

## Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Undergraduate program

2019-2020

Name of Institution: SUNY Buffalo State

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Katherine S. Conway-Turner

Name of Unit: Communication Department

Name and Title of Administrator: Deborah Silverman

Date of 2019-2020 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 10-13, 2019

If the unit is currently accredited, please provide the following information:

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Oct. 13-16, 2013

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2019-2020 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

### Team Chair

Name and Title: Brad Rawlins, Interim Director

Organization/School: School of Media & Journalism, Arkansas State University

Signature

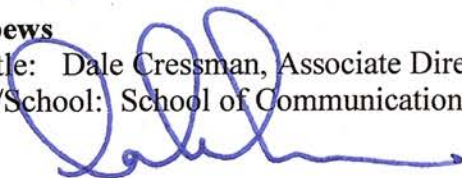


### Team Membews

Name and Title: Dale Cressman, Associate Director

Organization/School: School of Communications, Brigham Young University

Signature



Name and Title: Shirley Staples Carter, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Organization/School: College of Information and Communications, University of South Carolina

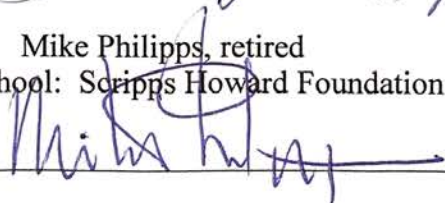
Signature



Name and Title: Mike Philipps, retired

Organization/School: Scripps Howard Foundation

Signature



## PART I: General information

The team should insert here the updated General Information pages prepared by the unit in advance of the visit and provided in a Word document. The pages may be copied and pasted. **(DO NOT ACCEPT these pages in a PDF.)**

**Name of Institution:** SUNY Buffalo State

**Name of Unit:** Communication Department

**Year of Visit:** 2019-20

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

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

*If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:*

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

Buffalo State originally was called the Buffalo Normal School when founded in 1871 as a training school for teachers; in 1888 it changed its name to the State Normal and Training School. The primary mission of training teachers continued in 1928 when the name was again changed, this time to the State Teachers College at Buffalo (signifying a collaboration with New York's higher education initiatives), and in 1946 when it became the New York State College for Teachers at Buffalo.

On April 14, 1947, the State University of New York system was ratified by the legislature and came into existence in 1948. The legal parameters can be found in an amendment to the New York Consolidated Laws Chapter 16, Title I, Article 8, Section 352, Paragraph 3. The college was incorporated in 1948 as a college offering arts and sciences.

More name changes would follow as Buffalo State's mission evolved: In 1950 it was known as the State University College for Teachers at Buffalo; in 1960 the State University College of Education at Buffalo; in 1962 the State University College at Buffalo; in 1993, Buffalo State College; and, in 2012,

SUNY Buffalo State, alternately Buffalo State (SUNY) and Buffalo State (The State University College).

Buffalo State holds the designation of Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities Larger Programs.

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

Yes  
 No

**If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit:** 2013

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

2008 provisional (Journalism, Media Production, Public Communication majors)  
2010 Accreditation (in the majors mentioned above)  
2013 Accreditation (in the above majors)

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

**Mission Statement**

The Communication Department of SUNY Buffalo State is:

- A faculty of scholars serving the communication disciplines by creating new knowledge and effectively sharing existing knowledge within a community of scholars and media professionals.
- A faculty of educators preparing students to think analytically and creatively, communicate clearly, act ethically, and succeed professionally. (Adopted 2001; revised 2018)

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

Semesters of 16 weeks  
Summer sessions of 2, 4, 6, 11 weeks until 2018; starting in 2019 sessions of 5, 5 and 11 weeks  
Intersessions of 3 weeks in January

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

Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree

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

B.A. in Journalism  
B.A. in Media Production  
B.A. in Public Relations & Advertising (formerly B.A. in Public Communication; name change effective summer 2019)

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

120 semester credit hours

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

Internships are 1 to 3 credits per semester, though almost all students take the 3-credit option

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Journalism (B.A. degree)	**
Media Production (B.A. degree)	**
Public Relations & Advertising (B.A. degree)	**

\*\* The department does not formally recognize a sequence chair, though the senior member in each major will lead their colleagues on issues.

Besides these three professional sequences in accredited B.A. programs, the department also offers a non-accredited B.A. in Communication Studies degree as well as a non-accredited, online M.S. in Public Relations (Dr. Deborah Silverman serves as coordinator of the M.S. in Public Relations program).

Additionally, the department offers a minor in speech with three students enrolled in spring 2019 and four in fall 2018. There is also a SUNY-designated certificate program in Sports Communication, although no students have enrolled in the sports certificate program in the past two years.

COM also lends administrative support to the highly regarded Television and Film Arts program. COM was once the administrative department for TFA, but it is now an interdisciplinary BA program. COM also participates in the following interdisciplinary programs and/or minors: Writing, Digital Music Production, Women and Gender Studies.

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

Fall 2018 → 9,118  
 Spring 2019 → 8,323  
 Fall 2019 → 8,736

**14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence and total (if the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total):**

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate majors in Fall '18/Spring '19
Journalism	104 (fall '18) /91 (spring '19)
Media Production	145/137
Public Communication	100/92
Communication Studies (not accredited)	133/117
Total	482/437

Buffalo State’s enrollment has dropped by 24 percent in the past six years, and that is reflected in the Communication Department’s enrollment, which experienced a 25 percent drop. There are several possible explanations for the enrollment decline at the college, including our department. First, Buffalo State largely draws on an applicant pool of high school graduates from Buffalo and elsewhere in Western New York state, which has declined in the past six years; as a result, the college is recruiting more actively in other parts of New York state, notably in New York City. Second, our feeder schools—SUNY’s community colleges—have lost 15 percent of their student population, according to Buffalo State’s Office of Institutional Research. This directly impacts the Communication Department because we accept many community college students as transfers. Other SUNY comprehensive colleges have lost 7 percent. So it can be seen that neither Buffalo State, nor the Communication Department, has been immune to the downward trend in enrollment that has also affected 34 states since 2012.

The college is also dipping lower into the applicant pool when it accepts students; more incoming Buffalo State freshmen today have high school GPAs of 70 percent to 80 percent, compared to 10 years ago. Many of these students are underprepared for the rigors of college academic life, and they struggle in their freshman year. As a result, Buffalo State has a lower retention rate. According to information from Buffalo State Interim Provost James Mayrose, in fall 2018, Buffalo State’s retention rate was 60.9 percent, compared to 73.3 percent in fall 2013, when the ACEJMC site team last visited the Communication Department.

To address this problem, Buffalo State has instituted a number of measures. These include the implementation of mandatory advising in fall 2017, use of a new Bengal Success Portal (“Starfish”), required notes to students in Degree Works by faculty advisers during advisement, the use of more full-time faculty to teach freshmen (in order to strengthen connections with students and thus, increase retention) and in fall 2019, the hiring of several “completion coaches” through a \$2.19 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education to better serve low-income students. Details about Buffalo State’s Title III initiative are available here: <https://titleiii.buffalostate.edu/about-title-iii>. The college also is examining non-academic issues of students, such as housing; financial aid; behavioral, motivation, and readiness issues; and health/mental health issues.

In addition, the Communication Department is working with the Admissions Office this fall on the creation of a survey to be administered to prospective students who decided to attend college elsewhere in order to learn more about this situation. The Communication Department also has stepped up its recruitment communication efforts to Buffalo-area high schools, including new department brochures mailed to high school guidance counselors in Western New York and paid social media campaigns targeting high school students interested in communication majors in college.

