

## Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Undergraduate program

2019-2020

Name of Institution: Kansas State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Richard Myers, president

Name of Unit: A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: J. Stephen Smethers, interim director

Date of 2019-2020 Accrediting Visit: October 27-30, 2019

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: October 27-30, 2013

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2019-2020 Visiting Team: **Reaccreditation**

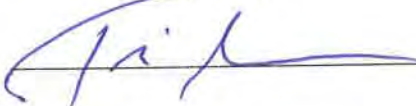
*Prepared and submitted by:*

### Team Chair

Name and Title: Tim Gleason, professor of journalism

Organization/School: University of Oregon, School of Journalism and Communication

Signature



### Team Members:

Name and Title: Sonny Albarado, projects editor

Organization/School: *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

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Name and Title: Michel Haigh, professor and graduate program advisor

Organization/School: Texas State University, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

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Name and Title: Mary T. Rogus, associate professor, electronic media

Organization/School: Ohio University, E.W Scripps School of Journalism

Signature



## PART I: General Information

**Name of Institution:** Kansas State University

**Name of Unit:** A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications

**Year of Visit:** 2019

**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.**

**Kansas State University: 76-408 Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**76-408. Acceptance of provisions of act of congress.** Laws 1863, chapter 2, sections 1 and 2, included by reference. [Section 1 of the act follows: "That the provisions of the act of congress entitled 'An act donating public lands to the several states and territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts,' approved July 2, 1862, are hereby accepted by the state of Kansas; and the state hereby agrees and obligates itself to comply with all the provisions of said act." Section 2 provided for filing certified copy of act with federal government.]

**History: L. 1863, ch. 2, §§ 1, 2; G.S. 1868, ch. 3, p. 73; R.S. 1923, 76-408**

**76-409: Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY: Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-409. Location of**

**college in Riley county; site ceded to state.** Laws 1863, chapter 3, sections 1 and 2, included by reference. [The preamble to the act cites the title to an act of congress approved July 2, 1862, "An act donating public lands to the several states and territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts" and alludes to the acceptance of that act by the legislature. Section 1 of the act establishes such a college and permanently locates same on a certain tract of land in Riley county, describing same by metes and bounds, with the provision that the location of the college is on the express condition that the Bluemont central college association cede to the state the real estate described, together with the other property of that association. Section 2 authorizes the governor to receive and cause to be recorded and filed the title papers to the property.]

**History: L. 1863, ch. 3, §§ 1, 2; G.S. 1868, ch. 3, p. 74, §§ 1, 2; R.S. 1923, 76-409.**

**76-410: Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY: Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-410. Endowment;**

**investment; use of interest.** Laws 1871, chapter 13, section 1, included by reference. [This act amended and repealed Laws of 1863, chapter 4, section 16. The text follows: "The ninety thousand acres of land granted to the state of Kansas by congress to endow a college for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts shall be used solely for the endowment of said Kansas state agricultural college and for no other purpose whatever, and the interest on the fund arising from the sale of said lands shall be used as the board of regents may determine, for the maintenance, support and development of said

agricultural college; but the principal or the money arising from the sale of said land shall be invested according to law, and shall constitute a fund to remain forever undiminished."]

**History:** L. 1863, ch. 4, § 16; G.S. 1868, ch. 3, p. 77, § 16; L. 1871, ch. 13, § 1; March 18; R.S. 1923, 76-410.

**76-410a Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-410a. State**

**agricultural university fund.** The state agricultural university fund shall at no time be diminished for any purpose whatsoever. Such fund shall be administered by the state 4 board of regents for the benefit of Kansas state university of agriculture and applied science, and the earnings of such fund shall be subject to appropriation by the legislature. K.S.A. 58-3601 et seq. shall apply to the state agricultural university fund, except as otherwise provided by this section and K.S.A. 76-718a.

**History:** L. 1974, ch. 294, § 10; July 1.

**76-411 Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-411.**

**History:** L. 1919, ch. 292, § 2; R.S. 1923, 76-411; Repealed, L. 1970, ch. 371, § 19; March 18.

**76-412 Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-412. Inspection of**

**dairy herds.** The department of dairying of the Kansas State University of Agriculture and Applied Science, at Manhattan, Kansas, shall inspect the dairy herds of all the state institutions having dairy herds, or that may hereafter have dairy herds. Such inspection shall be for the purpose of advising with and assisting the several superintendents, in the building up and maintaining the dairy herds of these institutions to a high standard.

**History:** L. 1917, ch. 300, § 1; Feb. 21; R.S. 1923, 76-412.

**76-413 Chapter 76.--STATE INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES; HISTORICAL PROPERTY Article 4.--KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY 76-413. Same; scope and**

**report; registration of cattle.** In these inspections, the professor of dairying, or his or her assistant, shall make a thorough investigation and inspection of these herds, and report to the superintendent in charge of an institution, any cattle that may be infected with any disease. It shall also be the duty of the professor of dairying to inspect the registration books kept by each institution, and to see that all cattle that are eligible are registered, and upon the recommendation of such professor of dairying, the superintendent shall make such disposition of these diseased, undesirable or condemned cattle as he or she shall deem best. It shall also be the duty of the superintendent to see that proper registration is made of all cattle eligible.

**History:** L. 1917, ch. 300, § 2; Feb. 21; R.S. 1923, 76-413.

(This information was copied from the State Legislative Web site [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2019\\_20/statute/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2019_20/statute/).)

**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:** October 29-31, 2013

**5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1947**

**6. Attach a copy of the unit's mission statement. Give date of adoption and/or last revision.**

This mission statement was adopted in Spring 2006 and was re-approved on November 27, 2018:

“The mission of the school is to: (1) Pursue knowledge through creative works, research and innovative teaching; (2) Encourage professional competencies, critical thinking, ethical decision-making and social responsibility; and (3) Serve our constituents as defenders of free expression in a dynamic, multicultural society.”

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

Semesters of 16 weeks  
Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
Summer sessions of 4-6 weeks  
Intersessions of 3 weeks

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

Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree  
 Graduate work leading to Master's degree  
 Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree. The A.Q. Miller School is a partner in a new interdisciplinary doctorate in Leadership Communication and began offering classes to doctoral students in Spring 2019. The partners in the program also include Communication Studies, Agricultural Journalism and Leadership Studies.

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

The A.Q. Miller School maintains a B.A and a B.S. in Mass Communications, which, following curriculum revision three years ago, is now composed of two sequences, journalism and strategic communications.

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

Kansas State University requires that students accumulate at least 120 credit hours to graduate. The University operates on the semester system.

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

Internships are set up on a one- to three-hour basis, with 120 on-the-job hours required for one hour of credit. The curriculum requires that each student complete at least one hour of 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*

Journalism: Sam Mwangi

Strategic Communication: Deborah Skidmore

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

The full-time enrollment for Spring 2019 was 17,190.

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

**NOTE:** Our new curriculum went into effect in the fall of 2018. The old Journalism and Digital Media sequence, which had been separated into two areas, Journalism Electronic and Journalism Print, was combined and renamed simply Journalism, eliminating delineation by platform. The Advertising and Public Relations sequences were combined into Strategic Communications. We still have students matriculating through our program under the old curriculum schema; those are noted below (\*).

