Tennessee Flagship High Schools, which includes 38 high schools from across the state with an average 86% of enrolled students from underrepresented populations. These schools are a focus for the Tombras Endowed Professor, a position established to focus on the School's DEI efforts, who is in charge of outreach to those schools for education, enrichment, and recruitment, starting with the three local flagship high schools. The School of Journalism and Media has also taken steps to increase minority representation within the student population. Faculty members from both schools volunteered to join the recruitment effort to visit minority-serving high schools, participated the college tours organized for those students, and strengthening relationship with high school counselors through a series of programming.

Various efforts have been made for student retention. The College created the Diversity Student Leadership Society, which has played a key role in the College's Intercultural Week and the Social Media Week. One of the stated goals of the Society is to "provide underrepresented students with support, programs, and experiences that will keep them in CCI and in college." It provides programs and services such as the Student Mentoring Program and Diversity Speakers Program, which inspire diverse students to become leaders or think about graduate school. In addition to the college-wide effort, the Tombras School has developed several well-branded programs, including scholarships and fellowships to support students from Flagship high schools to pursue professional and educational development. The School of Journalism and Media supports NAHJ and NABJ, two active student organizations, to help nurture diverse students on journalism career paths.

(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.

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.

At the University of Tennessee, faculty and staff go through mandatory compliance training annually, which includes sessions on Title XI and Title IX. The College provides a series of DEI events throughout the year, including initiatives such as book clubs, to foster an environment that encourages open discussions on relevant topics.

Interviews with faculty members indicate an overall positive sentiment regarding the College's climate, with no notable expressions of concerns. New hires since the last accreditation, including individuals from minority groups and LGBTQ identities, expressed feeling "welcomed," "supported," "seen and valued" within the College. They appreciate the mentors they have been paired with within their respective schools and the networking opportunities facilitated by the University's Faculty Affairs Committee through affinity groups. Long-time faculty members cited the collegial culture and their colleagues as one of the primary factors influencing their decision to remain at the institution. Students interviewees noticed the campus-wide weakness of lacking racial diversity within the student body, but seemed to appreciate the opportunities to be exposed to different experiences and perspectives through classes, study abroad and professional projects.

The site team observed the modest yet intentional aesthetic decoration of the facilities, including pictures and posters featuring a diverse student body, aligning with the College's inclusive culture. While elevators are available, there is room for improvement in the midcentury building's physical design features, particularly at the entrance and exits, to better accommodate people with mobility needs.

SUMMARY:

The College's leadership and faculty are highly invested in creating an inclusive environment and promoting diversity and inclusivity through their teaching, research and service. Students appreciate the DEI-related learning experiences and value diversity in their work. Despite the uncertainties stemming from the state's political environment, the strong leadership of the new dean and his team, coupled with the commitment and support of the faculty, has so far propelled the Schools toward continued achievement and enhancement of their DEI goals.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

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

Tombras School - Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	0	0 %	0	0 %
White	4	28.6 %	4	28.6 %
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0 %	0	0 %
Asian	1	7.1 %	2	14.3 %
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	2	14.3 %	1	7.1 %
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0 %	0	0 %
Two or more races	0	0 %	0	0 %
Other race	0	0 % 0		0 %
International (any race)*	1	7.1 %	2	14.3 %

* Note: International designation by UT is not part of the total percentage of faculty by race/ ethnicity. The three international professors are also listed under their respective race/ ethnicity categories.

Tombras School: Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Part-time/adjunct faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	0	0 %	0	0 %
White	9	69.2 %	4	30.8 %
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0 %	0	0 %
Asian	0	0 %	0	0 %
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0 %	0	0 %
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0 %	0	0 %
Two or more races	0	0 %	0	0 %
Other race	0	0 %	0	0 %
International (any race)	0	0 %	0	0 %

Journalism and Media - Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	0	0 %	1	5.3 %
White	7	36.8 %	4	21.1 %
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0 %	0	0 %
Asian	0	0	0	0 %
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0 %	1	5.3 %
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0 %	0	0 %
Two or more races	1	5.3 %	1	5.3 %
Other race	0	0 %	0	0 %
International (any race)*	1	5.3 %	3	15.8 %

Note: As per self-study instructions, each faculty member is reported in only one category. The four listed as International are Austrian, Chinese, Kuwaiti, and Turkish internationals.