**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 the preceding term. 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.)**

Enrollments in lab classes

**SPRING 2019**

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>CRN</b>	<b>enrollment</b>
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1028	9
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	4063	16
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1034	16
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1035	16

COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1656	15
COM303W PRINT NEWS REPORTING	1355	10
COM303W PRINT NEWS REPORTING	1892	16
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	4066	16
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	2221	16
COM308W PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING	1356	15
COM308W PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING	1870	11
COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1664	17
COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1666	17
COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1667	16
COM322 COM GRAPHICS	1551	16
COM322 COM GRAPHICS	1552	17
COM328 AUDIO PRODUCTION	1663	16
COM329 INTERMEDIATE TV STUDIO	1553	16
COM329 INTERMEDIATE TV STUDIO	3028	17
COM336 WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA	1865	18
COM336 WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA	1872	15
COM338 ELECTRONIC NEWS REPORTING	1554	16
COM405 ONLINE NEWSROOM	1599	9
COM429 TV STUDIO PRODUCTION	2759	18
COM431 ADVANCED VIDEO PRODUCTION	4416	17
COM432 ADVANCED POST PRODUCTION	4075	16
	<b>total</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>ONLINE</b>		
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	1867	16
	<b>total</b>	<b>16</b>

**FALL 2019**

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>CRN</b>	<b>enrollment</b>
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1379	16
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1380	4
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1460	16
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1461	6
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	1462	14
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	3124	9
COM210 CONVERGED MEDIA WRITING	3493	5
COM303W PRINT NEWS REPORTING	1587	12
COM303W PRINT NEWS REPORTING	1793	6
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	3054	13
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	1464	8
COM308W PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING	1465	2
COM308W PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING	2799	4
COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1967	15

COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1800	14
COM312 BASIC PRODUCTION	1663	16
COM322 COM GRAPHICS	2060	16
COM322 COM GRAPHICS	2061	4
COM328 AUDIO PRODUCTION	1665	16
COM328 AUDIO PRODUCTION	2706	8
COM329 INTERMEDIATE TV STUDIO	1429	16
COM336 WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA	1384	16
COM336 WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA	1794	8
COM338 ELECTRONIC NEWS REPORTING	2406	9
COM405 ONLINE NEWSROOM	1801	12
COM428 ADVANCED AUDIO PRODUCTION	4102	16
COM432 ADVANCED POST PRODUCTION	2064	16
COM433 ADVANCED TV DOCUMENTARY	4103	15
	<b>total</b>	<b>312</b>
ONLINE		
COM304W WRITING FOR BROADCAST	3053	17
	<b>total</b>	<b>17</b>

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2019–2020 academic year: \$1,362,768 (2019-20)**

**Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

2018-19: \$1,362,768 → no change between 2018-19 and 2019-20

2017-18: \$1,260,768

2016-17: \$1,361,443

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$798,890 (If we include TFA and staff who also teach as adjuncts, the total is \$1,176,825.)**

**17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit in fall 2019. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.**

Dorothea Braemer, Assistant Professor  
 Dr. Bruce Bryski, Associate Professor  
 Dr. Annemarie Franczyk, Associate Professor  
 Therese Fuerst, Lecturer  
 Dr. Ruth Goldman, Associate Professor  
 Meg Knowles, Associate Professor  
 Dr. Ann Liao, Associate Professor  
 Joseph Marren, Professor  
 Latrese Myers, Lecturer  
 Dr. Michael Niman, Professor  
 Dr. Deborah Silverman, Chair and Associate Professor

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2019. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2019. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2020, please provide the spring 2020 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

<b>FALL 2019 ADJUNCTS</b>
Brennan, Sean
Cornwell, Mary
Davis, Margo
DiMaio, Gabriele
Gaughan, Robert
Hudson, Stanton
Johnson, Holly
Karnath, Erick
Masiulionis, Mary Jane
Meyer, Brian
Notarius, Ellen
Pabico, Maria
Paige, Susan Mary
Park, Debra
Parson, Derrick
Passantino, Gina
Pergament, Alan
Ranney, James
Schulman, Susan
Walgate, Frances
Wiese, Sara
Zbaczyniak, Jay

**19. Schools on the semester system:**

**For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.**

Year	72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications		
	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percent
2018-2019 academic year	106	106	100%
2017-2018 academic year	133	133	100%

Please see the tables that follow.



Report of on-site evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2019-2020 Visits

DEGREES AWARDED 2017 - 2018				DEGREES AWARDED 2018 - 2019			
<b>FALL 2017</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl	<b>FALL 2018</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl
COM	4	4	100%	COM	11	11	100%
JBS	6	6	100%	JBS	5	5	100%
MDP	3	3	100%	MDP	3	3	100%
PCM	9	9	100%	PCM	8	8	100%
<b>J-TERM 2018</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl	<b>J-TERM 2019</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl
COM	0	N/A	N/A	COM	0	N/A	N/A
JBS	0	N/A	N/A	JBS	0	N/A	N/A
MDP	2	2	100%	MDP	0	N/A	N/A
PCM	1	1	100%	PCM	0	N/A	N/A
<b>SPRING 2018</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl	<b>SPRING 2019</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl
COM	23	23	100%	COM	16	16	100%
JBS	18	18	100%	JBS	14	14	100%
MDP	25	25	100%	MDP	19	19	100%
PCM	24	24	100%	PCM	18	18	100%
<b>SUMMER 2018</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl	<b>SUMMER 2019</b>	# grads	# in compl	% compl
COM	6	6	100%	COM	5	5	100%
JBS	1	1	100%	JBS	1	1	100%
MDP	4	4	100%	MDP	5	5	100%
PCM	7	7	100%	PRA	1	1	100%

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

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a). The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit. The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).**

The Department of Communication at SUNY Buffalo State is housed in the School of Arts and Humanities. Buffalo State is the largest of the 13 SUNY colleges, and the department is the largest communication program in the SUNY system. The department, which was established in the 1970s and given its current name in the 1980s, is the largest in the school and the fourth-largest academic department in the college.

The department's strategic plan was first adopted in 2005 and most recently revised in November 2018. The plan begins with a mission and values statement and was updated after a SWOT analysis for six goals: academic excellence, students, faculty, alumni-media engagement, reputation and communication, and diversity & inclusiveness. Each goal outlines specific strategies, metrics for success, and designates oversight. There are no timelines for completing the strategies and some of the strategies seem to carry over for several years, such as the need to develop an electronic portfolio, which has been a goal for nearly 14 years. The college does not seem to be concerned with holding a unit accountable for reaching its strategic plan.

While the strategic plan does not specifically identify resources needed to meet each goal, the department's budget requests are indirectly tied to the strategic plan.

The department had not uploaded its annual update to the ACEJMC searchable database prior to the site visit, but it was uploaded before the visit was completed.

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

Department bylaws provide policies and procedures for faculty governance. The bylaws were last updated in 2017. They include detail about the role of the chair and associate chair, and nine standing committees. Faculty members chair, participate and engage in these committees and present to the department meetings. Five faculty also serve in chair-appointed positions that provide service to the department.

Several faculty members are also very active at college-level faculty governance. For example, the former department chair is the chair of the Buffalo State College Senate. College peers commented that the department faculty and the chair are very active and engaged across the campus and that they are seen as leaders in several efforts.

The faculty are unionized at Buffalo State, which provides them with another level of authority at the university. However, there does not appear to be any tension between faculty and administration in the Communication Department. Faculty described the environment as welcoming, supportive, collaborative and engaging and gave praise for administrative leaders.

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

The department has a history of stable leadership. In 2018, Deborah Silverman was elected as the eighth chair in the unit's 42-year history. Joe Marren was chair from January 2011 to July 2018. Faculty describe Silverman's leadership as "collaborative," "nurturing," "energetic," "organized," "level-headed," "an advocate for the department" and described her as someone seeking ideas and well-connected in the university.

She has the respect of her colleagues around the campus and is highly regarded by her dean. Professional members from the community and alumni see her as an effective and innovative leader. For example, when the Buffalo Broadcasting Association met with her to discuss an idea for highlighting broadcasting accomplishments, she helped turn the project into a large-scale collaboration between professional broadcasters and students to begin producing a television series that would air on a local channel on Sunday evenings.

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

The process for selecting administrators is described in the department's bylaws. Evaluation of the department chair is conducted in the last year of the chair's three-year term. The associate chair leads the faculty evaluation to recommend continuation or non-continuation to the dean. When a new chair is sought, the recruitment committee shepherds the search process until faculty members are ready to select their preferred candidate by majority vote. The candidate is then recommended to the dean. The process allows for internal and external searches. The last two chairs were selected from among the faculty members.