***Name of Sequence or Specialty Undergraduate majors***

Pre-majors -- 156  
 Journalism (new curriculum) -- 15  
 \*Electronic -- 49  
 \*Print -- 19  
 Strategic Communication (new curriculum) -- 34  
 \*Advertising -- 48  
 \*Public Relations -- 63

**Total: 384**

**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.)**

| <i>Course</i>                                   | <i>Fall 2019</i> | <i>Spring 2019</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| MC191 Audio Production Foundations              |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 17               | 18                 |
| Section B                                       | 11               | 18                 |
| MC192 Pixel Foundations                         |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 17               | 17                 |
| Section B                                       | 12               | 17                 |
| MC193 Video Production Foundations              |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 17               | 17                 |
| Section B                                       | 18               | 18                 |
| MC194 Social Media Foundations                  |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 17               | 17                 |
| Section B                                       | 18               | 17                 |
| Section C                                       | 18               | 19                 |
| Section D                                       | 13               | 17                 |
| MC195 Vector Foundations                        |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 16               | 18                 |
| Section B                                       | 5                | 18                 |
| MC196 Web-CMS Foundations                       |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 18               | 16                 |
| Section B                                       | 6                | 17                 |
| MC200 News Reporting & Writing Across Platforms |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 0                | 11                 |
| Section B                                       | 15               | 0                  |
| Section C                                       | 0                | 7                  |
| MC221 Advertising Strategy & Writing            |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 15               | 15                 |
| Section B                                       | 15               | 3                  |
| MC280 Public Relations Writing                  |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 16               | 8                  |
| Section B                                       | 15               | 15                 |
| MC301 Introduction to Media Production          |                  |                    |
| Section A                                       | 14               | 13                 |

|   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| Section B   | 0  | 13 |
| MC316 Data Journalism   |    |    |
| Section A   | 20 | 19 |
| MC331 Digital Photography for Mass Media                        |    |    |
| Lecture   | 20 | 19 |
| Lab A   | 20 | 6  |
| Lab B   | 0  | 6  |
| MC340 Editing for Print & Online Media (Fall only)              |    |    |
| Section A   | 22 | 0  |
| MC341 Media Design & Data Visualization                         |    |    |
| Lecture   | 36 | 32 |
| Lab 01  | 10 | 13 |
| Lab 02  | 8  | 7  |
| Lab 03  | 18 | 7  |
| Lab 04  | 0  | 5  |
| MC403 Advanced News Reporting & Writing Across Platforms (Fall) | 13 |    |
| MC406 KKSU – TV Reporting                                       | 9  | 17 |
| MC409 Advanced Strategic Communications Writing (Spring)        |    | 11 |
| MC410 Sports Reporting (Spring)                                 |    | 10 |
| MC416 Photojournalism (Spring)                                  |    | 12 |
| MC426 Magazine, Editing & Design                                | 3  | 15 |
| MC471 Advanced Production (Fall)                                | 9  | 0  |
| MC472 KKSU-TV Production  | 13 | 8  |

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2019–2020 academic year:** \$280,000 (This is an approximate figure, based on variations in available funds.)

**Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:** 9.7% increase (Again, an approximate figure based on projected total expenditures and contrasted with the amount spent in FY 2017.)

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:** \$1,929.583

**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.**

Louise Benjamin Professor (Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, does not teach)  
 Bonnie Bressers Associate Professor  
 Raluca Cozma Associate Professor  
 Gloria Freeland Assistant Professor  
 Jacob Groshek Associate Professor  
 Kelly Glasscock Assistant Professor  
 Tom Hallaq Associate Professor  
 Nick Homburg Instructor  
 Nancy Muturi Professor  
 Samuel Mwangi Associate Professor  
 Danielle LaGree Assistant Professor  
 Nikhil Moro Associate Professor  
 Huyen Nguyen Instructor  
 Katie Olsen Teaching Assistant Professor

Ian Punnett Professor of Practice  
 Debra Skidmore Instructor  
 J. Steven Smethers Associate Professor, Director  
 Andrew Smith Professor of Practice  
 Alec Tefertiller Assistant Professor  
 Jana Thomas 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.)**

***Fall 2019***

Dan Biles  
 Barbara DeSanto  
 Shannon Kreuger  
 Marisa Larson  
 Avery Osen  
 Livy Seirer

***Spring 2019***

Dan Biles  
 Barbara DeSanto  
 Spencer O’Daniel

**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<br>outside of journalism and mass communications |                         |         |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------|
|                            | Total<br>Graduates   | Number<br>in Compliance | Percent |
| 2018-2019<br>academic year | 94   | 94                      | 100%    |
| 2017-2018<br>academic year | 109  | 109                     | 100%    |

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

N/A

## 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 School has a mission statement that was adopted in 2006 and re-approved in 2018:

The mission of the Kansas State University A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications is to (1) Pursue knowledge through creative works, research and innovative teaching; (2) Encourage professional competencies, critical thinking, ethical decision-making and social responsibility; and (3) Serve our constituents as defenders of free expression in a dynamic, multicultural society.

In November 2018 the School approved a revised six-year strategic plan that is organized using the nine ACEJMC accrediting standards. It includes a vision statement, action items and an annual review by the School's executive committee. It is also aligned with the College's strategic plan and with the University's "K-State 2025" strategic plan. The unit's listing in the ACEJMC database appears to be current.

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

The School has a Faculty Council consisting of the director, the associate directors and the sequence heads that is responsible for all spending decisions, policy matters and special operational issues. The faculty are involved in the review of these matters at regularly scheduled faculty meetings. The faculty met 13 times in the 2018-19 academic year.

University policy calls for the review and updating of all departmental governing documents every five years. In the past two years the faculty have reviewed and revised policies governing promotion and tenure, travel and assessment.

In this academic year the School has 11 standing committees and four task forces ranging from an executive committee to a scholarship committee to a "Job Ready/Mentoring Committee." The director has added members of the School's National Advisory Council to some standing committees in order to reduce the demands on faculty time, but faculty expressed concerns about the amount of time devoted to committee work.

**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 School has experienced a challenging six years during which it was led by five directors or interim directors. While this could have been a period during which the School lost its way, it did not. A resilient faculty with a strong commitment to the School and its students, and the willingness of a well-regarded, seasoned journalism administrator who is a KSU graduate to serve as an interim director for 18 months, kept the School on solid footing. The appointment in May 2019 of a senior member of the faculty as the interim director has stabilized leadership in the School. He is highly regarded in the



School and across the campus and has the strong support of the school's National Advisory Council.

The College expects to launch an internal search for a director in spring of 2020.

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

The director of the School is appointed by the dean of the College after a search conducted by a committee comprised primarily of JMC faculty and staff. Generally, it is chaired by another College department head. The search may be internal or national as determined by the dean. Deans and directors are reviewed annually with a fifth-year multi-year evaluation. Directors serve five-year terms with the option of a one-time renewal.

Associate directors and sequence heads are appointed by and serve at the discretion of the director.

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

The University Handbook provides clear guidance for the resolution of disputes and the formal grievance policy.

**SUMMARY:**

The School has come through a challenging period of leadership transitions with a solid leadership in place and well positioned to move forward. The School is well-regarded on campus and under its current leadership it is seen as having great potential.

**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.**

Kansas State University requires 120 credit hours to graduate, and the A. Q. Miller School of Journalism requires 45 credit hours of mass communication courses for its degree. The School is part of the College of Arts and Sciences which requires all BA and BS degree students to complete general liberal arts classes totaling a minimum of 42 hours. The School also requires a 15-hour outside concentration in one or two program areas, allowing only two courses from the college requirements to double count toward the concentration, which brings the total outside credit hours to approximately 50 from required courses. In addition, the journalism program requirements clearly state that a minimum of 72 hours outside the program are required.