Journalism and Media: Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Part-time/adjunct faculty

Group	Female	% of total Faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	1	3.7 %	0	0 %
White	6	22.2 %	15	55.6 %
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0 %	0	0 %
Asian	0	0 %	0	0 %
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0 %	0	0 %
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0 %	0	0 %
Two or more races	0	0 %	1	3.7 %
Other race	0	0 %	0	0 %
International (any race)	1	3.7 %	3	11.1 %

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The Schools adhere to the guidelines outlined in the University's Faculty Handbook concerning full-time faculty's primary responsibilities for curricula and teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The handbook specifies the expectations in these three areas for faculty members at assistant, associate and full levels, respectively. At both schools under review, tenure-line faculty are normally assigned to teach two courses per semester with accompanying research and service expectations (e.g., publish the equivalent of two refereed journal articles per year). For non-tenure line faculty, their main responsibilities include a 4/4 teaching load and service. The precise teaching load of each individual faculty is based on a number of factors such as class size, advising load, administrative duties, and institutional or public service.

Full-time faculty are actively involved in curriculum review and course oversight. Currently, the School of Journalism & Media has 19 full-time faculty (including 3 on the professional practice line) and 28 part-time adjunct faculty. The percentage of core and required courses taught by full-time faculty ranges from 50.5% to 65% in the last three academic years. The Tombras School has 15 full-time faculty (including 3 on the professional practice line) and 12 part-time adjunct faculty. The percentage of core and required courses taught by full-time faculty ranges from 45.8% to 58.6% in the last three years. It is noteworthy that the College is actively increasing the hiring of practice-track faculty, a step that may contribute to a decreased reliance on adjunct faculty.

(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.

A review of faculty CVs shows a varied combination of academic and professional backgrounds. Among the 34 full-time faculty members, 31 have terminal degrees (30 Ph.D.s and 1 J.D.). Many also have substantial professional experiences in advertising, PR or journalism, although some of the more recent tenure-track hires have limited formal professional experiences. Significant professional experiences in lieu of terminal degrees are required for practice-track faculty hiring. During interviews, students reported their appreciation of the real-world experience that their instructors have brought to the classroom.

The self-study documents a range of professional development opportunities provided by the university and undertaken by faculty members, such as the Teaching & Learning Innovation program offered through the Division of Faculty Affairs, and workshops provided by the Office of Innovative Technology. Faculty members also participate in teaching-related activities at national associations including AEJMC, ICA, NCA, BEA and AAA. The Tombras School created "Tombras Tune-Ups" program, which provides support for faculty to spend summer time as professors-in-residence to work with and learn from Tombras Agency professionals and assess outreach effort in the industry and academe.

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

Both Schools follow the requirements set out by the University and the College regarding faculty evaluation. Both Schools have recently updated their bylaws, outlining specific expectations and criteria

for appointments, promotions and tenure. Interviews with new faculty members indicate a clear understanding of those expectations.

All full-time faculty members must complete an annual review and set goals in each of the three areas for the upcoming year. Directors of each School rate each faculty member in the three areas as well an overall rating, using a 5-point-scale. Tenure-track assistant professors are also evaluated annually by the senior faculty for a retention vote. They also have a third-year review to guide them to successful tenure and promotion. Student course evaluations, as well as peer-teaching evaluations, are required as evidence of teaching performance during P&T review.