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

The unit follows the guidelines prescribed by the college's student and faculty handbooks. The pathway for student grievances are clearly outlined. The department has on average one student grievance per year. A review of previous grievances and appeals confirms the department follows the policies to completion and documents the appeals. Two faculty grievances were elevated beyond departmental oversight during the last six years. Both grievances were fully investigated to the college's satisfaction.

**SUMMARY:**

The department has a culture of faculty governance and is led by an energetic, innovative, caring and widely-respected chair who has ambitious plans for the unit but is challenged by a limited budget and stretched human resources.

**Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:**

COMPLIANCE

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

**a). The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.**

The unit reports it is 100 percent in compliance with the Council's 72-hour rule among graduates over the preceding two academic years. Spot checks, interviews and observations found no indications of non-compliance.

**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 competencies listed by the Council.**

The Department offers three sequences for re-accreditation: journalism, media production and public relations and advertising. A fourth sequence, communication studies, is not under review. The unit also offers certificates in Sports Communication and Public Affairs Communication.

The curriculum appears heavier on skills than on concepts.

Examinations of the curriculum map and interviews with faculty, students and alumni suggest the 12 ACEJMC competencies have been incorporated in courses offered by the unit. The unit asserts the competencies have been part of the curriculum for more than 10 years. A review of syllabi reveals the application of values and competencies are uneven across the curriculum and even within multiple sections of a single class.

The Communication BA requires a total of 120 credit hours. All students in the sequences under review are required to take 42 credit hours from within the unit.

The unit requires all majors in the sequences under review to take at least one basic media production class, except for Public Relations and Advertising. According to the department, students in Public Relations and Advertising are strongly encouraged to take media production courses, particularly one that teaches them video production.

Of the 42 hours, all students in the sequences under review are required to take five core courses that total 15 credit hours. These core courses are:

- COM 100 Media Literacy
- SPC 205 Introduction to Oral Communication
- COM 210 Media Writing
- COM 215 Introduction to Visual Communication
- COM 450 Communication and Society (This capstone course revisits ACEJMC core competencies such as law, ethics, diversity, global awareness and critical thinking.)

With respect to each sequence:

### **Journalism -- B.A.**

Journalism is the second largest sequence with 104 students enrolled at the time of the site visit. These students are required to take an additional seven courses, totaling 21 credit hours:

- COM 302 Principles of Journalism
- COM 303 Print News I: Reporting
- COM 312 Basic Media Production
- COM 338 Electronic News Reporting
- COM 325 Feature Writing or COM 337 Electronic News Producing
- COM 400 Communication Law
- COM 405 Online Newsroom

Journalism students also are required to take additional elective courses totaling six credit hours which may come from within their sequence or from anywhere within the unit. Electives available within the sequence are:

- COM 488 Internship
- COM 495 Special Project
- COM 499 Independent Study

### **Media Production -- B.A.**

Media Production is the largest sequence, with 145 students enrolled at the time of the site visit. Seven courses (21 credit hours) are required for the program:

- COM 304 Writing for Broadcast (TV, Radio, Film)
- COM 312 Basic Media Production
- COM 317 Media Management or COM 400 Communication Law
- COM 328 Intermediate Audio Production
- COM 329 Intermediate Video Production
- Two classes from the following list:
  - COM 428 Advanced Audio Production
  - COM429 Advanced Multi-Camera Studio Production
  - COM 431 Advanced Field Production
  - COM 432 Advanced Post Production
  - COM 433 Advanced Documentary Production
  - COM 434 Advanced Video Production Practicum

Media Production students can then tailor their course of study with several options that can be selected from the courses above, or, if they want a broader perspective, from other departmental majors such as Public Relations and Advertising, Journalism, or Communication Studies.

Finally, students must take any COM or SPC 300 or 400 level course to be used as a major elective.

## **Public Relations and Advertising --B.A.**

At the time of our visit, the department reported there were 100 students enrolled in the PR and Advertising program, making it the smallest of the professional sequences.

This program, which was recently renamed from Public Communications, has a strong public relations emphasis. The introductory book for COM 301, Principles of Public Relations and Advertising, is a public relations strategic planning book. The required courses also rely more heavily on public relations content. The following courses are required:

- COM 301 Principles of Public Relations & Advertising
- COM 307 Group Communication or SPC 407 Organizational Communication
- COM 308 Public Relations Writing
- COM 322 Communication Graphics or COM 336 Web & Social Media
- COM 401 Applied Communication Research
- COM 418 Campaigns in Public Relations & Advertising

Public Relations and Advertising students also are required to take additional elective courses totaling six credit hours that may come from within their sequence, which include courses in advertising such as Copy Writing, or from anywhere within the unit. As one faculty member noted, it might be more accurately be named Strategic Communication because the program blurs many of the elements between the two areas. The curriculum follows many of the recommended content from the latest report on PR education from the Commission on Public Relations, such as writing, research, planning and campaigns. The unit is considering adding an ethics course to the requirements, which would provide more balance between theory and skills. Students receive significant training in codes of ethics and ethical situations, but the curriculum currently lacks the theoretical foundations for teaching moral reasoning through ethical dilemmas.

**c). Instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.**

Overall, instruction appears to be of high quality. The faculty appears dedicated and their classroom instruction effective. Classroom observations and conversations with students suggest students are engaged learners who have affection for their instructors and appreciate their preparation, expertise, availability, and encouragement. Some students suggested some unevenness in the rigor and organization of online courses.

With respect to each sequence:

### **Journalism -- B.A.**

Faculty demonstrated professional proficiency and teaching observed was competent and responsive to student needs and questions. Observed teaching was conducted in a relaxed environment, there was minimal lecturing and students participated actively. Students uniformly reported that faculty are available outside of the classroom and are engaged and supporting. Some faculty provide students with their mobile phone numbers.

The unit attempts to actively anticipate industry developments and modify the curriculum accordingly. Academic standards are continually reviewed and increased. The faculty regularly updates course

content and the curriculum. Social media is addressed in many applied courses and the unit offers advanced Media Production courses in such areas as graphics and editing.

### **Media Production -- B.A.**

Faculty observed exhibited both professional competence and sound pedagogy in video and audio production skills, including field production and studio production, use of cameras, lights, and audio recording devices. Faculty provide a relaxed environment in which students feel comfortable asking questions. Instructors made ample use of visiting professionals as visiting speakers. Students are provided opportunities for active participation. For example, in an Introduction to Visual Communication class, students participated by setting up and taking down lights, as they were taught both the mechanics of lighting and the principles behind light temperatures. Students reported that their faculty mentors are available to them outside of class and participate with them in productions and in such activities as job fairs.

### **Public Relations and Advertising -- B.A.**

The faculty members teaching public relations bring many years of professional experience and some continue to work as consultants. Students described their classes as providing relevant and up-to-date content. Social media practices are infused into nearly every course, but, as one faculty member admitted, there could be more emphasis on social media measurement and analytics. Students have access to computer labs with the latest Adobe software and are required to enhance their production skills by taking a class in either graphics or web/social media production. A review of the syllabi provides evidence that classes are demanding and that teachers have high expectations for professional-level outcomes. Current employers and internship providers remarked that students coming from Buffalo State are much better prepared than students from other universities in the area.

#### **d). Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1. (Campaigns classes are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

The unit reports no skills classes contain more than 20 students. The site team found no evidence, either in enrollment records provided or in its observations, of skills classes or labs larger than 20 students.

While the department does not control all its own classrooms, it does have control of its computer labs, where skills and laboratory classes are held. These rooms have no more than 18 computers, which limits course sizes.

#### **e). 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.**

The unit does not require internships, but they are “highly recommended for the journalism, media production and public relations and advertising majors.”

A minimum of 150 hours of on-site time, approximately 10 hours a week throughout the 15-week spring or fall semester, or 15 hours per week for the summer semester, is required for credit.

A Communication Department faculty supervisor monitors the intern's work and serves as a liaison between the department and the work site. A professional at the work site directs the intern's work and

provides on-site guidance. The professional supervisor provides feedback and evaluation of the student's work performance.