The School reports 100% of students graduating in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 met the 72 outside hours requirement. A review of selected student records confirmed all students met or exceeded the 72 hours, and most had in excess of 80 hours.

**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 School's curriculum has undergone a major restructuring since its last reaccreditation. Responding to concerns and challenges brought forth through assessment data and feedback from students, alumni and professionals, the faculty decided to merge sequences, restructure the core and gateway (formerly pre-major) courses, and introduce optional honors and professional "Job Ready" programs. The restructuring of the curriculum was based on the following broad goals:

- Teach basic writing and production skills at the freshman level to introduce students to the demands of the industry.
- Respond to industry and audience realities by merging advertising and public relations sequences into Strategic Communication, and digital and print sequences into Journalism
- Focus on evolving media technologies and trends.

The new two-sequence structure was implemented in Fall 2018. The new curriculum includes a 9-hour introductory "Gateway to JMC," which students complete successfully to move on in the Journalism or Strategic Communication sequences. The curriculum offers two additional core courses and an internship requirement for all students, then separate sets of core classes for Journalism and Strategic Communication majors. Students also choose two skills electives from separate lists for each sequence and two conceptual electives from a single list for both sequences.

### **Gateway to JMC (Total 9 hours)**

MC 010 Pre-major Orientation (0 credits)

MC 110 Mass Communications in Society (3 hours)

MC 130-132 JMC Writing Academy—3 classes:  
MC 130 Media Writing Conventions and Mechanics (1)  
MC 131 Media Writing Styles and Platforms (1)  
MC 132 Media Writing Perspectives (1)

MC 191-196 Foundation Skills (Choose minimum of three)  
MC 191 Audio (1)  
MC 192 Pixel (1)  
MC 193 Video (1)  
MC 194 Social Media (1)  
MC 195 Vector (1)  
MC 196 Web and CMS (1)

The new Gateway classes have already had a positive effect on the writing and technology preparedness of students entering the degree program, according to faculty members. Students in the Gateway classes take exit tests to gauge their progress and proficiency, and plans are underway to test the same parameters early in the semester in each of the School's journalism, public relations and advertising writing classes. Students who have been through the Gateway classes expressed appreciation for the baseline skills provided, and seniors said they wished they had had the same opportunity to learn those basic technology skills much earlier. Review of syllabi indicate the foundational skills classes are highly interactive and hands-on. The Writing Academy Courses are delivered online.

### **Additional JMC Core**

MC 341 Media Design and Data Visualization (3)  
MC 466 Law of Mass Communication (3)  
MC 491 Internship (1-3)

### **Core Classes for Journalism:**

MC 160 Principles of Journalism (3)  
MC 200 News Reporting and Writing Across Platforms (3)  
MC 301 Intro to Media Productions (3)  
MC 316 Data Journalism (3)  
MC 385 Media Practicum (1) (One semester on the staff of a campus media outlet)  
MC 580 Storytelling Across Platforms (3) (Capstone)

These core classes go beyond the theoretical and provide practical experience. Principles of Journalism, for example, not only teaches what news is and how to exercise news judgment, but also puts those ideas to work by requiring students to participate in the Kansas State NewsDesk, a working newsroom that serves multiple platforms.

One longtime journalism professor expressed the belief that the new curriculum “will attract more engaged students” because of the emphasis on current technological skills and cross-platform capabilities. Some students still in the old sequences seem to be less engaged, this person said, because “they’ve been fed a steady diet that they’re going into a dying industry.”

### **Core Classes for Strategic Communication**

MC 120 Principles of Advertising (3) or MC 180 Principles of Public Relations (3)  
MC 221 Ad Strategy and Writing (3) or MC 280 Public Relations Writing (3)  
MC 380 Strategic Communication Planning (3)  
MC 386 Strategic Communications Campaigns (3) (Capstone)

The Strategic Communication students are excited about the new curriculum. Some of the seniors interviewed said the updated curriculum addressed some of the weaknesses in the program by offering the Gateway classes. Student interviews indicate there is inconsistency in course content across multiple sections of courses when different faculty teach. It was hard to verify this information because when reviewing the syllabi, the same professor taught the course over the past three semesters, and his syllabus was the only one presented. However, when reviewing the mapping chart for all ACEJMC competencies, it confirmed that the strategic communication sequence needs to work on developing common learning objectives across the core courses. The learning objectives should be specific to the subject matter taught and tied to expected outcomes. Learning objectives for individual courses should make sure students learn the same content and are evaluated the same way regardless of the instructor teaching the course. Strategic Communication faculty interviewed also expressed concern that the course objectives varied by section and instructor.

### **Conceptual Electives**

The program lists 14 conceptual electives from which all students choose two. The list of courses presents a wide range of topics from history and ethics to media/strategic communication management and the environment. A review of the course offerings for Spring, Summer and Fall 2019 indicate only seven of the listed courses were offered, and of those seven, six were only taught once in the year. Notably, given that the journalism program does not require an ethics course, MC 573 (Media Ethics) was not one the electives offered in 2019.

MC 589 Issues in Mass Communication was taught seven times with different topics. This course allows the school flexibility to deal with the ever-changing media field. Topics taught in 2019 ranged from Media in Movies and New Media/Politics to Drone Photography/Video and Social Media News Strategy. A review of syllabi showed that these were primarily conceptual courses. Only one, Photo/Visual Storytelling, appeared to be weighted more heavily toward skills. Looking at the topics covered and the assignments, these courses provide students an opportunity to tackle not only the skills, but also the issues and ethics of new technologies such as drones. A recruiter for a large television group noted that the drone class was a distinctive feature of the journalism program and one of the reasons he recruits at K-State.

With the merging of conceptual electives into one group of courses for both sequences, Strategic Communication students and faculty said there are not enough electives that cover public relations and advertising content. In 2019, only two sections of MC 589 appeared to have advertising and/or public relations content, with only one specifically focused on strategic communication (Analyzing Audiences). Strategic Communication faculty said that because they are being pulled in a number of directions to teach graduate courses, survey courses or the core courses, there is lack of opportunity to teach strategic communication electives.

The required conceptual courses and these electives provide a curriculum balance between skills and conceptual courses, especially when considering there is much conceptual content in many of the required skills courses.

### **ACEJMC Competencies**

Reviewing the School's master chart that maps courses to the ACEJMC Standard Competencies with a focus only on required courses that all students take, all 12 competencies are addressed in at least four courses. Although the School's curriculum does not require an ethics course for either Journalism or Strategic Communication sequences, 12 of the required courses address ethical principles in readings and/or assignments (as judged by a review of syllabi). Students confirmed that many of their courses

included units on ethics and discussions of ethical decision making. Two competencies are addressed in fewer required Strategic Communication than Journalism courses — #1 understanding freedom of speech/press (8 journalism vs. 5 strat comm) and #4 domestic diversity (12 journalism vs. 8 strat comm).

Looking at the Assessment Annual Reports, it appears most students show improvement from their first introductory course to their senior capstone on the Freshman/Senior exam, although some of the numbers in at least one report (2016-17) were confusing, stating that students had improved more than 100 percent. It was also concerning that in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 reports for example, on the 11 competencies tested, anywhere from 4-10 seniors did not get any answers correct.