The College provides funding for faculty research and professional development, including travel expenses. New tenure-track faculty receive \$10,000 annually for the first three years. Other faculty now receive \$6,000 annually, which can be used for research, conference participation and professional training. This is a significant increase from previous years. In addition, the newly founded CCI Research & Innovation Center provides service and support for faculty seeking external funding to support their scholarly and creative activities. The College also offers three awards for teaching. At the University level, faculty development leave is offered to full-time tenured faculty members to enhance their ability to contribute to the missions of the university and to student development.

(d) Faculty members communicate the results of research, creative and/or professional activity to other scholars, educators and practitioners through presentations, productions, exhibitions, workshops, and publications appropriate to the activity and to the mission of the unit and institution.

Faculty at both schools have established a noteworthy record of scholarly and creative work output. During the review period, between the two Schools, 37 full-time faculty members have received 73 awards, and a total of 56 internal and external grants. Eight sole or co-authored scholarly books, 11 textbooks, and seven edited books have been published. In addition, faculty have published 240 articles in refereed journals, which represents a significant increase compared to the last review period (187 in 2017). In addition, faculty have published 49 articles in non-refereed publications and presented 391 refereed conference papers. In addition, a total of 18 creative works is reported for this review period by faculty in the School of Journalism and Media. Notably, some of the research focuses on topics of gender, race, LGBTQ and other diversity and inclusion issues, which align with the DEI mission of the Schools and College.

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

Campus administrators and leaders from various units praised the College for its positive reputation in delivering high-quality instruction and providing abundant opportunities for skills training to students. The commendations extended to the students from the College, particularly those who have been hired as interns, were notably positive. They highlighted the Dean's proactive collaboration with other units in shaping course offerings, and fostering a cooperative environment. Noteworthy collaborations have been established with units such as the College of Music, resulting in forthcoming joint programs and minors that benefit the broader student community. Additionally, several research faculty members have actively engaged in cross-disciplinary initiatives and projects, earning respect across the campus community. The collaborative spirit and commitment to interdisciplinary efforts contributes to the College's positive standing on campus.

Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (xx)
		Full Professors (8)	Associate Professors (3)	Assistant Professors (7)	Other Faculty** (xx)	
Awards and Honors	41	19	2	29		41
Grants Received Internal	19	2	13	6		19
Grants Received External	8	4	2	2		8
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	3	2		1		3
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	2	1	1			2
Books Edited	4	3	1			4
Book Chapters	59	49	8	2		59
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	183	75	44	64		183
Refereed Conference Papers	287	96	59	141		287
Invited Academic Papers	12	6		6		12
Encyclopedia Entries	5	4				9
Book Reviews	5	4	1			5
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	4		3	1		4
Juried Creative Works						
Non-juried Creative Works						
Other (please specify)						

School of Journalism & Media

Adaption of the grid: Faculty members are identified in the rank in which their activities were conducted. As the three promotions from associate professor to professor occurred within the last year, those faculty are identified as Associates in the grid. No promotions from assistant to associate occurred during the review period. “Other Faculty” are full-time lecturers. The number of individuals within rank include all who held the rank during the review period, including those who have retired. The four assistant professors who joined the School in August 2023 are not included.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (19)
		Full Professors (8)	Associate Professors (4)	Assistant Professors (3)	Other Faculty** (4)	
Awards and Honors	32	17	7	7	1	32
Grants Received Internal	17	10	2	5		17
Grants Received External	12	4	8			12
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	5	3	1	1		5
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	9	8		1		9
Books Edited	3		1	2		3
Book Chapters	18	5	5	6	2	18
Monographs	5	5				5
Articles in Refereed Journals	57	35	10	14	2	61
Refereed Conference Papers	104	44	27	35	2	108
Invited Academic Papers	2	1		1		2
Encyclopedia Entries	9	9				9
Book Reviews	2			1	1	2
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	45	37	5		3	45
Juried Creative Works	12	10	2			12
Non-juried Creative Works	6	4	2			6
Other: Newspaper/online news outlets	19	8	11	2	1	22

SUMMARY:

The full-time faculty at both Schools actively participate in teaching, research and service, showcasing a high level of engagement. The faculty has robust academic qualifications and a range of professional experiences. Both Schools have clear policies and procedures to recruit and hire faculty and evaluate faculty for tenure and promotion. The College’s culture is described as collegial and supportive by both faculty and students. Students express appreciation for the high quality of faculty instruction and advising. The School’s strong reputation in teaching is evident across campus.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: 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 College ensures students are aware of graduation requirements through both centralized and School-specific efforts. A dedicated website page for incoming students highlights academic, financial and extracurricular opportunities for students, including registration information for the New Vol Experience, a comprehensive student onboarding program. The New Vol Experience — required for all students — includes an online module that orients students to the University, academic policies and procedures, and campus life, as well as a virtual advising appointment.

In the first advising appointment (one hour for first-year students, 90 minutes for transfers), students review their major requirements, assess transfer and AP credits, and emerge with a unique academic plan. Students are also introduced to the University's automated audit system that highlights students' degree requirements and reports their progress automatically online. When the advising session concludes, both the student and adviser sign the agreed-upon academic plan, and the student is authorized to register for classes. A copy of the academic plan is shared with the student and stored for reference. Students stay with their adviser for the duration of their academic journeys.

The individual Schools maintain curriculum descriptions, major requirements and course catalogs on their individual websites; send a degree progress email each semester; and host student engagement events to further communicate academic expectations.

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

The unit has significantly increased its advising and career support since the previous site visit, increasing its staff from three to six full-time advisers; reducing the adviser-student ratio to 260:1; establishing a dedicated Center for Career Development; and adding an assistant dean for undergraduate programs and advising to the College's leadership team. All academic advisers are trained professional advisers who hold at least a master's degree (a university requirement), with some holding media-related degrees. The unit's strategic plan forecasts even further growth for student support with intentions to relocate the Center and advising offices from smaller, separate spaces to a unified, more visible location in the building.

Academic advising is comprehensive and recurrent. All incoming students meet one-on-one for at least one hour with their academic adviser to plot out an academic plan inclusive of their major requirements, transfer and AP credits and career interests; both the student and adviser agree on the plan before students conclude the appointment by registering for their first courses. As is University policy, students who have completed fewer than 30 credits, are following an exploratory track or have been identified as off-track are required to meet with their adviser twice during the academic year; all other students must meet with their adviser once per year (but are invited and encouraged to meet with their adviser each semester).

Students report that academic advising effectively keeps them informed of graduation requirements, as reported by both unit data and the students themselves. Online surveys assessing advising effectiveness

are administered to students each semester; in fall 2023, 100% of Advertising students, 100% of PR students and 88.9% of Journalism and Media students reported having a better understanding of their degree requirements as a result of their advising experiences. Interviewed students echoed the data, calling themselves lucky to enjoy such effective advising.

During the review period, the College debuted a new Center for Career Development to provide communication-specific career development services to students, complementing the University's central career center. Led by a dedicated staff director, the Center provides industry-relevant career resources, and job and internship connections in the communications fields. It hosts more than 20 events each semester, including a career fair, headshot session, class visits and a portfolio- and reel-building workshop. The office also runs an industry mentorship program, matching current students with alumni working in the communications professions (additionally, 10 to 15 students each year participate in a Women in Cable Telecommunications mentorship program).

The college also funds travel for students' professional development: Some opportunities (a networking trip to Memphis for three students, another to New York City for five students) are fully funded, while others (a trip to the PRSA conference for five Tombras students, a Washington, D.C. trip for 20 Journalism students) offer partial support.

Meanwhile, the University's central career center provides career counseling and administers personality assessments, resume and cover letter support, interview preparation and professional clothing options.

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

At the beginning of each academic year, the College hosts an event to introduce faculty, reinforce major requirements, share study abroad opportunities, promote student clubs and highlight other student engagement opportunities.

Both Schools maintain separate websites and communications specialists through which they communicate information about events, clubs, internships and job opportunities; the College's central communications director unites the school's output under brand standards.