With respect to each sequence:

### **Journalism -- B.A.**

Journalism students are required to successfully complete COM 302 Principles of Journalism, COM 303 Print News I: Reporting, and either COM 337 Electronic News Producing or COM 338 Electronic News Reporting before they are allowed to enroll for an internship.

Journalism students intern in the editorial departments of area newspapers or magazines or in radio or television newsrooms. Student interns are expected to do entry-level professional work, monitored by the department and their internship supervisor.

Journalism placements include:

- Bee Group Newspapers (reporter)
- Buffalo News (city desk)
- The Challenger (newspaper reporting)
- Chameleon Communications (radio productions)
- Cheektowaga Times (reporting)
- Lockport Union-Sun & Journal (reporting)
- Niagara Gazette (reporting)
- WFSB TV3, Hartford CN (news reporting)
- WGR Sports Radio
- WGRZ TV-2
- WIVB TV-4 (news room)
- WKBW TV-7 (news room; production; graphics, AM Buffalo production)

### **Media Production -- B.A.**

Media Production students are required to successfully complete COM 304 Writing for Broadcast and COM 312 Basic Media Production before they are allowed to enroll for an internship.

Students intern in a variety of outlets, ranging from radio and television stations to video production companies. A representative of the Buffalo Broadcasters Association reported that Buffalo State Media Production students appear far more prepared to interview for internships than do students from neighboring institutions. News directors of a local television station and a local public radio station report they not only welcome interns from the Communication Department, but often end up hiring them.

### **Public Relations and Advertising -- B.A.**

Public Relations and Advertising students are required to successfully complete COM 301 Principles of PR & Advertising and COM 308 PR Writing before they are allowed to enroll for an internship.

Public relations and advertising students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one internship. The location in the second-largest city in New York provides many excellent opportunities for the students. Students who complete the internships are supervised and evaluated by the department's internship coordinator. Recent internships include the following:



- American Red Cross/Buffalo (public relations)
- Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers (public relations)
- Buffalo Police Department (public relations, DARE program)
- Canisius College (public relations)
- Cardinal O'Hara High School (public relations)
- Carr Marketing Communications (public relations)
- Center for Earthquake Engineering Research, University at Buffalo (public relations)
- Child & Family Services (public relations/publications)
- Collins & Company (public relations agency)
- Delaware North Companies (public relations; advertising/marketing)
- Erie County Fair (public relations/marketing)
- Erie County Medical Center (public relations)
- Gelia, Wells & Mohr (advertising agency)
- HSBC Bank (public relations)
- Intertech Digital Entertainment Systems (marketing/public relations)
- Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study (public relations)
- Masten District-City Council (public relations)
- Niagara Buffalo World Connect (public relations/fundraising)
- NYS Assembly Majority Leader's Office (public relations)
- Shea's Performing Arts Center (public relations)
- Travers Collins & Company (public relations)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (public relations)
- Univera Healthcare (public relations)

For those students who chose to participate in an internship, the experience appears robust. The internship sites are selected by interns in consultation with the department's academic internship coordinator.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The unit provides a vibrant curriculum in three professional areas. Students are engaged and appreciative of faculty availability and mentoring. Students are involved in internships, projects and co-curricular activities that lead to jobs.

#### **Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

COMPLIANCE

## PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a). The unit has a written diversity plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty 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 and identify the under-represented groups.**

The unit has a written diversity plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population that is part of the six goals in its strategic plan: academic excellence; students; faculty; alumni media engagement; reputation and communication; and diversity and inclusiveness. As part of the unit's strategic plan, the Diversity and Inclusiveness Plan includes strategies, action steps and metrics for achieving curricular diversity, student diversity, and faculty diversity. The current plan was updated and approved by the faculty in November 2018.

**b). The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit's curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

According to the self-study, the unit considers fostering an understanding of diversity and inclusion as a high priority for faculty. A 2013 survey of full-time and part-time faculty showed that a majority of instructors valued diversity/inclusiveness as reflected in syllabi, subject matter, textbooks and other resources such as speakers, etc.

Students reported familiarity and awareness of diversity in some class assignments, guest speakers, and other activities within the department. A review of course syllabi reveals some coverage of underrepresented groups in course content, but not in all of the courses in the core curriculum.

Buffalo State College requires each student to take at least one designated Diversity course as a graduation requirement, such as SPC 309 – Persuasion and Propaganda, SPC 311 – Intercultural Communication, or SPC 333 – Race, Class, and Gender in the Media, offered by the department and making the unit a leader in contributing to the requirement.

**c). The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.**

Since the last accreditation visit, the unit has hired one African American male as a part-time faculty member and two African American females, one as a part-time faculty member and another as a full-time lecturer, as part of a "grow our own strategy" to attract more African American faculty. The lecturer hire is being mentored and encouraged by the department chair to pursue her doctorate in anticipation of applying for a future tenure-track position in the department.

Other efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff include participation in the college's PRODI-G Program. This program attracted an African American candidate to whom an offer was made, but she declined. The department chair continues to work with the college's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer to attract diverse faculty through the Buffalo State Faculty Fellowship

and SUNY Faculty Diversity programs.

Within the department in general, oversight of full-time diversity recruitment falls under the purview of the recruitment committee, whereas recruitment of professionals for part-time faculty is overseen by the department chair and full-time faculty.

**d). The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education in the region or population it serves, with special attention to recruiting under-represented groups.**

As noted in the previous site visit report, the department has an impressive record of recruiting and retaining a diverse student population: 38 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic, 4 percent multiracial, 1 percent Asian, 0.63 percent international, 0.42 percent American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.21 percent unknown.

**e) The unit has a climate that is 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.**

Interviews with faculty indicate the unit is collegial, accommodating, accessible, welcoming and free of harassment and all forms of discrimination.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The unit's high percentage of African American students underscores the need to increase diversity among the faculty. Students themselves have expressed such a desire. Other diversity efforts –inclusive curriculum and guest speaker series-- are commendable.

#### **Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

COMPLIANCE

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

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

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

**Academic year: 2018 – 2019 Full-time faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African-American	0	0%	0	0%
White	7	17%	3	7%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	1	2%	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%

**Academic year: 2018 – 2019 Part-time/adjunct faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African-American	1	2%	0	0%
White	13	32%	14	34%
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	1	2%	0	0%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%
International (any race)	0	0%	1	2%

## PART II — Standard 4: Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

#### **a). The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.**

The unit's written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff are described in the Faculty Handbook and Promotion and Tenure guidelines, as spelled out in tenure-track faculty's letter of expectation at the time of hiring. Pre-tenure faculty members are provided an extensive evaluation on their performance in their first, third and fifth years. If credit for prior service is granted, evaluations are provided, but will occur on a different schedule.

The department's personnel committee coordinates peer observations and reviews for non-tenured faculty and others seeking contract renewal or promotion. The faculty handbook indicates part-time faculty should be evaluated every four semesters via peer observations by peer faculty, but discussions with both full-time faculty and part-time faculty suggest these evaluations have not been consistent in the past six years.

#### **b). Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service.**

In terms of teaching, the unit relies heavily on part-time faculty to teach lower division courses, an area suggested for improvement in the previous site visit report. The full-time faculty to part-time faculty ratio is decreasing. For example, in spring 2019 full-time faculty taught 51 percent of upper division courses compared to 46 percent in fall 2019. The part-time faculty have exceptional qualifications, but the oversight of these courses by full-time faculty has diminished recently. Part-time faculty are not required to meet with full-time faculty to discuss pedagogy and course resources and there is no part-time faculty orientation. Some part-time faculty take the initiative to reach out to full-time faculty, but it isn't required.

Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for research/creative activity and service in the unit.

The department and school identified the need for additional faculty in public relations and advertising, especially considering there is only one tenure track position for this program.

#### **c). Credentials of the unit's faculty represent a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise kept current through faculty development opportunities, relationships with professional and scholarly associations, and appropriate supplementation of part-time and visiting faculty.**

The full-time faculty is balanced in terms of professional and scholarly experience. Of the 11 full-time faculty in the three areas of media production, journalism, and advertising and public relations, there are five PhDs, two MFAs, one EdD and three MA or MS degrees. The unit has two full professors who are male, six associate professors, five of whom are female, one female assistant professor and two female full-time lecturers.