The Senior Capstone Project reviews by outside professionals positively indicated students had a working knowledge of most competencies. Many senior projects were evaluated as exceeding the standard for knowledge and the rest met expectations. However, professionals often rate the domestic and global diversity standards as “Not Applicable” in the projects they reviewed.

**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 several syllabi for required courses, and skills and technical electives, indicates that instruction is demanding and challenging and that assignments typically require the use of current technologies reflecting the professional requirements students need on current jobs. A public relations professional who does some adjunct teaching at K-State and University of Kansas explained that she was teaching the senior public relations campaigns course at KU and the public relations Writing course for the School. She had both groups of students working on a campaign for one of her clients. She reported that both she and the client thought the materials produced by the School’s students (who were not seniors) were superior to what KU’s seniors produced.

Student interviews confirmed the curriculum is demanding. They stated it is preparing them for internship positions. Students also commented that they felt the School was preparing them to be professionals compared to other campus programs they have interacted with via minors, second majors or other mass communication programs at other places they had transferred from. Students also noted that they spent more time on their JMC courses compared to outside courses because of the hands-on nature of their assignments, which they appreciated.

The addition of social media, drone videography, audience analysis, media design and visualization and a soon-to be-taught podcasting class, among others, show that the curriculum is rising to meet changing industry demands. In the school’s assessment chart of courses which meet the various competencies, for #12 Technology, six Journalism and seven Strategic Communication requirements directly address learning and using digital and multimedia tools.

In addition, to further challenge some of the school’s top students, the school launched an Honors Program in Fall 2018 that provides additional mentoring, more rigorous class work in two required courses and the opportunity to add Honors credit to other courses with individualized work. Honors students also participate in one off-campus, professionally oriented experience a year.

**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 list of skills courses and lab sections taught in Spring and Fall 2019 indicate no class size exceeded 20 students, and in fact only two classes reached the 20-student limit. The School's director indicated no skills classes were taught online.

**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.**

All students in the School are required to do at least one internship for one to three credits (students work at least 120 hours per credit). Students may do three separate 1 credit internships. Students are expected to find their own internships, but the school sponsors two events that bring internship recruiters to campus and maintains a website listing potential internship opportunities. The list of recent internship sites is extensive and varied. Students also indicated that their professors would often direct them to internship opportunities in class or in individual meetings.

The internship experience is treated as a class with requisites and multiple elements on which the students are graded. Students and internship supervisors/mentors are required to sign a contract that lays out the expectations from both sides. There are an impressive number of assignments that allow the internship director to keep close tabs on students' work and experiences, including a weekly journal and log of hours, mid-term and final supervisor evaluations, and a portfolio of work. After their internships, students are expected to share their experiences with other students in class presentations and at an internship mini fair.

Students' comments about their internship experiences were very positive. The feedback from professionals was equally positive. They said the students were prepared to come in and do the job. A radio station owner said, "I don't have to spend the first two weeks training them on our equipment—they're using it at KSDB [campus radio station]. They walk in and do." Other professionals in journalism and strategic communication praised students' writing skills and their ability to do research for stories or public relations campaigns.

**SUMMARY:**

In summary, the School has made substantial, positive changes to its curriculum structure and courses offered to better prepare students for entering the ever-changing media environment. All but one ACEJMC competency are addressed in multiple required courses as well as various electives. Senior capstone and internship evaluations indicate that professionals view the work of most students as showing progress toward mastery in those competencies.

**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 School's diversity policy was adopted in 1993 and most recently updated in 2015. It does not include a definition of diversity, nor does it identify the under-represented groups specifically. Students and faculty throughout are referred to simply as 'minorities' and performance to the stated goals are reported in percentages of total minorities.

The diversity policy is centered around five action plans and a sixth monitoring plan which focus on faculty recruitment and retention, student recruitment and retention, and curriculum. For goals of recruitment and retention, the plan uses the university-wide representation and retention numbers for students and faculty as the benchmark to measure its success. Those benchmarks weren't reached, but the School came close with 21.7% minority faculty vs. 24.2% university-wide and 18.2% minority students vs. 19.7% for the university. The School proudly noted its percentage of women students exceeded the university by more than 10%, and nearly 60% of the faculty are women, including three minorities.

The action plan to infuse the curriculum with diversity and inclusiveness, and create a welcoming environment for underrepresented students, recommends that all faculty include content in every class and in class discussions. It also asks faculty to be sensitive to any negative displays of bias, prejudice and discrimination in class discussions, student media and other venues.

There is a concern about the outcome goals of the curriculum part of the action plan; some students said they had little or no exposure to domestic diversity content in courses. The outcome goal emphasizes four courses with extensive domestic diversity content, but all four are electives. It also states: "Most syllabi for classes in the A.Q. Miller School include diversity and inclusion-related material and support this standard in one of three ways: 1) as a learning objective, 2) as a statement of support for diversity in the classroom *OR* [emphasis added] 3) as course content that covers multicultural subjects." As discussed below, most of the required course syllabi reviewed only have a diversity policy statement, but no learning objectives or content.

Monitoring of the plan is tasked to a diversity committee, which some faculty said does not meet with any regularity. There was no evidence of a report to faculty on diversity. Diversity is also reported in the assessment report's discussion of the domestic and global diversity competencies.

**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.**

The school offers four courses primarily focused on domestic diversity and global multiculturalism. All four of these courses are electives — three were offered once in the last year, and one, Ethics in Mass

Communication, was not offered at all. Enrollment in these courses Fall 2019 is 20 students each for the two international courses and 32 for Gender, Race, Class and the Media, but the instructor said that her typical enrollment was 20. In a group of about 50 students that met with the site team — about half of whom were seniors — fewer than a dozen indicated they had taken any of the four classes.

The School's syllabus review and course mapping chart of the 12 competencies indicates the following number of courses that address the two diversity competencies:

|                         | Domestic | Global |
|-------------------------|----------|--------|
| Strategic Communication | 8        | 8      |
| Journalism              | 12       | 10     |

A site-team review of syllabi from these courses found that nearly all had this diversity statement:

### ***Commitment to Diversity***

*The A. Q. Miller School supports Standard Learning Objectives of the Accrediting Committee for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Standard 2 urges promoting an understanding of how gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity in domestic society impact the mass communications professions. Standard 3 encourages classes in the A.Q. Miller School to illustrate the diversity of peoples and cultures and the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society. Students in this class are thus encouraged to 1) identify contributions of women and minorities in domestic and global society, 2) suggest ways the class might reach a better understanding and 3) identify speakers, articles, books and events that will enhance understanding.*

It should be noted a few faculty members customized the above statement and included a policy about discrimination and harassment:

### ***Discrimination and Harassment Statement***

*The objective of the K-State educational program is to develop individuals who demonstrate enlightened judgment in their professional, personal and social lives. To achieve this goal, the university's policy forbids discrimination against individuals or groups based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Please refrain from using racist or sexist language in the classroom.*

Other than these statements, the syllabi reviewed by the site team generally lacked learning outcomes and class content, i.e. readings and assignments, that have a domestic diversity focus. Units in at least two core courses addressed global cultures. It was hard to tell from syllabi how often diversity and inclusiveness are part of class discussions, or assignment details. Half of the professional evaluations of capstone projects said diversity was “Not Applicable,” according to the 2016-17 assessment report included in the self-study. The 2018-19 report noted that the highest evaluation on diversity was 2.84 out of 5, and the report says, “Capstone project reviewers often remarked that projects did not always reflect a broad enough understanding of the demographic composition of audiences.”