The Schools use the University's Navigate platform to communicate with students by email and text, and Instagram and LinkedIn accounts to share information via social media. Students praised the weekly emails, sharing that they not only open the emails habitually, but that they rely on them to learn about events, jobs, internships, deadlines and other College opportunities. Students also noted that their professors regularly remind them of initiatives and events at the beginning of class.

(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.

Numerous students participate in media controlled by the College, a portfolio that expanded during the review period as the new dean assumed control of several media properties previously held elsewhere in the university. Opportunities—some of them paid—include WUOT (an NPR affiliate), WUTK (a student radio station), The Daily Beacon (a student newspaper), Lumos Media (a commercial production unit) and Ablaze Magazine. Another, the Land Grant Films studio, funds students to work on documentary projects, including 2020's full-length "The Library that Dolly Built." While they benefit from the College's structure and resources, all properties are editorially independent.

Students also engage in a variety of organizations supported by the College and its schools. The College sponsors the Diversity Student Leaders Society, which promotes understanding and mutual respect across the student body and provides underrepresented students with programming and resources to support retention. The Tombras School sponsors two professional student groups that supplement its curriculum with visits from professionals and discussions on industry trends and tactics: an Ad Club, and a chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (closely connected with the Knoxville PRSA chapter). The School of Journalism & Media hosts a chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (associated with the East Tennessee SPJ chapter), a chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, and a chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, all of which facilitate guest speakers and professional development opportunities for its members.

Faculty in both schools facilitate student networking trips around the country to develop students' professional connections and understanding of their fields. School of Journalism & Media faculty members regularly take class trips on tours of local newsrooms, and occasionally to those in larger markets (visiting CBS, NBC, Fox News and more). The Tombras School, too, hosts student trips to agencies in Nashville and Atlanta, as well as experiences in larger cities. The school's annual New York City trip—held each January for more than 30 years—is a student favorite: Four faculty whisk 20 students to the world's advertising capital to tour advertising agencies, network with alumni and develop professional opportunities. Some students attend multiple times, and several characterized the trip as life-changing.

Since 2011, the College has hosted its annual Social Media Week—a now-signature program developed after student and alumni data suggested a need to better connect students to professional social media expectations. The week unites faculty, community members and students from inside the College and across the university in a series of social media sessions delivered by professionals; the 2023 series included insights from a news reporter and an Associated Press journalist; a discussion on building a podcast team; a social media listening software demo and more.

One student who had switched into the Tombras School from the Business School said, “The relationships are better, the bonds are better, the opportunities are better, and I’ve been able to build more connections here,” adding, “Our support system is what makes us special.”

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

As the university's enrollment has increased, so, too, has the College's: In the last six years, advertising and PR majors have increased 36.5%, while journalism and media majors have increased 19.6%. Student retention has also increased. The Tombras School's fall 2022 one-year retention rates exceeded the university's rate of 91.1%—the Advertising program's one-year retention rate was 92.9%, while the PR program's rate was 95.7%—while the 78.9% retention rate of the Journalism program (the larger of the three) fell short. Both schools' four-year graduation rates range from 60.9% to 77.3%, besting the 55.6% university average.

Both schools point to changes inspired by a desire to increase retention — among them, increased advising and career support, new concentrations and minors, removed statistics and second-language requirements, a club for first-generation students and a new remote internship program. But there was no evidence these optimizations were data-driven; indeed, some leaders said proactively using retention data to improve student outcomes was not a strength of the College. While the College's deans and directors have access to online data reports, central data lags (for example, the team visited in February,

and fall-to-spring data was not yet available), hampering fast action; still, there was no evidence that the retention/graduation data that does exist is widely discussed or applied in either School.

SUMMARY:

An expanded student success team successfully communicates degree requirements to students and effectively shepherds them to graduation and beyond. Students eagerly engage in an array of extracurricular opportunities, and call them a differentiator among other campus majors; students are active among the College's robust portfolio of media properties and clubs, and praise the annual faculty-led professional development trips. Both schools could improve in their sharing and application of retention and graduation data.