All full-time faculty have at least three years professional experience, and at the most 35 years. Only three full-time faculty have fewer than three years of teaching experience. All full-time faculty have to

demonstrate a commitment and balance to teaching, scholarship and service. Most have a 3-3 teaching load with a course reduction for administrative or heavy service responsibilities. For example, one faculty member receives a course reduction to serve as coordinator of Women and Gender Studies.

During fall 2019, the unit's 22 part-time faculty members had at least 10 or more years of professional experience; most had advanced degrees beyond the BA, including 10 MA or MS degrees, one PhD, one EdM, one MFA and one JD. The majority of the part-time faculty worked as full-time professionals, and almost half taught six credit hours instead of three.

**d). The unit regularly evaluates instruction, whether onsite or online, using multiple measures that include student input.**

The unit regularly evaluates instruction, whether onsite or online, by full-time faculty. However, evaluation of instruction by part-time faculty is uneven.

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

The communication faculty is highly regarded by campus peers and media professionals. Colleagues value communication faculty members for their expertise, passion, student-centeredness, and strong contributions to civic and community engagement.

**SUMMARY:**

The communication faculty is viewed across campus as providing strong leadership, and as being student-focused and passionate about teaching. According to one faculty member, the department is a great balance of professionals and academics, PhDs and academic rigor and training, and collegiality. Concern about the heavy reliance on part-time faculty is tempered by the part-time faculty members' strong academic and professional credentials, and teaching experience.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

COMPLIANCE

## **PART II — Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity**

### **Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

#### **a). The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity.**

The department's mission statement describes the unit as a faculty of scholars actively engaged in creating and sharing knowledge with other scholars and professionals. The strategic plan also includes faculty scholarship as an important goal and includes a strategy to continue to fund scholarship activities.

Faculty travel is supported, usually between 60 and 80 percent of the total cost, until funds are depleted. Funding comes from the school, not the department. The dean's office receives chair-endorsed travel requests from all of its departments and distributes its \$45,000 annual travel budget based on the quality of the research project. Several faculty members from the department have recently received travel funding.

Faculty are eligible for a sabbatical after receiving tenure, but it is not guaranteed. The decision for the sabbatical is made in the provost's office. One faculty member successfully applied for and was granted sabbatical since the previous reaccreditation.

#### **b). The unit specifies expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity in criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure.**

The department uses the college's tenure and promotion document which requires scholarship for tenure-track faculty hired as assistant professors. Tenure-track faculty are expected to have terminal degrees in the discipline. Scholarship is broadly defined and can include scholarly research, creative works and performances. The expectation for tenure and promotion to associate professor is that the level of scholarship will reach a national level and demonstrate a "cohesive line of thought." The document does not prescribe minimum requirements, such as a number of scholarly works to be produced over time, and allows candidates to also submit works in progress during the review.

After a faculty member is hired, she or he meets with the chair and a senior member of faculty to develop an expectation letter. The letter clearly outlines expectations in teaching, service and scholarship and is used for all subsequent reviews, including annual, third-year and final reviews for tenure and promotion. The senior faculty member often serves as a mentor for the pre-tenure faculty member. For pre-tenure candidates, the standard expectation is that he or she will produce three scholarly products before the sixth-year review. For traditional scholars, that would mean a peer-reviewed article in an acceptable journal. Substantial creative works are also considered, especially among the media production faculty, such as a juried film.

There is no post-tenure review at the college, in accordance with union governance. The incentives for scholarship after tenure are annual merit evaluations and promotion to full professor. However, there is concern by the department that the promotion criteria to full professor at the university are too ambiguous, resulting in a growing number of associate professors.

#### **c). Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition account for and acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members' professional as well as scholarly specializations.**

The letter of expectation provides clear evaluation criteria for each faculty member. This letter is developed with the pre-tenure faculty member to ensure that it reflects his or her professional and scholarly specializations. Annual reviews and third-year reviews provide in-depth evaluation and feedback to the candidate pertaining to his or her progress. There is currently one pre-tenure faculty member who described the process as “very clear.”

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

To fulfill the mission of being a faculty of scholars, the department regularly publishes and makes publicly available its scholarship. This responsibility primarily lies with the tenure-track faculty, as lecturers and adjunct faculty are not expected to produce scholarship. Since the last reaccreditation, the current faculty line-up, made up of approximately 9 scholars, has produced 4 books, 10 book chapters, 24 scholarly presentations, 10 creative works, 4 works for professional outlets, and 4 grants. This was determined after the site team reviewed the CVs of the current scholarly faculty because the table provided in the self-study had conflicting data and was the “best estimate” of the unit.

**e). The unit fosters a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, critical analysis and the expression of differing points of view.**

Faculty members expressed support for their research agendas, and said that they feel very comfortable even exploring subjects that some might consider controversial. To quote one faculty member, “compared to other places I’ve lived, this place is a bastion of liberal acceptance.”

#### **SUMMARY:**

While primary focus of the department is on quality teaching, scholarship is expected and the faculty regularly produce a variety of publications and creative works each year.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**



Report of on-site evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2019-2020 Visits

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (20)
		Full Professors (3)	Associate Professors (12)	Assistant Professors (3)	Other Faculty** (2)	
Awards and Honors	2	2	1			3
Grants Received Internal	2		5	4		9
Grants Received External	3	1	1	6		17
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	1		1			1
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	2	1	2			4
Performances	3			14		14
Book Chapters	3	3	6	2		11
Invited screenings/productions	3	2	2	18		23
Articles in Refereed Journals	3	6	10	6		26
Refereed Conference Papers	4	5	15	6	2	28
Invited Academic Papers	2	2	13			15
Encyclopedia Entries	1		4			4
Book Reviews	2	13	3			17
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	2		1	1		2
Juried Creative Works	3	1	7	4		16
Non-juried Creative Works	2		16	12		28*
Other (Curated)	1			2		2

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

#### **a). Faculty and/or professional advising staff ensure that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising.**

The college's mandatory advising requirement became institutional policy in the fall of 2017. All students are required to attain a PIN to register via Banner. One advising tool is Degree Works, an online academic planning program to ensure students and faculty advisers maintain up-to-date records and note keeping on the courses and requirements for graduation. The student registration guide, Banner, is another advising tool.

The unit has a professional adviser for incoming students (freshmen and transfers), and faculty advisers. Both use email, social media, the unit website, YouTube, class announcements, bulletin boards throughout the department, video monitors, fliers, faculty websites and the department blog to inform students of advising deadlines.

Faculty, the professional adviser, alumni advisory board and the college career development center provide career advising to communication majors.

#### **b). Faculty are available and accessible to students.**

The communication faculty's availability and accessibility were touted by students as one of the outstanding qualities of the department and college. Students are encouraged to meet with advisers during academic advising periods as well as whenever they need academic or career advice. Students praised the quality of advising by department faculty.

The University's Academic Commons also provides drop-in advising sessions, supplementing the department's advising sessions.

#### **c). The unit keeps students informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the unit.**

The unit provides academic roadmaps for each of the three majors to ensure they are informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the unit. The unit also uses the website to augment that effort. These roadmaps provide 14-course, 42-hour course requirements in three categories: communication core, required major courses, and departmental electives.

#### **d). The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.**

The unit meets this criterion through programming provided by PRSSA, collaborations with the Buffalo Broadcasters Association, Buffalo Association of Black Journalists, the Communications Honor Society, and the Fall Communication Research and Creativity Forum, a department-sponsored research conference to showcase student work and work-in-progress. Students apply to present a 15-minute oral/video presentation or a poster presentation detailing the work. In addition to the Communication Department's Fall Forum featuring student research in November, many of the Communication students participate in Buffalo State's Student Research and Creativity Conference in the spring, usually held in early May. The department's Alumni Advisory Board is scheduled annually to evaluate student

portfolios, and students attend career workshop sessions provided by the department and college career development center.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in student media such as the student newspaper, The Record, the student radio station, WBNY, and student TV station, BSC TV. These are not controlled by the department.

**e). The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its website.**

At the time of the site visit, the unit's enrollment, retention and graduation rates were posted on its website for the dates 2005 through 2017.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The unit's student services provide excellent academic and career advising to its students that students praise on the basis of faculty availability and accessibility.