When asked if diversity was discussed in classes, even when prompted with specific examples such as LGBTQ issues, coverage of Muslims or blacks, students in the large group did not respond other than with shaking heads. Some students said that they discussed in some classes news of the day that touched on diversity issues.

A smaller group of Strategic Communication students gave a similar response to questions about domestic diversity content and discussions in classes.



In contrast a group of broadcast students described extensive interactions and conversations about domestic diversity and inclusiveness in story production classes, radio practicums and television newscast production classes. An observation of a combined TV Reporting and TV Producing class discussing coverage of the upcoming KSUnite event led to a lively discussion of its impact, what diverse students thought about it, whether or not they would participate, etc. In a room of about 35 students, at least half were students of color. There was intermingling of minority and white students, and spirited, but very respectful discussion.

The college dean and the provost indicated that the new president of the university has taken a “bold view” of diversity on campus, hiring K-State’s first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer who reports directly to him. The president also declared a KSUnite Day every year during which afternoon classes are cancelled and a march plus programming on diversity and inclusion is scheduled. The dean said the strongest diversity and inclusion push comes out of Student Life, which produces a lot of campus programming and oversees centers, as well as supporting nine multicultural student organizations, but he said the academic side needs to catch up. The university just broke ground on a new Multicultural Student Center right next to the student union (and right across the street from the main JMC building).

So, there is a sense of optimism from top administration that diversity and inclusion is now a priority at the university. However, there is a perception among some school faculty and students that the priority does not extend to JMC classes other than the three elective classes. Only one of those focuses on domestic diversity and given enrollments, it appears that less than a third of students choose to take that elective. Discussions with the current director indicated that it is a priority for him, and he had emphasized this year to faculty the need for a commitment to domestic diversity content, not just a boiler plate statement, in every course.

**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.**

In the last three years the School has done well in recruiting and hiring women and minorities. In 2016-17 there were six openings generating a pool of 66 applicants, more than half of which were women and/or minorities. The School hired two women and an Asian man. In 2017-18 three openings were posted, about a third of the 25 applicants were women and/or minorities and an International woman was hired. For part-time faculty the School has hired five women in the last three years.

**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 School diversity policy uses university percentages as its benchmarks for minority student goals. In the 2018-19 academic year, the School’s student make-up was 81.8% white, 6.5% higher than the university student population but on par with 2018 population estimates for the state of Kansas. However, the School nearly doubled the percentage of black students (matching the state population) and 13 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, tripling the university percentage. Its Hispanic/Latinx student population was about a percentage point lower than the university, but less than half the 2018 population estimates in the state.

The School relies primarily on college and university recruiting resources to attract under-represented students. The College Assistant Dean for Diversity, Recruitment and Retention said the university is changing its strategy for attracting and retaining under-represented students by reaching outside Kansas borders and targeting the growing Hispanic/Latinx population in the state. The 2018 census estimates

show the minority population of Kansas is 25.5%. He noted that the A.Q. Miller School is one unit in the college that can attract out-of-state students.

One of the major barriers, especially for minority students, has been the financial aid structure. The college assistant dean said the structure led to under-represented students dropping out or transferring at a much higher rate than white students. The new provost took immediate action to ensure that student aid awarded to freshmen is for four years, with reasonable requirements to keep that aid. There was agreement among administrators that this should be a big help for retention.

The university also has lowered out-of-state tuition to its primary feeder states from 250% of in-state tuition to 150%. The assistant dean for diversity and recruitment and retention believes this would have a very positive impact on minority recruitment.

The School's major effort at recruitment, particularly minority recruitment, is the Journalism Education Association conferences. The JEA is housed in the School and supported by the university. The JEA executive director is also a faculty member. He said that about a dozen K-State students provide support staff for the conventions which bring in upwards of 6,000 high school students. The School has a recruiting booth at JEA, but the real recruitment tool is the interaction with current students. The director has heard from more than one K-State students that they came to the School because of their interactions with a particular current student.

**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.**

Nearly every syllabus reviewed included a policy statement of accommodation for students with disabilities, many also provided specific contact information for accessibility services. Multiple syllabi also included the policy statement on harassment and discrimination. In discussions with faculty we heard repeatedly that it is currently very collegial and focused on moving the School forward with its new curriculum and new initiatives reaching out to other departments to create collaborative programs.

Faculty and students reported a good climate for students, with little evidence of minority students isolating themselves from other students. In the large student gathering and the sequence meetings students of color were intermingled among white students. Faculty report students work well together in group projects and student media. Students observed in a social media class finishing final projects were working very well together in mixed race groups, and as mentioned above, the interactions in very diverse TV Reporting and TV Producing combined class often conflicted, but every opinion was respected and accepted, and none of the discussion was personal.

There were a series of racial incidents in 2017 and 2018 on and near campus which lead to meetings with top administration. The student newspaper wrote a strong editorial responding to two of the incidents which turned out to be hoaxes on their impact on real diversity issues on campus. These incidents lead to the above-mentioned focus of the new president on diversity and inclusiveness.

## **SUMMARY**

The School is aware it has some work to do infusing domestic diversity and inclusiveness across its curriculum, but there are already efforts underway to do that. The students express confidence in dealing with diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace, and that confidence is reinforced by employers and

internship supervisors. The School is now operating in a university environment which has put a priority on diversity in faculty and student recruitment which will aid its continued efforts to diversify its student body.

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

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

**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                 | 1             | .03                       | 1           | .03                       |
| White                                  | 10            | .37                       | 8           | .29                       |
| American Indian/Alaskan native         | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Asian                                  | 1             | .03                       | 1           | .03                       |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race)             | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Two or more races                      | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Other race                             | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| International (any race)               | 1             | .03                       |             |                           |

**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                 | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| White                                  | 2             | .07                       | 2           | .07                       |
| American Indian/Alaskan native         | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Asian                                  | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race)             | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Two or more races                      | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| Other race                             | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |
| International (any race)               | 0             |                           | 0           |                           |

## **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 School has a detailed plan on conducting searches for new faculty members. It details the make-up of who is eligible to serve on the search committee. Position announcements are placed in venues such as the Chronicle of Higher Education or the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The search committee will select three finalists and recommend them to the faculty. The candidates then have to be approved by the Office of Affirmative Action. If approved, the candidates will be invited to campus. All full-time faculty will vote at the end, but the director has the final say on who is hired.

Part-time temporary faculty are hired when needed. If adjuncts receive strong evaluations, they remain in the pool and are typically re-hired for the next semester. Adjuncts are normally hired without advertising.

All full-time faculty members submit a summary of activities for the preceding calendar year. The faculty member meets with the director to discuss his/her performance. The director rates faculty in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity and service. The director assesses a faculty member's performance as: meritorious, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, needs improvement/meets minimal standards or unsatisfactory – does not meet minimal performance standards.

The part-time faculty are also evaluated. The review is based on course syllabi, assignments and course evaluation. If a part-time faculty member is performing at a level less than meritorious, he/she is unlikely to be asked to teach again.

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

The full-time faculty consists of 14 women and 10 men. One of the weaknesses stated in the 2013-2014 site team report was the lack of faculty in the largest sequence of public relations. This continues to be a struggle in the new strategic communication sequence. The number of full-time faculty has remained the same – 24.

