

Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Undergraduate program

2019-2020

Name of Institution: University of Puerto Rico-Humacao

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Aida I. Rodriguez Roig

Name of Unit: Communication Department

Name and Title of Administrator: Héctor R. Piñero Cádiz, Ph.D.

Date of 2019-2020 Accrediting Visit: February 2-5, 2020

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: N/A

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: N/A

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: N/A

Recommendation by 2019-2020 Visiting Team: Accreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Marie Hardin, Dean


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

Signature 

Team Members

Name and Title: Lucy Dalglish, Dean

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

Signature 

Name and Title: Vincent Duffy, News Director

Organization/School: Michigan Radio

Signature 

Name and Title: Joanna Hernandez, MPA, Director of Inclusion and Diversity

Organization/School: College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida

Signature 

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: University of Puerto Rico at Humacao

Name of unit: Communication Department

Year of Visit: 2020

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

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.

The University of Puerto Rico at Humacao (UPRH) was founded in 1962 as the first Regional College of the University of Puerto Rico. Its initial objective consisted of providing students from the eastern region of the country access to the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) and to facilitate the transfer of its alumni to other UPR units with higher levels of academic offerings. During the first year of operations, a faculty of 21 professors served 267 students. In 1963, the Division of Continuing Education and Extension began offering evening and summer courses. In 1965, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools granted the Regional College its first accreditation.

The legal basis for the UPR at Humacao is Law number 1 of January 20th, 1966. [Please see appendix 1.d.](#)

By 1973, the Puerto Rico Legislature approved Joint Resolution No. 95, which renamed the Humacao Regional College as Humacao University College (CUH, by its Spanish acronym). For administrative purposes, CUH responded to the Office of the President of the University of Puerto Rico. Soon after, four-year academic began to be offered.

In 1982, the Council on Higher Education granted the College its autonomy, which permitted the designation of its first chancellor. Also, tasks that had been previously carried out by the University of Puerto Rico Central Administration were transferred to the CUH's directive bodies. In 1999, the UPR Board of Trustees authorized the change of the institution's name, from Humacao University College to the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao (UPRH).

At present, the UPRH offers twenty bachelor programs and four associate degree programs. It serves a population of 3,628 students with a regular faculty of 223 professors. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education granted its most recent reaccreditation in 2018. Furthermore, the following programs are accredited by their respective professional accrediting agencies: Social Work, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Accounting, Management, Human Resources, International Commerce, Office Systems Administration, English Elementary Level, English Secondary Level, Elementary Education with a Major in Primary Level and Special Education, and Electronics Technology.

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:

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

The unit has not been accredited by ACEJMC.

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

Revised mission adopted on June 8, 2016.

The program develops professionals capable of using digital multimedia technologies in order to play critical roles in cultural, social and economic affairs. Graduates will possess the theoretical, technical and practical competencies, in addition to the ethical disposition, needed for integration into civic

participation as well as the labor/business market mediated by information and communication technologies.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 15 weeks
 Summer sessions of 3.8 weeks

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

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

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

Bachelor of Arts with Major in Communication Technologies

With (2) Areas of Emphasis in:

- Audio & Video
- Graphic Design

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

The BA in Communication Technologies requires 129 credit/semester hours. The total of credits are distributed as follows, per year and semester.

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
1st semester 15 credit hours	1st semester 18 credit hours	1st semester 15 credit hours	1st semester 18 credit hours
2nd semester 15 credit hours	2nd semester 18 credit hours	2nd semester 15 credit hours	2nd semester 15 credit hours

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

3 semester credit hours - COMU-4336 Supervised Practice in Communication

4 semester credit hours - INTD-4995 First Work Experience*

*The student receives a payment from the agency that offers the internship.

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
Audio & Video	Dr. Héctor R. Piñero Cádiz
Graphic Design	Dr. Marcia Pacheco García

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

In the fall semester 2019-20, there were 3,207 students registered in UPR at Humacao Campus.

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	Number of students
Audio & Video	145
Graphic Design	91
Total	236

*Data as of August 2019

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.)

Numbers of Students in Skills Courses by Section (Spring 2020)		Students Enrolled
COMU-4007 001	Principles of Computerized Animation	18
COMU-4008 001	Production of Interactive Multimedia	16
COMU-4008 002	Production of Interactive Multimedia	14
COMU-3009 0E1	Fundamentals of Writing for Media	15
COMU-3118 001	Principles of Acoustics	15
COMU-3118 002	Principles of Acoustics	16
COMU-3118 0E1	Principles of Acoustics	10
COMU-3120 001	Advanced Audio and Video Production	15
COMU-3120 002	Advanced Audio and Video Production	11
COMU-3120 003	Advanced Audio and Video Production	7
COMU-3010 0E1	Introduction to Graphic Design	15
COMU-3116 0E1	Digital Graphic Design	6
COMU-3006 001	Introduction to Photography	15
COMU-3006 002	Introduction to Photography	14
COMU-3006 003	Introduction to Photography	14

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COMU-3119 001	Graphic Production	16
COMU-4010 001	Advanced Photography	11
COMU-4115 001	Writing, Rhetoric and Digital Media	19
COMU-4115 002	Writing, Rhetoric and Digital Media	20
COMU-4115 003	Writing, Rhetoric and Digital Media	22
COMU-4336 001	Supervised Practicum in Communication	9
COMU-4336 001	Supervised Practicum in Communication	9
COMU-4336 001	Supervised Practicum in Communication	9
COMU-4336 001	Supervised Practicum in Communication	4
COMU-4125 001	Writing and Style in Journalism	14
COMU-4129 001	Integrated Promotional Communication	8
AGRA-3039 001	Fundamentals of Typography	10
INTD - 4995 005	First Work Experience	3

Numbers of Students in Skills Courses by Section (Fall 2019)		
	Students Enrolled	
COMU-4007 001	Principles of Computerized Animation	16
COMU-4007 002	Principles of Computerized Animation	17
COMU-4007 003	Principles of Computerized Animation	16
COMU-4008 001	Production of Interactive Multimedia	16
COMU-4008 001	Production of Interactive Multimedia	14
COMU-3009 N01	Fundaments of Writing for Media	15
COMU-3009 N02	Fundaments of Writing for Media	15
COMU-3009 N03	Fundaments of Writing for Media	12
COMU-3018 001	Fundaments of Video Production	15
COMU-3018 002	Fundaments of Video Production	15
COMU-3018 003	Fundaments of Video Production	13
COMU-3010 N01	Introduction to Graphic Design	16
COMU-3010 N02	Introduction to Graphic Design	11
COMU-3010 N03	Introduction to Graphic Design	10
COMU-3116 001	Digital Graphic Design	12
COMU-3006 001	Introduction to Photography	16
COMU-3119 001	Graphic Production	15
COMU-4010 001	Advanced Photography	15
COMU-4127 001	Educational Communication	10
COMU-4336 001	Supervised Practicum in Communication	9
COMU-4326 001	Research in Communication	9

16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2019–2020 academic year:

\$685,653.00

Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:

2018-2019 academic year \$681,040.13

2017-2018 academic year \$763,518.75

2016-2017 academic year \$747,860.00

The Communication Department experienced a decrease of 10% over the past three years.