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 School of Journalism & Media (JEM) and the Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations (ADPR) are both housed within The College of Communication and Information (CCI) which sets the annual budget. Overall, the CCI is in strong fiscal shape and both Schools are well supported in all budget areas. The total budget for the two Schools during 2022-23 FY was \$4.9 million and the budget for the current fiscal year is \$5.7 million.

It should be noted the University of Tennessee converted to a new Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget model in 2022-2023 FY that allocates revenue and indirect expenditures to the colleges based on a series of metrics such as tuition are based on number of credit hours of instruction and indirect costs are based on staff head counts, square footage, and student FTE's. The RCM model has greatly benefited the unit in the second year of its adoption in terms of salaries and more funding for equipment, supplies, and faculty travel. Given the continued upward trajectory of growth in enrollment in the unit, this suggests a continued favorable budget allocation to the unit for the foreseeable future. In addition, enrollment growth is being supported by new faculty lines.

Fundraising is strong at both the College and School's levels and has increased momentum in the area of advancement. The total number of donors and dollars has increased substantially since the 2017 assessment. Importantly, in March 2022, Dooley Tombras, principal at the Tombras Agency, provided a naming gift endowment creating the Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations. It is the first named school at UT-Knoxville.

(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.

Both Schools within the College have experienced increased student enrollment in recent years and that growth is in line with the University's overall growth. The dean and department heads report the College receives support that is consistent with other colleges at the university. The new RCM model should be favorable to the College given the continued growth of FTE students. Faculty indicate the opportunities for professional development are well-supported through either start-up funds, or other financial resources provided by the College. Development also remains strong.

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

The College is housed in the Communications & Information Building located in a central portion of campus. The building was built in 1969 and houses a few classrooms, three computer labs, administration and faculty offices, student media as well as broadcast studios for WUOT and WUTK radio stations. Given the limited classroom availability, many classes are held in locations other than the Communications & Information Building. While the building is beginning to show its age, some improvements have been made including the relocation of student advising to a more central, visible

location within the building, a renovation to the dean's suite, and the establishment of the social media command center and Scripps Convergence Lab which promotes a collaborative, open-space environment for students.

Space to accommodate the growing needs of faculty and increased student enrollment is the most urgent need of both Schools. The College of Communication and Information with its four Schools must compete with other campus units for space allocation. The College has been able to physically expand office space through accruing offices left open by the relocation other campus departments. In addition, some spaces have been reconfigured to provide more accessibility and to create social spaces for students and faculty. The Tombras endowment will enable ADPR to be housed in a modern, showcase environment within the College of Communication and Information; scheduled completion is Fall 2025. Looking forward, the University's master plan has the Communications & Information Building scheduled for a renovation and expansion that should be completed within the next seven to ten years.

(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.

Another area that has benefited from RCM is in technology and equipment. Until 2023, equipment inventory and access were in a state of disarray. However, improvements have been made to centralize student access to both technology and equipment and a full equipment inventory was taken in 2023. Faculty, administration and students report resources for both academic units are commensurate with support for similar units across the University. IT support is also equitable to that of other units. Neither faculty or students complain that anything is out-of-date or in short supply. Free access to the Adobe Creative Cloud and Microsoft Office is provided by the university to all students. Both Schools have representatives on the Colleges tech committee that makes recommendations on new equipment and software purchases. The tech committee also recently completed a full inventory of all equipment housed in the College. Additionally, JEM's equipment room recently relocated to a larger, centralized space within the Communications & Information Building and a new checkout process was initiated. This has helped greatly enhance inventory control and the checkout process for students.