Strategic Communication faculty also expressed concern that they did not have enough people to fully implement the new curriculum. Tenure-track faculty expressed concern about heavy service loads, and so did faculty on non-tenure track lines. A common theme among faculty interviews was the concern about starting too many new initiatives and not being able to support them.

During the period under review, full-time faculty taught a majority of the courses. They taught 86 percent of the courses in 2018-2019, 100 percent of the courses in 2017-2018, and 95 percent of the courses during the 2016-2017 academic year.

A regular teaching load in the school is a 3:3. Tenure-track faculty have a 2:2 load so they may focus on research. New tenure-track faculty may receive an additional course release during their first semester. Faculty who have an active research agenda after tenure also receive a reduced teaching load (2:2).

The School's Performance Review and Evaluation Standards/Procedures document indicates tenure-track/tenured faculty's assignment is broken into instruction (40 percent), research and creative work (40 percent) and service (20 percent). The assignment can also include administrative duties.

Non-tenure track faculty are evaluated on their contributions to teaching, research and service based on the type of appointment they have.

**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.**

Sixty percent of the current Miller faculty hold terminal degrees (14 Ph.D.s and one Ed.D). Thirty-two percent have master's degrees. Two individuals have bachelor's degrees with substantive professional experience. A majority of the faculty has professional experience.

Faculty have access to the Teaching & Learning Center at Kansas State University. The Center supports and advances the research-based scholarship of teaching and learning. It provides tools for faculty to evaluate and strengthen teaching practices. The self-study states, "faculty members are encouraged and supported for their participation in subject-specific professional development opportunities designed to ensure that they have expertise in current normative practices in journalism and mass communications."

Faculty are encouraged to be part of scholarly associations. The self-study and faculty interviews indicate when the budget allows, the membership fees are paid for out of the School's Anniversary Fund. The School also covers travel for at least two academic conferences a year.

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

Faculty members are evaluated by students using the Kansas State University Teacher Evaluations (TEVAL) form, one of the Individual Development Educational Assessment (IDEA) Center's two evaluation forms or an approved custom evaluation form for each course section they teach. Faculty members get feedback by encouraging students' written comments and by providing supplementary questions beyond those on the standard evaluation forms.

The director assesses a faculty member's performance as: meritorious, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, needs improvement/meets minimal standards or unsatisfactory – does not meet minimal performance standards.

Faculty members can also use custom evaluations (usually in addition to the TEVAL or IDEA forms) to get feedback on other topics not addressed on the two standardized forms.

The faculty also evaluate each other's teaching. In 2016, the faculty approved a policy that provides criteria for who may be the observer and under which conditions the evaluation may take place.

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

A number of university representatives noted the students perform at the same level as other majors and non-majors in the classes outside of the School. Campus interns are prepared for positions in other units.

The director is proactive in seeking out partnerships to offer a number of curricular opportunities for students.

**SUMMARY:**

The faculty bring a mix of academic and professional experience. The School has processes in place for hiring, promotion and tenure and annual evaluations. The faculty have opportunities for professional development. The School is respected on campus for the quality of education it provides. The School has not addressed the concern from the previous site team of the number of faculty in strategic communication. Faculty expressed concern about being pulled in too many directions to meet the demands of teaching, research and service.

**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.**

Kansas State University aspires to be a Top 50 Public Research University. The College of Arts and Sciences and the A.Q. Miller School have embraced that goal. Scholarly research and/or professional publication are expected for all tenured and tenure-track faculty with scholarly and/or professional productivity as a key criterion in evaluating promotion and tenure. The School supports faculty research through travel funding, small research grants as well as matching funds for University small research grants, funding for professional memberships, and lower teaching loads. In 2013, the School began organizing a monthly research colloquium with the Department of Communication featuring faculty and graduate research presentations. Faculty report regular participation in the sessions. In 2019, seven JMC faculty were invited to participate in the interdisciplinary doctoral program in Leadership Communication, which brings together graduate faculty from the Staley School of Leadership Studies, the Department of Communication Studies, the Department of Communications and Agricultural Education, and the Institute for Civic Discourse. Faculty members are co-primary investigators on research grants totaling more than \$540,000.

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

The School revised its policy statement concerning expectations for tenure and promotion in 2017. The policy provides a broad definition of scholarship and professional work: “Faculty members in the A.Q. Miller School are expected to make contributions to the field through research, creative works or interdisciplinary scholarship.”

It then defines research and creative work as encompassing: “1) quantitative research such as content analysis, experimental studies, narrative analysis or survey design; 2) qualitative research such as case studies, participant observation, rhetorical criticism or textual analysis; and 3) creative works, which can be broadly defined and are usually discipline-specific.”

While all new faculty are provided with a link to the policy, some faculty noted a lack of understanding of expectations. The institution of a more formal mentoring program should provide more clarity going forward for faculty seeking tenure and promotion.

Faculty with active research agendas carry a four-course teaching assignment while the standard teaching assignment is six courses.

#### **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 School’s policy values scholarly and professional work across a broad spectrum of disciplines, including “mass communications as well as in art, business, education, health, history, humanities, psychology and science. Additionally, the discipline has a strong orientation toward faculty who do not have terminal degrees but who have extensive, distinguished professional experience in the field... Faculty achievements in research and creative works will be evaluated on their quality and significance in their respective fields and in society.”



School policy requires annual reviews of research and creative work, teaching and service.

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

Faculty (all full-time assistant, associate, full professors or professors of practice, but not faculty who arrived on or after July 2019) were active in a wide range of research and creative activity. During the period under review they authored or co-authored 45 different refereed journal articles in publications including: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, the *Journal of Health Communication* and the *International Communication Gazette*; authored, co-authored or edited six books and published 13 different chapters in edited books; and presented 143 different refereed conference papers, more than double the amount since the last re-accreditation period. In addition, JMC faculty are co-primary investigators on research grants totaling more than \$540,000.

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

The School supports a wide range of research and creative work and is increasingly engaged in collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives on the campus and beyond. At the same time, teaching and service demands on an understaffed faculty limit the School's ability to build on the progress of the last six years.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The School has clearly articulated promotion and tenure and merit policies that value research and creative work. It provides support for faculty scholarship efforts. Faculty have increased research productivity during the period under review; however, they will be hard pressed to continue an upward trend without additional faculty lines. The addition of a number of new faculty with strong research profiles in recent year establishes the potential for a continued upward trend.

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

| Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities | By Unit | By individuals |                 |                 |                     | Totals (26) |
|---|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
|   |         | Full Prof. (6) | Assoc. Prof (6) | Asst. Prof. (8) | Other Faculty * (6) |             |
| Awards and Honors   | 14      |                | 2               | 10              | 4                   | 16          |
| Grants Received Internal                                    | 18      | 3              | 2               | 8               | 5                   | 18          |
| Grants Received External                                    | 13      | 1              | 3               | 7               | 2                   | 13          |
| Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored                       | 4       | 2              |                 |                 | 2                   | 4           |
| Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored                             | 1       | 1              |                 |                 |                     | 1           |
| Books Edited  | 1       |                | 1               |                 |                     | 1           |
| Book Chapters   | 13      | 3              | 6               | 3               | 2                   | 14          |
| Monographs  |         |                |                 |                 |                     |             |
| Articles in Refereed Journals                               | 45      | 21             | 19              | 18              | 3                   | 61          |
| Refereed Conference Papers                                  | 133     | 43             | 26              | 61              | 13                  | 143         |
| Invited Academic Papers                                     |         |                |                 |                 |                     |             |
| Encyclopedia Entries  | 5       |                | 5               |                 |                     | 5           |
| Book Reviews  | 7       | 2              | 3               |                 | 2                   | 7           |
| Articles in Non-refereed Publications                       | 45      |                | 5               | 1               | 39                  | 45          |
| Juried Creative Works                                       | 5       |                | 1               | 4               |                     | 5           |
| Non-juried Creative Works                                   | 6       | 1              |                 | 2               | 3                   | 6           |
| Refereed Research Abstracts                                 | 12      | 12             |                 |                 |                     | 12          |
| Other (Invited Presentations)                               | 35      | 4              | 1               | 17              | 13                  | 35          |

## 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.**

All entering students must take an orientation class developed by two former undergraduate advisers. Course objectives include giving students knowledge of graduation requirements, the School's mission, available student organizations, student media and professional development opportunities.