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

The Communication Department has a total of 5 full-time faculty members. The sum to be spent this year in their salaries is \$374,354.00.

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.

All of the following are currently teaching.

- Dr. Maximiliano Dueñas Guzmán Full Professor
- Dr. Héctor R. Piñero Cádiz Full Professor
- Prof. Gloria Yukavetsky Colón Full Professor
- Dr. Miriam Ramirez Muñoz Full Professor
- Dr. Marcia Pacheco García Assistant Professor
- Prof. Hilda Muñoz Aponte Instructor

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.)

Adjunct Faculty Spring 2019		Adjunct Faculty Fall 2019	
Prof. Anabeth Camps Martinez	Instructor	Prof. Maribel Bonilla Reyes	Instructor
Prof. Glorimar Velázquez Carrasquillo	Instructor	Prof. Glorimar Velázquez Carrasquillo	Instructor
Prof. Hilda Muñoz Aponte	Instructor	Prof. Anabeth Camps Martinez	Instructor

Adjunct Faculty Spring 2020	
Prof. Maribel Bonilla Reyes	Instructor
Prof. Glorimar Velázquez Carrasquillo	Instructor
Prof. Anabeth Camps Martinez	Instructor
Prof. Hilda Muñoz Aponte	Instructor
Prof. Jesús A. Fuentes Velázquez	Instructor

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.

Academic year	Total Graduates	Number in Compliance	Percent
2017-2018	34	34	100%
2018-2019	41	41	100%

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

Introduction and background:

According to the self-study, the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao (UPRH) was founded in 1962 as the first Regional College of the University of Puerto Rico. It was established to provide students from the eastern region of the country access to the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) and to facilitate the transfer of its alumni to other UPR units with higher levels of academic offerings. In 1965, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools granted the Regional College its first accreditation.

UPR-Humacao offers twenty bachelor programs and four associate degree programs to more than 3,500 students with a regular faculty of 223 professors. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education granted its most recent reaccreditation in 2018. The following programs are accredited by their respective professional accrediting agencies: Social Work, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Accounting, Management, Human Resources, International Commerce, Office Systems Administration, English Elementary Level, English Secondary Level, Elementary Education with a Major in Primary Level and Special Education, and Electronics Technology.

The Department of Communication was established in 1971, offering an academic program leading to an Associate Degree in Audiovisual Communications. Although the unit only initially offered an associate degree, its faculty was active in island-wide activities such as founding and providing leadership in an association of communication programs, the development of a video archive of cultural activities and the publication of a communication journal.

In June 2012, the Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Communication Technology was approved. The Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Communication Technology offers two areas of emphasis: graphic design and audio & video. The Department of Communication also offers service courses in educational technology for the Bachelor degree program in English.

The Department, housed in the Arts Division of the campus, is one of 16 departments at UPR-Humacao. The Chair reports to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who reports to the campus Chancellor. The Department has the highest enrollment in the Arts Division.

According to the self-study, severe budget cuts across the university system since 2008 have meant cuts in basic services such as access to the library. Last year, Middle States put the entire 11-campus system on probationary status, but its full status was reinstated in June.

The Department, however, has focused on ACEJMC accreditation throughout the budget cuts. Since before the baccalaureate program was established in 2013, the Department decided to pursue accreditation. The self-study states: “In fact, the proposal presented to the Office of the Vice Presidency of Academic Affairs of the UPR for the creation of our BA program was conditioned to its being subject to accreditation by the ACEJMC.” The unit received a pre-visit from ACEJMC in 2014.

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's current mission statement (provided in the General Information section of this report) was adopted in 2016. The revision was a result of internal discussions after an ACEJMC pre-visit in 2014. Compared to its earlier mission statement, the statement places a far greater emphasis on the development of students' proficiency as it relates to the values and competencies necessary to move into the professions.

According to the self-study, the Department's long-range plan must align with that of the University. The University's plan is a 10-year plan; the campus plan is a five-year plan; and the Department's plan is a two-year plan. It must be submitted to the university's Assessment Office for approval and publication. The unit submitted its most recent iteration of the plan during the 2018-19 academic year. The plan includes objectives relating to advising, assessment, enrollment and graduation rates for the Department.

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

Policies and procedures for faculty governance are provided in a UPR faculty handbook and general regulations.

The Department has a robust committee structure, although most committees comprise just two or three faculty members because of the small overall size of the Department. Committees include a curriculum committee, assessment committee, and personnel committee. The Department also has a liaison to the Academic Senate.

The faculty meet often. Although UPR regulations require two meetings a semester, faculty in the Department of Communication have been meeting each Friday during the current academic year to prepare for the AJEJMC site-team visit. Departmental committees meet separately.

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 Chair, Héctor R. Piñero Cádiz, is well liked by faculty, who describe him as a good listener and a problem solver. He also has a strong reputation among administrators in other units. He reports to the academic dean, Héctor Ayala del Rio. The dean characterizes the Chair as someone who moves quickly to address issues. "He comes with the problem and with the solution," the dean said, using Dr. Piñero's response to save equipment and relocate classes and faculty after Hurricane Maria in 2018, then the earthquakes in late 2019, as examples of quick problem solving that drew on his institutional knowledge and positive relationships across campus.

Site-team conversations with administrators and faculty members from across campus indicated that the Department enjoys a strong reputation. Its faculty members are seen as action-oriented and collaborative, and its students as highly engaged in the life of the community. One faculty member (and former dean) from another department said, "The faculty is like a family. Their students project those values on the campus, and that is very important." He added that the Department is "a very important piece in the development of the conscience of this campus."

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

UPR publishes guidelines for the appointment of administrators, and it requires consultation with members of the Department. The Department Chair has been in the role since 2012, after a vote of faculty, staff and students. A previous chancellor changed the appointment to “interim,” however, and the title was not removed until the new chancellor arrived and determined that designation should be permanent. There is no formal mechanism for annual faculty feedback on the Chair’s performance. The Chair serves at the pleasure of the chancellor.