#### **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 unit appears to have little real control over the budget it provided in the self-study and is reliant upon the dean of the School of Arts and Humanities for virtually all important budget decisions. According to the self-study:

- The budget has a common incremental percentage adjustment based on the previous year, that is said to be “common” throughout all units within the School.
- The self-study asserts “There is no way to request increases” because the School adjusts budgets primarily to cover contractual requirements for salaries for all full-time faculty and staff. However, increases are indirectly requested each September, when the dean asks the unit chair for a list of full-time position requests. If any are approved, salaries are negotiated by the dean and they are then funded.
- Budgeting for adjuncts is also handled by the dean’s office. The self-study is silent on the details of requesting and funding adjuncts.
- Funding for spending other than personnel “has not substantially changed in many years.”
- Most faculty input comes in the form of annual spring equipment requests that are coordinated by a unit technology committee before being sent to the School for consideration by the dean who has final authority. Almost \$90,000 in such requests currently are said to be pending from the “most current” request.

The strategic plan document makes a priority of ACEJMC accreditation, and, in a separate non-priority action step, seeks alignment with the assessment standards and all ACEJMC competencies.

The dean of the School of Arts & Humanities says the strategic plan is considered when determining funding for the unit.

#### **b). The resources that the institution provides are adequate to achieve the unit’s mission. The resources are fair in relation to those provided other units.**

SUNY Buffalo State is in the third year of a three-year plan to close a \$7 million budget deficit. The first-year goal was to reduce expenditures campus-wide by \$1.4 million, with followed by a \$2.8 million reduction and another \$2.8 million reduction in current academic year. Such efforts test the resourcefulness of the unit and the campus as a whole. Meanwhile, according to a May message from the College President, declining enrollment and the attendant reduction in tuition revenue, projects an additional \$2.4 million gap between revenue and expenses in the 2020-21 academic year. This suggests funding will be a long-term issue.

The self-study asserts “fiscal resources are not equal within the School of Arts and Humanities,” but notes that is “due to the varied nature of its departments.” Note, however, that during the 2018-19 fiscal year, the School of Arts and Humanities allocated \$196,292 to 10 departments for non-personnel

spending. The department average across the School was \$19,629; for the Department of Communication the allocation was \$16,027. Its expenditures are significantly higher than many other majors without lab or studio courses.

The unit has, however, successfully lobbied for money to upgrade and support programs and equipment, including planned construction of new TV studio facilities in what is becoming its main location, Buckham Hall. The unit also has been successful in getting \$250,000 for Avid Server, 40+ Station licenses and for AirSpeed, as well as \$350,000 for high definition studio cameras and related equipment to make major upgrades to its TV studio.

The self-study limited its examination to the School of Arts and Humanities and is silent on how resources compare to other units campus-wide.

Overall, the unit's resources, though extremely limited, appear to be adequate, even if only barely adequate, to fulfill and sustain its mission. However, long-term sustainability may require more creative and robust solutions than those now contained in the unit's strategic plan.

Despite its funding issues, the unit does not seem out of line with the experiences of other departments within the school and other institutions within the SUNY system.

**c). The facilities of the unit enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.**

The Communication Department moved in June 2017 to newly renovated office space in Buckham Hall. The department has no classrooms designated specifically for departmental use. Therefore, students might be attending classes in their major anywhere on the 125-acre campus. Unit facilities include:

Department suite: The office suite in Buckham Hall includes the chair's office, secretary's office, workroom/mailroom, conference room, several storage rooms, and adjunct office with storage space and computers.

Faculty Offices: Most full-time faculty each have private offices in Buckham Hall where there is also newly-renovated laboratory space. This is said to provide greater opportunity to interact with students between classes.

With the Buckham Hall renovation, all faculty were moved out of Bishop Hall, which was located a few steps from the Donald Savage Building where the studio is currently located. Buckham Hall is about a 10-minute walk from the Savage Building. The unit maintains a small conference room in the Savage building and faculty members, especially in Media Production, split their time between the two buildings.

Computer labs: The department has five full computer labs with up to 18 stations each. The equipment in the lab is replaced every four years. They are located as follows:

- Buckham Hall -- Three full computer laboratories. An audio lab. A "one-button mini studio," which allows nontechnical users to make video recordings in a studio environment. A user simply plugs a flash drive into a USB port and pushes a button to start recording. The Buckham labs are primarily for writing and editing (including graphics), and are equipped with appropriate software. However, one of them, the Stripes Media Lab, is capable of more advanced editing and interfacing with other computers.

- Donald Savage Building -- Two full computer labs. The Savage labs are designated mainly for Media Production and affiliated Television and Film Arts use with appropriate software.

Production facilities: The Donald Savage Building houses audio and visual production facilities, including:

- A 1,500-square-foot TV studio
- A 650-square-foot control room
- Five video editing suites, totaling 310 square feet
- Two audio production and editing suites of 170 square feet each.
- A 200-square-foot viewing room.
- A 500-square-foot storage area where students can check out reporting and production equipment

There also is a media equipment storage area in Buckham Hall.

Meanwhile, the self-study reports plans are being drawn up to move the TV studio, control room, edit suites, main equipment room, and possibly adding a soundstage, viewing rooms and additional offices to Buckham Hall. Preliminary plans call for TV studio facilities and a soundstage to be in a former gym with high enough ceilings to accommodate necessary lighting and other equipment.

Student media: United Students Government, which falls under the vice president for student affairs, has provided separate space in the Campbell Student Union for WBNY radio, BSC-TV, and The Record, the college's student newspaper.

The unit is advocating for The Record to be relocated adjacent to the student radio and TV stations in the student union, which would allow the media organizations to collaborate more. In the long term, however, the unit is advocating to relocate all three student media organizations to Buckham Hall, a process which must be reviewed and approved by several college committees.

The unit provides adequate space for adjuncts to meet with students.

**d). The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment or access to equipment to support its curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty.**

The unit purchased an AVID server and other television studio equipment for students in the Media Production major from 2017-19.

Lab fees (currently \$75 per production course) are currently bringing in approximately \$40,000 per year to support maintenance, repair and software licenses. Five computer labs with 17 stations in each are replaced by the college on a four-year rotation. Additional funds provided by the Dean of Arts and Humanities each year generally results in purchases of approximately \$25,000 in replacement/new equipment. In addition, the provost made two major investments in the last five years (approximately \$250,000 for Avid Server, 40+ Station licenses and AirSpeed, and approximately \$350,000 for HD Studio cameras and related equipment to make major upgrades to the TV studio).

Student quality production equipment may be borrowed by any Buffalo State student enrolled in a Communication course that charges the lab fee. Students must have filed an information card each

semester with the equipment room in Savage Hall. Equipment may be picked up in the afternoons and may be returned during morning hours.

Equipment checkout is limited to two nights per week or, on Friday, for the weekend, depending upon availability. Equipment may be reserved up to 2 weeks in advance, although exceptions may be made for date-sensitive projects.

Students can reserve editing suites up to 4 hours per day, up to 3 times per week, in advance. Additional time is available if suites have not been reserved by others.

Interviews with students suggest that shortage or condition of equipment are not issues.

**e). The institution and the unit provide sufficient library and information resources to support faculty and student research and professional development.**

E. H. Butler Library contains more than 675,000 printed volumes, over 174,000 electronic volumes, and provides access to full-text articles from over 57,000 unique print and electronic journals. In addition, the library houses several special collections and the Buffalo State Archives. The library's Information Commons provides computing support, research assistance, and equipment loan services. The Writing Center, located in the library, provides assistance to students throughout all stages of the writing process.

The facility appears adequate to support the unit.

There are no library facilities contained within the unit.

**SUMMARY:**

Despite financial constraints, including a near total lack of control over its own budget, the unit has been largely successful in acquiring the up-to-date equipment needed to provide a robust learning experience. The unit has adequate, if only barely adequate, resources to fulfill its mission. Careful consideration must be given toward long-term sustainability if the program is to prosper.

**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 is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching, whether on-site or online, current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The unit asserts it “continually adapts to current industry standards in order to offer our students the best preparatory education for careers in journalism, media production, public relations and advertising.”