Students are required to meet with advisers at least once a semester to discuss progress and be reminded of unmet requirements. Advisers also help students design strategic plans for graduation. This system worked well from 2017 until this year. Both advisers left for jobs at other institutions – one in July, the other in August. A new adviser began work the day before fall classes started, four days before the second adviser left. Budget cuts pre-empted the hiring of a second full-time adviser. The unit has been trying to find a half-time adviser, but with little success so far. That means one adviser must meet with 400-plus students, recruit and meet prospective students and teach the required 8-week orientation course.

Students reported having trouble scheduling timely face-to-face meetings with the lone adviser in order to get approval to register for classes in the upcoming semester. Some students who met with the site team said this issue has not resulted in delayed graduation, principally because the adviser was able to help find alternative solutions. But others said their graduation plans have been delayed because of the unavailability of required courses or missed prerequisites.

Several faculty members also cited the swift end of the days of two full-time academic advisers as a serious challenge for an already resourced-strapped unit. A couple of faculty members questioned whether the School would be able to find a qualified adviser for the low salary/no benefits half-time position it is trying to fill. The new adviser said she will appreciate having the half-time person's help, but also questioned how much could be accomplished in a four-hour workday.

The new adviser expressed the belief that the job can be done by one person through strong time management but said an additional person obviously would benefit students and the School.

A required annual survey that evaluates advisers, conducted before the loss of the previous advisers, showed a 98 percent overall satisfaction rate. In some categories, satisfaction with the unit's advisers was higher than averages for the university overall.

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

Faculty maintain regular office hours and are generally available to students via email and group messaging as well. More than a third of faculty interact regularly with students as advisers to such student organizations as Associate Press Sports Editors, Advertising Club, Collegian Media, JMC Ambassadors, JMC Honors Program, KKSU-TV, PRSSA, SJEA, SPJ and Wildcat 91.9, the student radio station.

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

In addition to the required orientation class, students are informed regularly through advising, classroom announcements, interactions with faculty and online reminders.

**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 supports and encourages students to participate in a wide assortment of extracurricular activities, student groups and programs that connect them to professional resources. Student media provide hands-on training in radio, television, video and web production with campus outlets in print (newspaper, electronic news and yearbook) as well as in advertising and public relations venues.

In the last two years, students created a successful new lifestyle publication, rebranded the student-run radio station, began a professional media chapter for students with a passion for sports and increased innovative social media and face time with real-world clients. Student portfolios contain print, broadcast and online storytelling, innovative campaigns, audience strategies, research and media leadership.

The nonprofit Collegian Media Group publishes the student newspaper, the 123-year-old *Collegian*, the 110-year-old yearbook, *Royal Purple*, and *Manhappenin'* magazine, a lifestyle publication published semi-annually. Although the school doesn't control these publications, the Collegian Media Group employs about 160 Miller School students.

In addition, students in the school's Magazine Writing, Editing and Design class produce a magazine, *Update*, that is published each semester and distributed to more than 6,000 Miller School alumni and friends.

Other media outlets where students can hone their skills include KSDB-FM, Wildcat 91.9, the oldest continually operating FM station in Kansas; *Wildcat Watch*, a student-operated video production outfit, managed by the university's Division of Communications and Marketing, that creates daily webcast updates of activities and events around campus; and KKSU-TV, a low-power campus television channel. The student-staffed station also produces "Channel 8 News," which airs regularly on the Cox Cable public access channel. Since 2015, students also produce "MHK All Day," a program produced through a practicum and experiential learning class that allows students to specialize in one position for a semester.

Student media organizations include:

- Associated Press Sports Editors, which brings in guest speakers in the field, helps members get their work noticed by professionals through APSE's national competition, and creates contacts for finding internships and jobs.
- Advertising Club, the only collegiate chapter of the American Advertising Federation in Kansas, which promotes events at the two AAF professional chapters in Topeka and Kansas City.
- Journalism Ambassadors, whose members assist in recruiting on campus and across the state, serve as greeters at Miller School events, and serve as mentors to incoming freshmen.
- Public Relations Student Society of America, which connects students to like-minded peers and provides networking and experiential opportunities off campus.
- Society of Professional Journalists, which offers opportunities to network with industry professionals who speak at bi-weekly meetings and advice on ethical decision-making and promotes discussion of the First Amendment and journalistic responsibility.

- Student Journalism Education Association, sponsored by the national Journalism Education Association headquartered at Kansas State, whose members help at two national JEA conventions each year and practice their skills by assisting with website and program materials.

The Strategic Communication sequence has built professional relationships in Manhattan and area communities through service-learning projects involving local and regional clients. Many clients have been paired with student groups charged with preparing strategic communication plans, conducting research projects, and developing public relations and advertising campaigns on various events, activities, and festivals. Service-learning clients include business clients and nonprofit organizations, and these partnerships often lead to student internships.

**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.**

The university's Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Life tracks this data for all colleges and schools within them and reports them on the School's website. The unit's enrollment, like that of the university, has declined since the last site visit. Spring 2019 enrollment at Kansas State was 1,673 fewer students than six years. The School's enrollment decreased from 575 in fall 2013 to 363 in fall 2018, a 37 percent decline.

The self-study reports that more students are taking longer to graduate, both from the School and from the university overall, but the unit's graduation rate tends to be higher than the university's. Of the class that entered in 2012, for example, 49.4 percent obtained a School degree within four years compared with 30.6 percent for the university at large. The six-year graduation rate was 78.4 percent for the School and 63.9 percent for the University. The self-study cites anecdotal reasons for this trend, but reports that rising tuition costs and fees and the state's reduced financial support of the University "has meant more students have been forced to temporarily – or permanently – disrupt their studies."

Retention has been identified as a problem across the university, and the university is beginning a new student success collaborative, known as "SSC Navigate." The initiative monitors student performance in classes identified as markers of student success. The provost reported that a new vice provost for student success starts in January. The School cites the area's struggling rural economy and the growing cost of a university education, along with some students' inability to maintain a 2.5 GPA, as contributors to the retention problem.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The unit has done a good job of advising students and providing strong plans of study to guide them toward graduation. Recent turnover in the advising staff and the loss of a full-time position have strained the system, but students still reported general satisfaction to the site team. The School maintains a strong tradition of providing hands-on opportunities to students through classes, required participation at campus media outlets, partnerships with private-sector clients and required internships.

**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.**

In the fall of every year the School's annual budget is developed by the director and the JMC Faculty Council. That process is informed by discussions with the faculty. The School's proposal is forwarded to the dean's office for review and approval in the spring. While the budget and the budget process are aligned with the School's strategic vision, drastic past budget cuts and ongoing budget challenges at the state, university, college and school levels make it very difficult for the School to focus on long term financial planning.