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

The university has a set of regulations and a faculty handbook that spells out procedures through which to express grievances or concerns, and faculty members indicated they are familiar with those channels. They also report having great confidence in the Department Chair to listen and advocate for them. “He’s looking after our jobs,” one faculty member said.

Students with concerns can first address them with a professor, then with the Unit Chair. They also have student representatives who attend faculty meetings and can take student concerns to those meetings or to the Chair.

SUMMARY: The Department has a mission statement that focuses on preparing students for the professions; it has a strategic plan that aligns with campus and university priorities; and it has policies and processes that ensure faculty oversight of the curriculum. It has capable and well-respected leadership and a strong reputation across campus for its dedicated, collegial and knowledgeable faculty and for its engaged students.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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 Bachelor of Arts in Communication Technologies requires 129 credits to complete. However, most of these credits are outside the unit. To complete their degree requirements, students must complete 39 credits in the unit, 66 credit hours in general education and other courses outside the unit, and an additional 15 hours in liberal arts courses (also outside the unit), plus nine credits in “free electives.” Thus, the total of outside credit hours is 81. As the self-study notes, the curriculum was designed to comply with ACEJMC’s “80-65” rule, which has since been changed. The unit left this curriculum in place.

According to the self-study and a random check of student advising files, the Department meets ACEJMC’s requirement that 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two previous academic years meet the 72-credit-hour requirement.

However, the Department is planning changes that would align it with the current policy that requires just 72-credit hours outside the unit by increasing required courses in the curriculum to 51-credit hours. Group interviews with students indicate that they are eager for this kind of change. The only improvement they suggested for the curriculum was that they be allowed to take more courses in the Department, especially those that would allow them to advance and refine their basic skills. Some students said that courses that are currently electives in one or the other sequence should be mandatory.

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.

All students in the major take a core group of courses before moving into courses in their chosen sequence. The core courses are:

- 1) Introduction to Communication Studies COMU 3008 ^[L]_[SEP]
- 2) Literacy in Traditional and Digital Media COMU 3207
- 3) Writing, Rhetoric and Digital Media COMU 4115
- 4) Ethics, Law and Communication COMU 4128 ^[L]_[SEP]

One course in the core is a skills course (COMU 4115); the others are theoretical/conceptual. Depending on the sequence they choose, students must take the following additional courses, for a total of 24 credits.

Graphic Design

- 1) Introduction to Graphic Design COMU 3010 ^[L]_[SEP]

- 2) Introduction to Photography COMU 3006 [L][SEP]
- 3) Digital Graphic Design COMU 3116 [L][SEP]
- 4) Production of Graphic Materials COMU 3119 [L][SEP]

Audio and Video

- 1) Fundamentals of Writing for Audio-Visual Media COMU 3009
- 2) Principles of Acoustics COMU 3118 [L][SEP]
- 3) Fundamentals of Video Production COMU 3018 [L][SEP]
- 4) Advanced Audio and Video production COMU 3120 [L][SEP]

Courses that are required in both sequences are, for the most part, skills-focused and lab-based courses. The introductory graphic design course is taught entirely as a “pencil-and-paper” course, however, focusing on thinking creatively and learning the history and fundamentals of graphic design.

All students, no matter the sequence, choose two of the three following electives:

- 1) Principles of Computerized Animation COMU 4007
- 2) Production of Interactive Multimedia COMU 4008
- 3) Animation and 3D Graphics COMU 4009

They then choose a capstone experience: Either a research course or a practicum (internship) experience; they can also take two more elective courses in the Department. The overwhelming majority (more than 90 percent) opt for the practicum.

The self-study outlines the way the ACEJMC values and competencies map to the UPRH Communication Department learning objectives, and then to individual classes in the curriculum. Learning objectives are stated on the syllabi. The Department has 13 learning objectives, including some that map almost perfectly, such as: “Design and produce messages for different media and for new communication technologies.” Other learning objectives combine several ACEJMC values and competencies or introduce values not explicitly stated by ACEJMC. One example is the learning objective to “Plan as a team, problem solving and decision processes.”

There is a strong “social responsibility” ethos among the students and in the Department, and this is also reflected in the wording of the learning objectives. An example is the learning objective to: “Solve in an ethical, creative and entrepreneurial way the social, economic and cultural problems of Puerto Rican society, from the perspective of communication.”

Students report learning history, theory, critical thinking and technological skills in the program. There is also a strong emphasis on rights and responsibilities in their classes, and an emphasis on the ties between communication, freedom, and democracy. “We’re also taught the need to have humanity and empathy in our work,” said one student.

Of the ACEJMC values and competencies, the one that receives less attention in this program than in most accredited programs may be *writing*. The UPRH learning objective that maps to the ACEJMC writing-related competency is: “Correctly apply the knowledge and skills of Spanish orally and in writing.” The major is in Communication Technologies, and the sequences are both production and/or visually oriented. There is no companion sequence or major that emphasizes journalism or public relations, where writing is heavily emphasized. Thus, it was not a surprise when a radio station executive told the team that writing was the one “deficit” she sees in students from the program.

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.

A review of samples of student work, along with interviews with faculty, students and others, indicate that instruction is current and relevant.

Audio and Video

Students in the sequence must take a basic writing course, a course that focuses on audio production, and a course that focuses on video. Then, the Advanced Audio and Video Production course brings the various elements of production together and challenges students to work on group and individual projects. Students must produce a music video, an advertisement and a short documentary. Their end-of-semester “exam” is the production of a program multiple times, where students rotate positions. They seem to have a love-hate relationship with this exam, but they also uniformly expressed the value of the exercise.

Reflective of the general desire by students for more courses, some students in the sequence said they want a more advanced journalism course because the program has piqued their interest in careers in that field. (One student, for instance, was starting a practicum at a newspaper in San Juan the week the site team visited.)

Students say they are confident that they can either do contract work or gain full-time employment, based on the courses and other experience they get through the Department.

One recent Audio & Video graduate wrote in an email, “They benefited me in everything... Not only academically with theory and everything but also with practice... A lot of practice, that’s for sure. I’m 100% that not only me but most of my classmates we were ready to be introduced into the job market with confidence, because we knew what we were going to do.”

Graphic Design

Students start with a course that emphasizes the history and theoretical underpinnings of graphic design. Although they are not allowed to use digital tools in the course, students praise the class for laying the fundamental groundwork for the rest of the program. The students are also required to take a basic photography class before moving to courses that incorporate multiple digital elements.