The Communications & Information Building also houses a variety of laboratories for both Schools to utilize, including:

- The Message Effects Lab
- Scripps Convergence Lab
- User Experience Lab (UXL)
- Adam Brown Social Media Command Center
- Lumos Video Services
- Computer and Production Labs

There is also a full broadcast production studio located in the Communications & Information Building that is owned by UT Athletics. Students have access to the studio when not in use by the athletic department. That can sometimes pose a conflict as students are not able to cover sports such as basketball as the athletics department has priority.

SUMMARY:

The College in general and both Schools in particular are on strong financial footing. Overall, both Schools are benefitting from the new RCM model in all budget areas. Fundraising remains strong and especially noteworthy is the naming gift endowment received from Dooley Tombras creating the University's first named school. Equipment is state-of-the-art and IT resources and support are comparable to that of other units across the University. Students and faculty alike applaud the collaboration and partnership the endowment has created between both entities. Space resources for both Schools remain the most urgent need; however, The Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations will be relocating to new space in Fall 2025 that will double the school's existing footprint. A full renovation of the College's existing building is planned for the next 7-10 years and includes an expansion of the current footprint.

In 2022, the Office of Student Media transitioned to the School of Journalism & Media and in 2023, the College gained leadership of WUOT-FM, an NPR affiliate. Those properties allow for opportunities for students to gain practical experience in various forms of media.

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 engagement and ongoing communication is a priority for the College as it recognizes the importance alumni play in philanthropic and professional counsel for students, faculty and administrators. A long-standing College Board of Visitors comprised of distinguished alumni and professionals meets twice yearly to review and discuss curriculum issues, future trends and needs in the industry. Additionally, both Schools have established alumni boards to help keep skills courses up-to-date and play a critical role in the College's Student Learning Assessment Program. The Alumni Advisory Board of the Tombras School of Advertising was established in 2020 to help advise and support the programs of the School of Advertising & Public Relations. As with the College's Board of Visitors, the Tombras Advisory Board meets twice yearly and advises the school on curriculum issues and to engage with students. The JEM Alumni Advisory Board connects faculty and administrators to various areas in the field and meet and provide feedback at least on an annual basis.

The College also leverages its strong alumni network to organize visits for groups of students to visit advertising and public relations agencies, TV and radio stations, and other media companies in cities such as New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Washington, D.C. For example, in 2022, the Tombras School reinstated its annual trip to New York City following a COVID hiatus. This trip is a week-long visit of students and faculty to several major advertising and public relations agencies and media companies located in New York. The trip also includes a reception for students with New York alumni. It is important to note for those students who are unable to afford the travel costs, the College provides scholarship assistance as it does not want finances to be an obstacle for students.

A new alumni engagement opportunity takes advantage of the Communications Building's terrace space located directly across from Neyland Stadium, home to the University of Tennessee football team. The dean hosts a tailgate for each home game and invites 200-to-300 guests, and has found it to be a great way to engage with alumni and potential donors.

There are several methods the College leverages to connect with alumni and industry professionals, including an alumni newsletter that is updated frequently, social media channels, and various networking opportunities for faculty and students. The College and Schools periodically survey graduates on their overall satisfaction with their educational experience and applicability of their degrees to working in their chosen fields. In addition, alumni and industry professionals are asked to review syllabi and sit in on various classes to help provide feedback on how the Schools can assure the courses align with current practices in journalism and mass communications.

(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.

College faculty members have made presentations at the AEJMC Conference and American Academy

of Advertising, among others. The School of Journalism & Media brings distinguished science journalists to campus to discuss contemporary issues in science and research through the annual Alfred and Julia Hill Lecture. The College's annual Social Media Week brings in participants from the College community, including area alumni and professionals, to share insights and best practices. Participants in the 2023 event included representatives from the Associated Press and WRAL-TV.

(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.

Faculty members throughout the School complement their teaching through service to the community. Faculty and students alike have contributed to those programs in a real, meaningful way that delivered a positive civic impact. For example, the ADPR capstone courses have provided support to nonprofit programs in the community and there is a positive effort with JEM in partnering with high school newspapers.