To accomplish these ends, the self-study asserts that “most contact with professional media practitioners and organizations has been through individual faculty members since a number of us are also members of local communication organizations.”

The unit has established an advisory board made up mostly of alumni to offer professional input, critique programs and help keep teaching current with evolving industry expectations. The board was established in 2018 in response to a deficiency noted by the 2013 site team visit and virtually all of its members are employed in media or communications. Ten members are alumni, four are regional professionals.

The board is still new and presumably the relationship is evolving. Nevertheless, it is beginning to have an impact. In February of 2019, the board, in a letter to the college president, called for consolidation of departmental studios and labs in one building and also requested student media be housed in one wing of the Student Union. The board’s suggestion is under serious consideration and a budget is being drawn up by college administrators.

The advisory board’s role also has been made a part of the unit strategic plan.

Advisory board meetings are described as “very informal” and the board does not produce minutes.

The unit has established a faculty Alumni Affairs Committee as one of the department’s standing committees. It is intended to strengthen the unit’s relationships with alumni through reunions and special events. The unit experimented with an alumni newsletter, but it was deemed unsuccessful and discontinued.

Alumni regularly return to campus or appear in Skype video conferencing presentations.

Local and regional professionals regularly are invited to campus to discuss with students and faculty how national events are covered, talk about their work and examine professional and ethical issues arising from that work.

The unit maintains a Facebook site, cited recently by the college’s social media manager as one of the best and most active department Facebook presentations at Buffalo State.

The unit has access to the college’s alumni office list of alumni in and outside of Western New York. Invitations to specific events are sent to alumni from these lists, “when appropriate,” according to the self-study.

**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.**

A review of faculty vitae shows engagement in workshops and discussions and panels aimed primarily at professionals and occasionally at the general public. Faculty members serve or have served on local and area governing bodies of professional organizations. At least one serves such organizations at a national level.

The unit attempts to maintain and increase contact with local and regional professionals through a biennial Professional Achievement Award, given to alumni or those with “long-standing record of service to the department.”

**c). The unit contributes to the improvement of journalism and mass communication as academic disciplines by supporting the faculty’s involvement in academic associations and related activities.**

Broad involvement in academic associations is constrained by budget considerations, but such engagement is not discouraged and is supported where possible.

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

The unit has begun an ambitious project with the Buffalo Broadcasters Association to “show Buffalo’s rich history and the people who influence it,” told through the eyes of members of the Buffalo Broadcasting Hall of Fame. The project includes Media Production and Journalism students who will work directly with local professionals in creating a series of programs examining such topics as “Airplane History in Buffalo,” “Buffalo Bills -- History of the Team,” and “Frank Lloyd Wright Buffalo” on a series of 30-minute Saturday evening prime time broadcasts to be aired on Sinclair Broadcasting’s WNYO. Production begins in January and the first of eight episodes will be broadcast in September 2020. The project arises out of the school’s close connection to the broadcasters association.

The unit operates Buffalo Review – West, a community-outreach project associated with the COM 405 Online News course. Students in the class cover the surrounding neighborhood with a high percentage of immigrants and refugees.

Discussions with faculty find that service-learning opportunities are incorporated throughout the curriculum.

In fall 2017, the unit mentored a group of African American Boy Scouts through their journalism badge. This was a one-time activity at the invitation of the scout troop.

**e). The unit supports scholastic journalism through such activities as faculty workshops, visiting lectures and critiques of student work.**

The unit offered high school journalism summer workshops in 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. Although the program has lapsed, the self-study asserts “there is a potential that some form might re-emerge.”

**SUMMARY:**

The unit has a robust culture of service learning and contributing to the local community is among the unit’s strengths.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

*The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another. Please respond to each of these questions in your report on indicators (a), (b) and (c):*

#### **a). The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of the Council.**

- Who is in charge of the assessment program (e.g., administrator, sequence coordinator or faculty committee)?

According to the self-study, assessment activities are conducted by a committee of four faculty members with the same faculty member serving as chair throughout the current reaccreditation cycle. In addition to leading assessment activities, the committee is responsible for producing a yearly assessment report, accompanied by recommendations for any changes the data suggest. The site team was provided with an assessment report dated Fall 2019 and one dated Spring 2014.

- How has the unit verified that core and required courses cover all 12 of ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies?

The self-study states the department has adopted ACEJMC’s 12 professional values and competencies for its learning outcomes (the two diversity-related values are collapsed into one, while a topic unrelated to ACEJMC’s values and competencies, public speaking, has been added as the 12th). However, the values and competencies don’t appear to be mentioned anywhere outside the self-study and assessment report. No other mention is made of program learning outcomes in syllabi or the self-study. In essence, it appears the values and competencies substitute for program learning outcomes. Syllabi all appear to have course-level learning outcomes, but they are not mapped to program learning outcomes nor to ACEJMC’s values and competencies. The unit confirmed that program learning outcomes do not yet exist.

- How has the unit ensured that the syllabi for these courses state learning outcomes that address the values and competencies appropriate for each course?

The assessment plan suggests that, for each of the values and competencies, the unit reviewed syllabi “to ensure that revision is being implemented.” However, there is no evidence this has been done. Unit representatives were unable to confirm that follow-up occurred. Furthermore, a site team review of syllabi reveals inconsistencies within multiple sections of the same class. COM 100 syllabi, for example, suggested that the class learning outcomes varied from one section to another and that not all mentioned law, ethics, or history—outcomes that were all reported as measured in the course during earlier semesters.

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

- What direct measures of assessment does the unit use, where in the curriculum and when?

The unit has a written plan that specifies it uses multiple direct and indirect measures. For direct measures, the self-study says the unit relies upon portfolio reviews and assignments or tests from five classes. Knowledge tests in COM 100 Media Literacy accounted for direct assessments in 2013 of law, history, and diversity; in 2014 on ethics, and research; and in 2015 on technology. The senior essay in COM 450 Communication and Society provided direct assessments in 2013 on diversity; in 2014 on

law, and history; in 2015 on ethics; in 2016 on technology; in 2017 in statistics; and in 2018 on critical thinking, research, and writing. An editing skills test administered in COM 450 also provided assessments of editing in 2016 and 2019. Visual communication skills were assessed in COM 215 Introduction to Visual Communication during 2013, in COM 322 Communication Graphics during 2013, and in COMM 336, Web and Social Media Production in 2013. All these are required classes, with the exception of COM 322 and 336, which are required only of Public Relations and Advertising students, and they can choose one of the two. Visual communication was also assessed through portfolios in 2013. However, findings could not be located in the self-study or assessment report.

Following the last reaccreditation, the unit's assessment committee composed a schedule for assessing the values and competencies on a four-year cycle. However, after concluding that some competencies required more frequent assessment, the schedule of direct assessments was more recently revised to the following:

2013-2014: law, history, diversity  
2014-2015: ethics, research, law  
2015-2016: editing, technology  
2016-2017: statistics, visual communication  
2017-2018: law, ethics, public speaking, research, critical thinking, writing  
2018-2019: editing

This schedule suggests each of the values and competencies were scheduled to be assessed at least once during the reaccreditation period (editing, ethics, and research twice and law three times).

•What indirect measures does it use, where and when?

The self-study makes reference to two Silver Student Excalibur Awards (PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter)—one in 2017, the other in 2019. Additionally, SUNY Buffalo State recognized the department's development of COM 301 Principles of Public Relations and Advertising with an Outstanding Service-Learning Course Award in 2016.

The assessment plan makes reference to annual surveys of graduates and a periodic survey of alumni. However, neither the self-study nor the assessment plan appeared to report results of these surveys, nor do they describe how they were interpreted or used. The unit confirmed these surveys have not been conducted during the current accreditation cycle.

• Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC's professional values and competencies?

The unit is measuring student learning, is attempting to establish a sustainable schedule for doing so, and intends to involve alumni professionals. However, it is not clear the unit is effectively assessing the professional values and competencies at present.

**c). The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

•How does the unit collect and analyze the findings and identify unsatisfactory learning of specific values and competencies?