The courses rely mostly on Adobe creative tools. Students report that the graphic design courses and electives (such as an interactive multimedia class and one on animation) are challenging and prepare them well for the professions. Many students in the program do freelance work and get advice from a professor in the Department on how to charge for those projects. “We’re getting excellent classes from excellent professors,” said one student. Another added – to nodding heads around the table – “I feel I have the skills where I can easily be hired.”

A May 2019 Graphic Design graduate, who started working at a local newspaper before he graduated and who now works at a design studio, told the site team that there have been no demands in his career for which the program did not prepare him. He added that the exposure he got to audio-video production in the program also gives him an advantage in the workplace.

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.)

According to the self-study, the Department complies with the 20-1 rule set by ACEJMC. According to rosters presented in the General Information section of this report and confirmed on site, both the Audio and Video and the Graphic Design sequences comply. This semester, one of 28 sections of skills courses in the curriculum exceeded the cap; in Fall 2019, none did. The Department Chair reported that when an occasional section exceeds the cap, it is because a student needs the course to graduate in that semester. The average number of students in lab/skills sections across both semesters was 13.

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 Department has a capstone practicum (internship) program that is popular with employers and students and has strong oversight by a faculty member. Although it is not required, most students in both the Audio & Video and the Graphic Design sequences take it. Employers are approved to become practicum sites on the stipulation that they will provide substantive experiences and will provide weekly feedback, in person, to students. Students are assigned to worksites, although they may indicate a preference. They report weekly on their activities, and when they have reached 80 hours on site, the supervising faculty member visits the site.

Students in the group interview expressed excitement about their practicum experience and their hopes that it would lead to employment. One student said the practicum had led to a job.

Employers, including those in San Juan (about 45 minutes by car), praised the quality of the program and the students. The CEO of a local radio station, which provides practicum experience for 2-4 audio-video students each semester, said that the students were of far greater quality than those coming from competing programs on the island and that she likes hiring UPRH graduates. A graphic design alumna, who did an internship in spring 2019 at a design firm with another student, told the site team that both she and the other student were hired upon graduation. She also reported that her supervisor has indicated plans to hire the current UPRH intern when she graduates.

SUMMARY: The program complies with ACEJMC requirements for the number of credit hours inside and outside the unit. It also complies with the requirement to cap skills courses at 20. Furthermore, it is providing students with an educational experience focused on learning objectives that align with ACEJMC values and competencies and one that gives them the competence and confidence to move into the professions.

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, 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 diversity plan, first written in 2012 when the major was designed, for achieving an inclusive, diverse, supportive environment. Diversity is defined as the differences — physical, social, economic, political, cultural and gender identity — of humanity. Diversity also focuses on the environment — promoting a respect for nature.

Minority/under-represented groups are identified as relating to religious beliefs, socio-economic class, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and people of Afro Puerto Rican and Dominican Republic descent.

The diversity plan was updated in 2016 and modified in 2019. The last two plans were influenced by a questionnaire surveying attitudes toward diversity and inclusiveness that was administered to students of graduating classes in 2015 and 2019.

The 2015 questionnaire served as a baseline and the one administered in 2019 assessed progress or the lack thereof toward diversity and inclusiveness. In addition, during weekly meetings in preparation for the accreditation process, faculty acknowledged some their own diversity biases, and now they are working on creating programming to engage in further faculty and staff discussions about biases.

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.

Course syllabi include learning objectives that demonstrate a commitment to social diversity and to the planet's conservation.

Some courses identified as addressing issues of diversity, inclusion and internationalization are:

COMU 3207, Media Literacy in Traditional and Digital Media

This three-credit course explores types of relationships concerning race, class and gender; identifies stereotypes, generalizations; and puts up for classroom debate such topics as whether one should be more alarmed by certain messages communicated through mass media or of the public's own personal interpretations. Global cultural imperialism is also looked at; for example, students are assigned projects in which they examine television programming in countries outside the United States — such as Chile and Turkey, which are currently exporters of some of the most popular Spanish-language soap opera programs viewed on the island.

COMU 4128, Ethics, Law and Communication

This required course takes a historical look at ethics and is committed to presenting students with social diversity and planet conservation. Lessons include looking at U.S., Puerto Rican and international laws that affect freedom of expression, press freedoms, human rights and social justice.

COMU 3009, Fundamentals of Writing for Audio-Visual Media

An objective of this required course for students pursuing a concentration in Communication Technologies (and an elective for other students) is to “evaluate prejudiced language (sexist, racist, among others) present in our culture and perpetuated through the media.” Radio and television programming for children, women, ethnic groups and minorities are also part of the syllabus.

COMU 3010, Introduction to Graphic Design

Students “plan a graphic communication related to diversity and social equity” in this required course for students pursuing a bachelor’s in Communications Technologies.

In addition, students are familiarized with internationalization through a variety of means, such as producing radio programming that is specific for a Dominican Republic audience and travel to Cuba.

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.

The last time the Department recruited for an open full-time tenured faculty position was five years ago, when a woman, Marcia Pacheco, was hired. The Unit currently has five full-time faculty, three of whom are women. There are five adjuncts; four are women.

**Full-time Faculty Populations by Race, Sex and Nationality
2019**

Nationality/race	Female	% of f.t. faculty	Male	% of f.t. faculty
Puerto Rican	3	60%	1	20%
Colombian	0	0%	1	20%
Black/African American	0	0%	0	0%
Other race	3	60%	2	40%

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.

The criteria for recruitment and enrollment are established by the university, and the Department does not have control over admissions. However, as a result of the self-study, the Unit became aware of differences in graduation rates between males and females, and, consequently, is focusing on strategies to improve the graduation rate of female students. In addition, during the self-study, faculty and student representatives were able to corroborate many of the program’s strengths: the prevalence of a supportive and amicable environment among students, faculty and staff; the continuous high demand for admission into the Unit; the growth in the size of graduating classes; the support and respect of the institution’s community for the Unit’s personnel and students; the achievements of faculty members in research, artistic creation and community service in the context of reductions in institutional support;

the quality and quantity of extracurricular activities carried out by the Department's student organizations; and the depth of the Unit's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

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.

Responses to the 2019 survey administered to the graduating class showed a high level of satisfaction among students on issues relating to diversity and inclusiveness. However, it also revealed new challenges, which include the perception of discrimination against certain minority/under-represented groups. There was also concern about the pervasiveness of male chauvinism among the student population, the absence or limited presence of female students in leadership positions in student organizations and their limited participation in tasks often identified with men, such as handling of video cameras or audio consoles. These challenges are addressed in the 2019-2022 diversity plan, and the Department has had some successes. For example, leadership of a sports student organization previously was exclusively male; two semesters ago, leadership was exclusively female. Also, the Unit is responsible for recording graduation ceremonies and it makes conscious efforts to ensure that women are hired for audio and video positions.