Many members of the JEM faculty are actively involved with professional organizations such as the Tennessee Press Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, and more specialized professional associations. In addition, nearly all faculty are members of at least one academic professional organization such as the AEJMC. Faculty also work with local professional organizations such as ADPR, PRSA, SPJ, and the Atlanta Chapter of the Women in Cable and Telecommunications. JEM faculty and students regularly interact with students from Knox County's Fulton High School, which is a magnet school for communications students, most of whom are from underserved populations.

The College also supports the University's Flagship High Schools initiative in which faculty visit underserved communities and introduce high school students to the fields of journalism, advertising and public relations.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The School of Journalism & Media has a strong history of support for scholastic journalism. Several regularly serve as judges in professional and high school journalism competitions. Journalism faculty have also helped high schools establish an online presence for their journalism programs and developed workshops for high school teachers to instruct them on building successful news sites for their high school newspapers. Additionally, faculty members have hosted and made brief presentations about their courses to visiting high school journalism classes.

The Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations hosts a large group of high school students each semester with the goal of introducing those students to the fields of advertising and public relations. These students also gain hands-on experience and learn about working in an advertising or public relations agency. There is also outreach to several schools across the state in partnership with the University's Flagship High Schools program to introduce students to the prospective majors and fields of study.

SUMMARY:

Both the School of Journalism & Media and the Tombras School of Advertising & Public Relations are committed to engaging with alumni and industry professionals and supporting scholastic journalism. Faculty and students alike benefit from those experiences by improved course work and assignments. From a service standpoint, both Schools have a demonstrated commitment to placing the skills of their students to work on behalf of the various communities the University serves. The School has also deepened its commitment to identifying and developing emerging talent at the high school level. Evidenced by its multiple alumni boards, professional development workshops, plus student and faculty involvement in community engaged workshops and experiences, the unit fulfills its obligations to its community and alumni.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- The dean has brought an atmosphere of energy and enthusiasm to both Schools and is regarded highly by the Chancellor, the Provost, peer deans, faculty, staff and students.
- The Schools are outstanding partners with units in other Colleges across the University.
- Students have tremendous respect for, and feel enormous gratitude to, the faculty for proactively engaging them in course and skills learning, study abroad opportunities and making connections for them to hiring managers in the professional world.
- The Schools have strong alumni support.

Weaknesses

- While the site team found the Schools in compliance on Standard 4 because of their robust DEI efforts in general, it did note a low number of underrepresented populations on the faculty and within the student body.
- The JEM assessment effort was woefully deficient in terms of clearly demonstrating how the process is used to keep curricula up to date and in closing the loop.
- The Schools have not used enrollment and retention data as effectively as they could have.

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

Standard 3. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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.

There were no deficiencies with the Tombras School (ADPR) assessment plan or process.

Deficiencies that need to be addressed in the School of Journalism and Electronic Media (JEM) include:

- The assessment plan was last adopted formally in 2017 and not consistently kept up to date during the review period
- Lack of time and resource allotments so that the JEM assessment committee could formally revise the plan, then ensure, on a regular basis, that it remained current
- Communication and collaboration between the assessment and curriculum committees
- Lack of coherent statements within the plan clearly articulating all ACEJMC direct and indirect measures
- Curriculum matrices that clearly map courses to ACEJMC values and competencies

- Lack of evidence that the curriculum committee has implemented changes based on assessment data
- No direct indication that student performance on ACEJMC competencies was performed by anyone in any of the courses
- The assessment plan does not adequately measure student performance with regard to ACEJMC competencies

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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.

It is quite clear that the self-study could have benefited from more participation from administrators and faculty across both schools, and a strong editor who could have ensured more parallel data from both schools. Portions of the report were not cohesive or efficiently written. There were factual errors that had to be tracked down by the site team and then corrected by the Schools. There were numerous other discrepancies between data in the self-study and data discovered by the site team on the ground. These are excellent Schools with great stories to be told. Unfortunately, portions of the self-study didn't tell some of them very well.