The unit provided an assessment report, dated 2019, which includes measurements for each of the values and competencies as well as percentages of student performance as either exceeding, meeting, or approaching standards. Each set of data is followed by a "response goal" and "action steps." However, the report lacks detail. For example, in response to data collected on the law competency, the response goal is "The department will implement a series of steps to achieve higher levels of competence."

Action steps tend to be more specific, including such recommendations as reviewing syllabi and adopting common textbooks.

- What specific values and competencies had graduating classes not mastered satisfactorily?

In 2016, assessment suggested that 100% of seniors had failed the editing skills test in COM 450. These results led faculty to change the assessment instrument from copy editing a press release to a multiple-choice test of ten questions. When the test was administered in 2019, results suggested that 35 percent of Media Production students had failed to meet the unit's standards. As a result of the findings related to editing skills, faculty decided to require textbooks that specifically address grammar and writing for all courses that teach writing skills.

- How does the unit decide how to address these areas of concern and what actions did it take to do so?

The assessment committee reports its findings to the full faculty with recommendations for remedies. In a faculty meeting, the findings are discussed and a remedy is determined.

- How does the unit evaluate whether its actions overcame the weaknesses in student learning and what were the results?

It is unclear whether, in all cases, there is follow up on proposed remedies. In one instance, faculty decided to remedy writing deficiency by purchasing writing guides/style manuals to be placed on library reserve. However, in other instances, the assessment committee simply asks faculty to comply with the decided upon remedy but, later, is not aware of whether faculty members have complied.

The dean of the School of Arts and Humanities observed that the department assessment plan seemed "cumbersome," adding that he could see "no evidence of assessment driving curriculum decisions."

- Was the program of data analysis and action effective for identifying and overcoming unsatisfactory student learning?

Beyond percentages, there is little evidence of data analysis or interpretation. Furthermore, it is unclear how remedies are determined or whether they take effect.

**d). The unit maintains contact with the alumni to assess these experiences in the professions and to provide suggestions for improving curriculum and instruction.**

The unit states it previously had mixed results with alumni outreach. In response to this weakness, cited in the previous reaccreditation report, the unit in 2018 established an alumni advisory board, comprised of industry professionals, to provide input on curriculum and student portfolios. The board is scheduled to meet twice yearly, and is comprised of 10 alumni and four non-alumni, representing all areas of the major.

**e). The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.**

In Spring 2019, the unit conducted its first portfolio review with the participation of its newly-formed alumni advisory board. The self-study reports that "only a handful" of students attended, leading them to consider moving the event from springtime to fall. What the unit described as portfolio assessment was, in fact, student mentoring. Professional alumni met students to offer critique of portfolios and provide career advice. However, no assessment data was collected from this activity.

**SUMMARY:**

The unit is collecting and measuring direct and indirect evidence of student learning. However, measurements are sporadic, the single data report for this accreditation cycle lacks detail: recommendations for remedies are not explained and there appears to be no mechanism to ensure follow through. While the unit conducts portfolio reviews with the involvement of professional alumni, no data is collected. Finally, while the unit claims to have adopted the professional values and competencies, it does so only at the course level, while lacking program learning outcomes. Simply put, this unit does not have a culture of assessment. It lacks an authentic assessment program that measures whether students are meeting program learning outcomes or the professional values and competencies of ACJEMC.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**NONCOMPLIANCE**

### **PART III: Summary by site visit team**

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

#### Strengths

1. A faculty that has a balance of professional and academic experience and that passionately cares about student learning and preparing students for professional careers. These hard-working faculty members are collegial, accessible and genuinely committed to student success. The department is very student-centered and “punches above its weight.”
2. An energetic, innovative, caring and widely-respected chair who has a vision for improving the department.
3. A well-respected department that provides leadership on campus in civic engagement, student diversity, and collaboration with other units.
4. Strong industry ties that produce opportunities for students.
5. Newly renovated facilities in Buckham Hall that provide better space for computer labs, faculty offices and some production facilities. The department has also been successful in lobbying administration for up-to-date broadcast studio equipment.
6. A diverse and engaged student body.
7. Excellent part-time faculty members who are exceptionally qualified and who bring professional and academic experience to the classroom.

#### Weaknesses

1. Despite the quality of the part-time faculty, there continues to be an over-reliance on them and full-time faculty oversight has declined in recent years.
2. While the current efforts to recruit diverse faculty are commendable, and students recognize the inclusion of diversity-oriented exercises in classes, the department needs to realize its goal to add diverse faculty to its ranks. Students have strongly expressed the need for mentors who reflect their diverse backgrounds, or as one person put it: “You can’t be what you don’t see.”
3. The broadcast studio, production facilities and equipment are located across campus from the department, which creates challenges for students and faculty to collaborate more frequently and to build a culture of community.
4. Assessment fails to achieve its purpose of authentically improving student learning outcomes because it isn’t genuinely connected to program outcomes.

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

#### Standard 9, Assessment of Learning Outcomes

3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that should be addressed before the next evaluation (i.e., related to non-compliance with standards).

The unit needs to develop a culture of assessment, including authentic and sustainable measurement of program learning outcomes that leads to the improvement of curriculum and instruction. Whether the unit opts to map program learning outcomes to ACEJMC's professional values and competencies or it decides to adopt the values and competencies as program learning outcomes, the unit needs to expand beyond relying on course level learning outcomes. Either way, students need to be aware of values and competencies of the Council. While the formation of an alumni advisory board is noteworthy, its participation in the assessment of student portfolios should result in operational assessment data.

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

NA

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

NA

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

- a.) "The Department's reliance on part-time faculty for almost half of its major courses and for advising weakens its ability to control the quality of its curriculum and ensure a high-quality student experience."

ANSWER: Full-time faculty now advise the vast majority of unit students with the assistance of one professional adviser who advises incoming freshmen and transfers. Budget constraints mean the unit still relies on adjuncts for about half of total instruction, but nearly 70 percent of lower level courses. However, the quality of the adjuncts is extraordinary, virtually all having at least an M.A. degree. Some have PhD level degrees. Many have many years of teaching experience.

- b.) "Although the student fee for lab courses is helpful, the Department's budgetary constraints—on discretionary funds for use on equipment, technology and resources—threatens to keep it from moving its curriculum forward and providing faculty members and students the support they need."

ANSWER: Lab fees now produce about \$40,000 annually for equipment and the school administration has been forthcoming with hundreds of thousands of dollars of funding.

- c.) "The Department uses the word 'converged' in the title of at least one course, and faculty members and students are certainly aware of a fast-changing media environment. However, the curricula, overall, do not sufficiently integrate convergence across platforms and communication areas."

ANSWER: The curriculum is much more integrated with multiple platforms for media production, in each of the professional programs.

- d.) "The Department's data-gathering and analysis efforts around assessment are noteworthy, but the 'bang for the buck' on curricular improvements, informed by adequate professional input, is not evident."



ANSWER: The unit has established its Alumni Advisory Board to offer professional input into its curriculum. However, there continues to be an issue of gathering data without connecting it to improvements to curriculum and achieving program level outcomes.

- e.) “The Department’s focus on diversity in enrollment, in classes and across the curriculum is commendable but cannot substitute for diversity among the faculty.”

ANSWER: The unit has adopted a “grow our own” program to enhance faculty diversity that has helped produce one diverse faculty member and needs more time to help achieve its diversity plan.

- f.) “Although faculty members in the Department maintain strong individual relationships with alumni that benefit teaching and learning, the Department would benefit from better engaging alumni to improve its curricula and assessment.”

ANSWER: The unit’s new Alumni Advisory Board will offer alumni input about curriculum, and the unit strives to keep its alumni network viable.

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

The self-study lacked detail and was frequently imprecise, often using adjectives such “regularly” or “periodically.” The accounting of faculty scholarship was convoluted and inaccurate. The self-study said, though the numbers did not add up, it was their “best estimate,” and referred readers to “more precise information in the CVs.” The descriptions of the assessment activities did not reflect the reality of what is taking place. Readers are referred to pdf documents via links that didn’t work, such as a document claiming to show how the 12 professional values and competencies are implemented in required/elective courses. Overall, there could have been more care with elements of the document that could have assisted the site team in its evaluation.