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.

SUMMARY: The Department has a written diversity plan. Assessment has been in the form of surveys administered four years apart. The curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Because of governmental budgetary cutbacks, the Department has not had the opportunity to recruit additional faculty or staff in five years. The criteria for recruitment and enrollment are established by the university, and the Unit does not have control over admissions. However, it became aware during the course of gathering data for the self-assessment of differences in graduation rates between males and females. Consequently, its focus is on creating strategies to improve the graduation rate of female students. It works towards supporting female students to achieve leadership status and work in tasks traditionally thought to be a male profession.

Overall evaluation, compliance/ noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

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.

UPR has rules for hiring, promoting and evaluating full-time faculty members. UPR regulations require any recruited candidates to have terminal degrees unless the opening is in a discipline where recruitment is difficult. The Department has five tenured or tenure-track professors and one full-time contract professor. Four professors have doctorates and two have master's degrees.

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

The full-time faculty have teaching loads that exceed the norm for accredited programs. In the fall 2019 semester, the average number of classroom teaching hours exceeded 17 credits. The four part-time contract lecturers taught 11 credits on average during fall 2019. Full-time faculty members teach, on average, 80-84 percent of the Department's courses. They are expected to engage in research and scholarly activities and perform service to the Department and campus.

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.

Full-time faculty members worked as professionals in a variety of communications-related disciplines before joining the academy. Three have earned doctorates in the past four years while teaching full time. They regularly speak and attend professional and academic conferences and workshops using a combination of grants from campus, philanthropic and NGO sources.

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

The self-study reports that full-time faculty members are evaluated by peers every year. However, faculty members report that peer evaluations occur every five years. Students evaluate all faculty at the end of each semester. Part-time faculty members are hired semester-by-semester and are evaluated annually by full-time faculty members.

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

Administrators from across campus praise the Communication Department faculty members for their leadership, diligence, dedication to students, willingness to collaborate and resilience. Noting the last-minute relocation of the program because of recent earthquakes and the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Maria, one colleague said, "You have no idea. They are incredible."

SUMMARY: The faculty at the Communication Department is well-prepared academically, possesses professional experience and has demonstrated its commitment to student, campus and community

service. Despite budget cuts, faculty members have worked hard to stay current with professional skills and to improve their teaching.

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

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.**

UPR regulations require full-time faculty members to engage in research, creative and professional activities. Severe budget cuts campus wide diminished the university's ability to fund these activities, although a limited pool of grants designed to promote research is controlled by the Dean of Technology and Research Affairs. Faculty members have sought creative solutions to support their research and professional activity by seeking outside grants from philanthropic and NGO sources.

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

Criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure are clear and enforced, and recognize scholarly and professional achievements.

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

Promotion, tenure and merit rules clearly outline expectations that recognize scholarly and professional expectations.

- 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.**

The Department's research portfolio is unusually robust for a faculty with such an intense teaching load. In addition to articles, books, peer-reviewed papers and juried creative works, faculty frequently write columns and articles, create broadcasts and podcasts, and serve as experts in popular media. In the past three years, faculty members have presented at academic conferences in Puerto Rico as well as New York University, the University of California-Berkley, Cuba, Spain, Turkey and St. Lucia. The last sabbatical awarded to a faculty member was seven years ago. That sabbatical was awarded, then revoked for financial reasons. Full-time faculty members have used a variety of alternative mechanisms to fund their research and travel, including grants from campus offices and a variety of local businesses and NGOs.

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

Faculty members report a supportive climate that supports intellectual curiosity, critical analysis and the expression of other viewpoints.

SUMMARY: UPRH promotes the development of research and professional activities among its faculty members. Despite financial problems, faculty members have used creative methods to fund research, conference attendance and continuing education programs

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Totals from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (10)*
		Full Professors (4)	Associate Professors (1)	Assistant Professors (1)	Instructors (6)	
Awards and Honors	7	3	2	2	0	7
Grants Received Internal	1	-	1	-	-	1
Grants Received External	4	1	2	1	-	4
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co- authored	4	1	1	1	1	4
Textbooks, Sole- or Co- authored	1	1 in progress	-	-	-	1
Books Edited	0	-	-	-	-	0
Book Chapters	0	-	-	-	-	0
Monographs	0	-	-	-	-	0
Articles in Refereed Journals	5	3	1	1	-	5
Refereed Conference Papers	15	9	1	1	5	16
Invited Academic Papers	6	5	-	-	1	6
Encyclopedia Entries	1	1	-	-	-	1
Book Reviews	2	2	-	-	-	2
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	29	7	-	-	22	29
Juried Creative Works	18	5	3	2	8	18
Non-juried Creative Works	33	9	1	3	24	37
Others (Academic Modules and Workshops)	11	8	-	1	2	11

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.

Students attend orientation sessions when admitted to the program and are required to meet with academic advisers at least once a semester to assess progress toward degree conferment. From sophomore year through graduation, they meet with advisers at least three times a year. There are three staff members responsible for advising: a full-time academic counselor; the Unit chair (who meets with students during course registration periods); and a faculty academic counselor (who meets with students during course selection — this person also provides career counseling related to graduate studies).

b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Full-time faculty are required to have six office hours weekly. Students also mentioned being able to meet with their instructors at other hours. This access provides students the opportunity to discuss matters related to their courses and about their general academic progress. Students also mentioned being able to receive critiques of their freelance work from their instructors before submitting it to clients. Part-time faculty also maintain office hours at the rate of 1.5 hours per every three-credit hours of class time and meet with students as well. Faculty also stay in touch with students through the use of social media (WhatsApp and Facebook).

c) The Unit keeps students informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the Unit.

Office hours, class time and mandatory three-times-a-year meetings for academic advisement give students the opportunity to meet with their instructors and advisers to discuss matters related to their courses as well as their activities, requirements and policies of the Unit.

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.

Extra-curricular activities are popular among students, particularly, RadioWeb, an internet radio station in which students and staff produce programming. *Revista Universitaria* is a weekly magazine program with several segments. There is an interview segment coordinated by students that a faculty member hosts. A staff member usually works as the technical director, but students have also taken the reins to lead production. There's also biweekly programming entirely produced by students, including *Nido Deportivo* that focuses on sports, Gamers In SYNC (news and comments on video games), *Movietón* (student-written film reviews), and *Dímelo Campus* (news and comments on campus events). In addition, *RadioWeb* produces a weekly half-hour interview that is aired on Radio Vieques (91.1 FM) and on Radio Cimarrona (Radiocimarrona.com, originating in the Dominican Republic).

There are also three campus organizations for students:

Communications Students Association (Spanish acronym AECOM), which hosts forums and conferences with communication professionals; promotes and supports the coordination of educational trips through fundraising efforts; meets and collaborates with other student organizations to foster

transdisciplinary activities; and coordinates a series of cultural activities throughout the academic year. In addition, AECOM is responsible for the production every two years of the Image and Sound Festival, where more than 30 communication professionals judge and award student projects (and what students call “the Oscars”).

Nada Es Lo Que Parece (Nothing Is What It Seems), a weekly segment aired on RadioWeb that also serves as a student organization. The live half-hour radio program offers the UPRH community an opportunity to promote projects, meetings and campus events.

Eco Búhos (Eco Owls — UPR’s mascot is an owl) is a student association that incorporates education and respect for the environment.

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.

UPR’s office of planning, accreditation and institutional research (OPAI by its Spanish acronym) collects and maintains data on enrollment, retention and graduation rates. OPAI publishes a report on these findings annually. A link to the report and data (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JMUIxLPIR8S9fXiQ22vYL_w0funI-OpP/view) is displayed prominently on the Department’s webpage.

SUMMARY: Student records, transcripts and files are meticulously kept in both writing and digitally, maintained by the Unit’s academic counselor in the registrar’s office. The Unit posts a variety of publications (advising guides, manuals, annual reports, newsletters and internal communications) that are available online on Google Drive and accessible with a password or via links accessible by the Unit’s webpage. Statistics on enrollment, scholarships, retention and graduation are easily accessible and available to the public through a link posted on the Unit’s webpage. Information on campus events, news and other communications is also disseminated through programs broadcast on a popular internet radio station, RadioWeb. Examples of student media and information about student professional organizations are prominent on the web.

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Roughly 97 percent of the annual \$567,897 budget for the Department is allocated to faculty and staff salaries. The only money aside from salaries provided by the university is \$1,500 for equipment purchases. The remainder of the budget is money raised by the Department's in-house production company, Casa Productora. This production company is a collaboration with private companies, the government and UPR. Casa Productora, in addition to student bake sales, t-shirt sales and other fundraising efforts, raised almost \$17,000 in budget year 2019 for the Department.

The Department shared its budget for the last three years, and in that time no funding was provided from the university for equipment maintenance, supplies, travel or library resources.

The bare-bones funding is not only for the Communication Department at UPRH but is system-wide due to precautionary measures decreed by the president and governing board of UPR. Specific needs not funded in the annual budget may be obtained by request from the Chair to the UPRH administration.

The Department creates a two-year strategic plan that calls for improvement in areas such as recruitment, retention, assessment and other goals that can be achieved without significant additions in resources.

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.

The budget of the Department of Communication is approved and distributed by the UPRH administration depending upon the general funds made available by the UPR system. In recent years the Department's budget allocation has been just enough to cover faculty and support staff payroll and benefits.

The serious economic situation experienced by Puerto Rico over the last decade has affected even basic services on the Island, and that includes the public university system. However, the resourcefulness, enthusiasm and resilience of the faculty and staff in the Department has created a can-do atmosphere that continues to provide a quality education to the students, which the students recognize and appreciate.

The faculty, through the director, may request financial assistance for conference travel and research activities directly from the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Office of Sponsored Program and Research, but these are granted or denied on a case-by-case basis dependent on the availability of funds and not allocated in a departmental budget line.

A similar direct request mechanism exists for the purchase of equipment and materials. The Chair must submit a proposal to the Technology Committee of the Administrative Board, and the proposal may or

may not be approved. The Unit recently received approval to replace some academic laboratory computers for \$42,000, but much of the equipment is dated, and the software used by students needs updating.

The Department of Communication is afforded funding similar to other departments in the Arts Division; however, the other departments do not share the technical equipment needs of the Department of Communication. Other academic programs at UPRH that need new technology, such as science and administration departments, received larger budgets for equipment. This continues despite many requests over the years both to the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Chancellor for an increased allocation for equipment and software updates.

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

Until two weeks before the visit of the site team, the Department of Communication was located on the first level of the SRIA building, which also housed the library on upper floors. This area was home to all faculty offices, four standard classrooms for theory courses, a modestly equipped television studio, a radio studio, post-production cubicles, photography and animation laboratories, graphic design and multimedia laboratories, a darkroom and a student services room where audio and video recording equipment could be checked out by students. A video provided by the Department confirms that while these facilities were not state-of-the-art, they were adequate to meet the pedagogical goals of the curriculum.

Then there was an earthquake. The building that housed the Department is no longer structurally safe and cannot be used. To make matters worse, the earthquake occurred two years after the campus was directly hit by Hurricane Maria, and the Department had not yet fully recovered and rebuilt from that disaster. (After Maria the Unit had classrooms held in tents, all the broadcasting equipment was moved to a trailer so it could be kept dry, and computer labs were set up in hallways.)

The university and the Department scrambled for two weeks before the site team visit and through Herculean effort have rebuilt the Department in scattered vacant spaces around the campus. Makeshift classrooms, labs and studios are scattered across numerous buildings:

- One classroom was created by placing desks on the risers in the choir room, surrounded by marching band equipment.
- The TV studio is located in an empty room adjacent to the theater, with no separation between the control room and the set, no studio lights, and loud air conditioner units on the wall.
- The radio studio is located on the side stage in the theater, and the projection booth has become a shared faculty office.
- A smaller radio studio is located in another room with loud fluorescent lights and air conditioning.
- The basic graphic design lab moved into a trailer with 15 drafting tables. The lab includes the desk for a faculty member from another unit.

While the list above may seem critical, it should be noted with praise that Department leadership was able in only two weeks to relocate the entire departmental infrastructure throughout a campus that itself is still rebuilding from a devastating hurricane. As one student said, “The Department deserves a medal!”

It is far from optimal, and not acceptable as a long-term solution, but for now it is functioning, and classes are being held and projects are being produced. The faculty and university leadership recognize this is not ideal or a long-term solution, but the future fate of the Department building remains unclear, and there is not plan yet on how funding might be secured to improve things. It's still too early to know.

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.

Students and faculty do have access to audio and video production equipment and graphic design software necessary to support its curriculum and research, but because of the building being damaged by a recent earthquake, the equipment is not located in locations where it can be put to proper use.

For example, the Department has 3 Panasonic HD video cameras, two equipped with teleprompters, a jimmy-jib, a chroma key, green screen, Tri-Caster switching board and multiple monitors to equip a small television studio, but there is no longer a television studio in which to locate the equipment.

Likewise, the Department has 16-channel and 24-channel audio production boards, a 16-channel multi-box, microphones and digital editing software and monitors, but no radio studios in which to locate the equipment.

Both students and faculty report there is enough available equipment to borrow for class projects and assignments (including six video cameras, 10 DSLR cameras, microphones and lights), and the graphic design software is current enough for professional quality work to be produced. Almost all production software (audio, video and graphic design) could be updated to meet current professional levels.

Studios and labs are only available during class time and are not accessible at night or over the weekends. Both students and faculty members say faculty are willing to open the studios and laboratories for project work during non-class hours toward the end of the semesters, when students are working more hours, to get projects finished.

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

The UPHR library is housed in the upper floors of the building recently closed due to structural damage from the earthquake. It is inaccessible to students and only accessible to faculty members and staff for very short periods when accompanied by security. The library is effectively closed.

The university has created a “mini-library” in the lobby of the theater building. It has six long tables with chairs where students can gather to study or work together. A student librarian at the desk said students can check out books via computer, and once a day a librarian accompanied by security will pull those books from the stacks and they can be obtained the next day. There is no access yet to the periodicals or research materials housed in the library.

SUMMARY: The Department faces numerous and unprecedented challenges when it comes to resources, facilities and equipment. It is difficult to criticize the Department, however, because the challenges all come from institutional budget restraints and “act of God” natural disasters. The faculty, staff and students of the Department are to be commended for their “hustle” in the face of numerous adversities, and the site team is in awe of their optimism and resourcefulness. Despite not having enough money, or at the moment even a building to locate the Department, workarounds are being created and as our interviews with students demonstrated, they are obviously getting a good education.

Still, at the time of the site team visit, there appeared to be no resolution in sight to ongoing budget constraints and understaffed faculty. Classrooms, studios and offices are makeshift and not adequate for university level-instruction, and the library is closed.

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

NON-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.

Faculty members in the unit maintain informal communication with alumni and professionals, mostly through personal relationships and social media, including a page called Our Alumni 842 that highlights alumni and creates a fair amount of engagement. In the past, a formal party had been held annually for alumni, but that ceased five years ago due to budgetary restrictions.

Recent alumni are paired with seniors in a program called “Gradsuados” that meets several times per semester to prepare graduating seniors for the job market or application to graduate schools.

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.

The Department does provide leadership in professional practice and continuing education, but the evidence provided suggests the majority of this work is done to help other educators improve their abilities to teach communication courses. Faculty members have provided distance learning courses for teachers to improve their use of media technologies including radio, teleconferencing and video. Short courses in photography have also been offered with an emphasis on how to teach photography as well.

Issues of public consequence and concern are addressed both through various speakers who come to campus and in the topics chosen or assigned for student documentary projects and productions. Guest speakers and research have addressed the political culture in Puerto Rico and a dialogue on foreign corporate ownership of Puerto Rico media. Advanced video production students have travelled to southern Puerto Rico to record interviews with the population suffering the effects of Hurricane Maria.

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.

The academic curriculum of the Department is more focused on professional production skills in broadcasting and graphic design than in a traditional journalism curriculum. The unit demonstrates strong evidence of faculty involvement in contributing to academic associations and improving the disciplines within their areas of expertise and research, but these activities and research are for the most part not in the traditional journalism-related associations and journals.

Faculty members are active in many professional and academic associations related to their disciplines, including the Association of Puerto Rican Programs of Academic and Social Communication, the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers, and the Association of Instructional Design and E-Learning Professionals.

However, due to budgetary constraints, the Department cannot support faculty membership in any association that requires dues to belong. The Chair reports he is not aware of any faculty member belonging to an association that requires a dues-paying membership.

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 primary community engagement activity of the Department is RadioWeb, an internet-only radio station that provides programming to the community 24/7. While primarily a music station, there are roughly 4-8 regularly scheduled programs produced by the Department ranging from campus events (Tell Me Campus) to student activities (Nothing Is As It Seems) to online video gaming (Gamers in Sync). Some of these programs are also broadcast on local terrestrial signals as part of a collaboration with WALO 1240 AM and Radio Vieques 90.1 FM in Eastern Puerto Rico and Radio Cimarrona in the Dominican Republic.

In addition to RadioWeb, the Department and its faculty provide workshops, conferences and seminars to community-based organizations and nonprofits. These have included short courses on basic photography, sponsored speakers on such topics as political satire in animation or the ups and downs of soccer in Puerto Rico, and fundraising for various social causes such as a children's hospital and clothes for the homeless.

The Communication Students Association noticed after Hurricane Maria that some students were not eating lunch on campus because they could not afford it, and so they created a free lunch program called "social lunch" for them. Students are also organizing a trip to the earthquake zone in Puerto Rico, where families are still living in tents, to paint with the children there.

The students in the Department also provide graphic design, photography and broadcast public service announcements free of charge to local nonprofits under the supervision of the faculty.

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

For its size, the Department has a strong record of activities and critiques of student works. Again, because of the curriculum's emphasis on broadcast production and graphic design, the activities are not as strongly related to scholastic journalism as one might find in other departments.

The unit offers workshops to high school level students related to the communications field. It has also donated equipment to a high school robotics laboratory and helped high school students produce a short documentary that won a national video competition for students.

The Department also hosts a biannual festival (Festival Imagen y Sonido or FIS) where alumni and communication professionals serve as judges of student work.

SUMMARY: The Communication Department at UPRH is small and operates under tight budgetary restrictions that limit departmental support for travel and participation in some professional associations. Nevertheless, this enthusiastic and socially conscious faculty and student body find ways to provide professional and public service directly related to its core curriculum of broadcast production and graphic design. Interaction with alumni could be better and more organized, but alumni

report feeling welcome on campus and many participate in judging student work. Some recent alumni counsel future graduates on job searches and graduation school applications through “Gradsuados.”

The Department engages with the community through its online radio station, free productions for non-profits and community outreach by the students. It should be noted, however, that there is no regularly produced student journalism available on campus.

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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)?*

The Communications Department has a robust assessment program led by a full Professor who has an instructional design background. She chairs a committee comprising the full-time faculty.

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

The Department has a comprehensive assessment plan that ties each course to one or more ACEJMC core values and competencies. The plan is updated each year. All 12 ACEJMC core values and competencies are covered in multiple places in the curriculum.

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

Learning objectives are clearly stated in each course syllabus.

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?*

All students are given a pretest on basic concepts of Graphic Design or Audio and Video upon entry to the program. The test is repeated midway through their studies and just before completion of their degrees. Results show significant improvement in scores by graduation.

Professors prepare annual reports for each course that track the assessment plan, tying student performance to individual ACEJMC core values and competencies.

- *What indirect measures does it use, where and when?*

The Communication Department provides a practicum program, in which 90 percent of students enroll. A full Professor evaluates opportunities throughout the region and matches students to specific jobs. Weekly reports are filed by the students’ supervisors. The Professor visits each job site after about 80 hours are completed.

Students evaluate each professor at the end of the semester. They also are asked to evaluate the program and the Department’s services.

The Unit has an alumni advisory board that has met three times over the past two years to improve course content and help the faculty stay up to date with communication technologies. Over the past year, the alumni board has evaluated all course syllabi and curricular changes were made as a result of their recommendations.

The Unit sponsors the “Festival of Image and Sound” every two years. Faculty members evaluate every student portfolio and nominate finalists to a board of 30 professionals who pick winners. The campus-wide awards ceremony is akin to the Academy Awards with a red carpet, guest presenters and a televised show. The professionals present workshops to students in the week leading up to the awards show.

- *Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies.*

These measures are highly effective in assessing ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies.

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?*

Each faculty member prepares an assessment report for each course taught that outlines the ACEJMC core values and competencies at the end of each semester. The reports specify whether the ACEJMC core values and competencies measured in the course have been met.

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

Recent weaknesses that have been identified by faculty and students include the need to strengthen writing skills in Spanish and English, and master the use of updated communication technologies and software.

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

The assessment committee meets annually to review the faculty reports and make appropriate changes in the curriculum, tracking the ACEJMC core values and competencies. The faculty has asked the university for additional resources to increase the number of credits offered by the Department, which would add writing options. The Unit recognizes that some software is outdated and is trying to use more open source software that would, for example, replace the more expensive, outdated Photoshop software it has been using with Gimp, a free Photoshop equivalent.

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

The faculty “closes the loop” with annual meetings to discuss assessment results and potential curriculum changes.

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

Yes

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

As noted above, the Unit sponsors a “Festival of Image and Sound” every two years that incorporates judging. Faculty members evaluate every student portfolio and nominate finalists to a board of 30 professionals who pick winners. The campus-wide awards ceremony is akin to the Academy Awards with a red carpet, guest presenters and a televised show. The professionals present workshops to students in the week leading up to the awards show. In addition, alumni working in the discipline review course syllabi and suggest curriculum changes.

SUMMARY: The Communication Department faculty is committed to a routine, thorough assessment program. The assessment committee has a comprehensive plan that ties each course in the curriculum to the ACEJMC core values and competencies. Alumni and regional professionals are closely tied to the assessment process.

Overall evaluation, compliance/noncompliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths:

- Faculty members in the Department are dedicated, experienced, knowledgeable and collaborative. They are seen as advocates for the students and have a strong reputation across campus for collegiality and productivity.
- The Department Chair is savvy, resourceful, positive and well liked. He is seen as a crisis-tested problem-solver and leader.
- The students in this program are resilient, diligent, positive, and dedicated to one another and to the program. Their unflagging optimism is palpable.
- The Department's student organizations are vibrant, visible and contribute to the life of the entire campus.
- The Department's biannual Image and Sound Festival is a powerful event that motivates students across the program to strive for excellence, engages alumni and local professionals in workshops and the assessment process, and puts a spotlight on the program.
- The practicum program has an outstanding reputation with employers and students. It is efficiently run and enjoys strong oversight.

Weaknesses and Challenges:

- More practice in journalistic-style writing should be introduced into the curriculum. Students in these programs sometimes enter the journalism or public relations professions.
- The assessment process is thorough and detailed. However, the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies should be more directly tied to assessment of individual student performance.
- An additional faculty member will be necessary for the Department to fulfill its aspirations – shared by students – to expand its required curriculum (from 39 credit hours to 51).
- The Department needs to continue to address its disparity in graduation rates between male and female students.

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

Standard 7

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

A major earthquake and series of aftershocks forced the Department, just weeks ahead of the scheduled site visit, to relocate all of its facilities. The current facilities are serviceable in the short term, but far from optimal and untenable over the long term. The Department must be made whole. Furthermore, the Department needs more reliable access to funds for necessary equipment, technology and faculty support.

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

N/A

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

N/A

- 6) **If the unit was previously accredited, summarize 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.**

N/A

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

The self-study was thorough and the appendices voluminous. The writing was uneven, however, across standards. We recognize that this is not unusual when the drafting is a team effort.

We also suggest that more support materials be translated from Spanish to English if future site teams do not have a majority of members who can read Spanish. Finally, we suggest that the program develop a more systematic way of documenting such data as visiting speakers and alumni employment for the next accrediting cycle.

February 28th, 2020

Dr. Patricia Thompson
Executive Director
Accrediting Council on Education in
Journalism and Mass Media (ACEJMC)
University of Mississippi
201 Bishop Hall, P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848

Dear doctor Thompson:

I have received the *ACEJMC team's Report* of on-site evaluation as part of the accrediting process of our *B.A. program in Communication Technologies*. Overall, I am extremely pleased with the findings and recommendations, particularly the conclusion to recommend full accreditation for this program.

Nevertheless, I find it imperative to address the team's findings of non-compliance with "Standard 7: Resources, facilities and equipment". Specifically, I want to respond to the following observation in the Report of on-site evaluation: "Still, at the time of the site team visit, there appeared to be no resolution in sight to ongoing budget constraints and understaffed faculty. Classrooms, studios and offices are makeshift and not adequate for university level-instruction, and the library is closed".

I met with faculty and staff of the Communication Department on the 27th of February and shared with them the good news that we have received permission from a team of structural engineers commissioned by the University to reopen the library building, which houses the Communication Department's facilities. A small portion of the first floor will be blocked off so that work may be done to reinforce the building's structure, but the department's faculty, staff and students will have full access to classrooms, laboratories, studios and offices.

Regarding the valid concerns expressed by the on-site evaluation team related to budget constraints and understaffed faculty, the Department chair has submitted to me a plan for on-going budget support so that equipment and software needs are consistently addressed, as well as a request for an additional tenured-track position. With the assistance of the Dean of Administrative Affairs and the Director of the Budget Office, I am carefully evaluating our options in the context of dwindling financial support from the Island's government. In the meeting with faculty, staff and students I made the commitment to prioritize both requests so that the Communication program's only weakness may be quickly redressed.

I look forward to meeting you at the ACEJMC Accrediting Committee's meeting on March 21st. On that date, I will be more than glad to present to that committee the details of full institutional support so that our Communication Technologies B.A. program may continue to maintain its academic excellence.

Cordially,



Aida I. Rodríguez Roig, Ed. D.
Chancellor