#### **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 University is in the first year of the implementation of a new Responsibility Centered Model (RCM). The new model is a response to a long-standing statewide budget crisis. The core of the model is a revenue calculation of unit generated student credit hours (SCH) and majors. A percentage of those revenues are distributed to the colleges, where other factors, such as college initiatives, determine the College allocation to the departments. In addition, the School receives equipment maintenance funds from a College Credit Hour Fee fund. The School also has an active development program in the KSU Foundation that provides significant scholarship dollars and some operational support funds on an annual basis and generates additional revenue from on-line course offerings through K-State Global Campus.

As a result of annual campus-wide budget cuts in recent years and declining enrollment in the School as well as in the University, allocations from the College have dropped as expenditures have continued to increase. An additional budget cut is anticipated in the coming year, and while there is some optimism about a possible increase in the state allocation to higher education in the next legislative cycle, it is not expected to return state funding to pre-2014 levels.

The School is actively exploring new initiatives that would benefit students and generate additional revenue. They include online master's programs and interdisciplinary certification program. For example, the School has partnered with the Hospitality Management department in the College of Health and Human Sciences to establish a "Travel and Tourism Promotion Certificate" and with several humanities departments in the College to develop a certificate program in Film Studies. These programs rely on existing courses and should generate additional SCH.

Currently the School is stretching to meet its existing teaching, research and service needs. It has lost faculty lines in recent years and while it continues to serve students well, faculty are feeling the stress and are frustrated by the lack of resources needed to innovate and move the program forward. The lack of resources has not gone unnoticed by students. They noted a number concerns, including out-of-date technology, long waits to have an appointment with the School's one academic adviser, elective courses that are in the catalog but never offered, and a desire to have valuable opportunities available at other schools, such as a student public relations agency and participation in the AAF team competition.

The School should be commended for its ability to maintain its program as it, along with the rest of the university, work to address challenging financial conditions.

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

Classes and programming in the School are spread across four buildings on campus. This has been an issue mentioned in the previous two reaccreditation self-studies. Most classes and faculty offices reside in Kedzie Hall, an older building that has undergone some freshening up with new paint and carpet. But the video and audio production equipment and studios are spread across three buildings, including one that is at least a 15-minute walk from the main building.

While ten years ago students interested in radio or television might have simply spent entire days in those facilities, now every major has good reason to gain audio and video storytelling and production skills.

Students complained they often cannot make it from the building that houses all the television equipment and studios back to Kedzie Hall for additional classes. The students also noted the building is locked up at 5 p.m., which limits their ability to get their stories done for the following day's television newscast unless a student mans the door to let others in. Student workspace in Kedzie Hall also closes at 5 p.m. except for a room called the "Think Tank," which has four Mac computers and four PCs, plus the controllers for the drones, that is open until midnight.

Students said that finding computers with the video editing software they need has been especially difficult since a fire destroyed the main library in May 2018. The library had an available workspace open nearly 24 hours a day that contained at least 10 Macs with the full range of software for the Adobe Creative Suite needed for video production.

Discussion of an expansion of the newer TV production building to house the entire Miller School has stalled because of severe state budget cuts, a decline in enrollment university-wide and the need to raise a substantial amount of money for the project.

**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.**

Faculty and students say that generally they have access to the equipment needed to complete course work and conduct research and professional activities. The School offers discounted Adobe licenses to students for use on their personal laptops. Personal laptops will become important as the unit moves toward a full "plug-and-play" system for computer-related academic requirements.

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

The 2018 library fire disrupted some access to technology and information resources, but since much of the information resources are available online, the effect has been negligible.

**SUMMARY:**

In the face of significant resource issues, the School has continued to successfully offer a high level of instruction. A lack of budget resources, the need to gather all of the School in a single building, and the need to update current computer technology present significant challenges if the School is to achieve its potential.

**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 A.Q. Miller School's National Advisory Council provides a primary resource for alumni contact and engagement. Composed of media and other business professionals from throughout the country, all but one of the 19 members are alumni. Council members also serve on the school's standing committees and critique senior-level projects. Members also provide curriculum feedback and were instrumental in some of the new curriculum changes.

The unit publishes a semi-annual alumni magazine, *Update*, which is mailed to almost 6,000 alumni. The alumni section of the School's website contains digital files of the magazine back to 2010 as well as features about alumni and ways for alumni to keep the unit and each other abreast of their careers. The School also hosts alumni gatherings in various cities, including one at the annual AEJMC meeting that is co-sponsored by the K-State Foundation, and a pilot program of after-work socials for alumni in Kansas City and Wichita.

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

Faculty members take seriously the School's public service tradition; they contribute to professional development in many ways and have focused specifically on ethics, certification and the role of media in society. Two faculty members regularly research risk and crisis communication; three others focus research on the importance of media in rural communities and the creation of news deserts with the loss of local newspapers. Several faculty members have spoken to professional, academic and civic groups about general media issues and specific research topics. Almost all faculty have been involved in judging college and high school journalism contests and serving on editorial boards of peer reviewed journals.

**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.**

More than a third of the faculty are involved in professional and academic organizations either as advisers to student groups or as board members or officers of academic or professional associations.

**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.**

A faculty member serves as the director of the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media, founded in 1990 to serve and strengthen news media in small towns. Through the center, students write news and feature stories to be published by rural newspapers throughout the state. Research associated with the center included a 2019 case study of a rural Hispanic newspaper and a continuing study of the adoption of digital production and distribution platforms by residents of a small town who developed a multimedia production center in the aftermath of a devastating tornado.

The Huck Boyd Lecture in Community Media is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year and now includes panel discussions in addition to the lecture. The 2019 lecture featured the editor and publisher of a Kansas newspaper for the African American community. Panelists included the publisher of an Hispanic newspaper.

Through a partnership with nearby Fort Riley and the 1st Infantry Division (Mech), the School works with the installation's Public Affairs Office. Interns write for the Fort Riley Post newspaper and website, prepare social media releases, cover military training events and write speeches for military command group members. The editor of the post newspaper told site team members that "students come to us with solid skills." The post and the School share guest speakers for various events and invite each other to attend functions.

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

The School houses the national headquarters of the Journalism Education Association, and the unit is heavily involved in JEA activities. Several faculty members and student ambassadors attend JEA conferences and assist in staging these events. The unit maintains ties with high school programs throughout Kansas and the Great Plains. It annually lends its facilities and faculty expertise to the Kansas Scholastic Press Association, which holds at least one annual meeting on the K-State campus. Faculty members and advanced students teach KSPA sessions and judge hundreds of contest entries prepared by high school students.

The School partners with KSU's Collegian Media Group to co-host events organized by the Kansas Scholastic Press Association, such as a one-day fall convention where high school students hear speakers in advertising, marketing and journalism – many of whom are faculty members or graduate students. Faculty and students also act as judges for the KSPA high school journalism contest.

**SUMMARY:**

The A.Q. Miller School remains deeply committed to professional and public service and to supporting scholastic journalism.

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

**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.

During the 2013-2014 visit, the School was found non-compliant for the assessment standard. The team said the assessment plan was dated and not consistent with its implementation. It suggested the School clearly incorporate the 12 ACEJMC competencies, apply assessment measures to required courses rather than electives and incorporate internship evaluations in the assessment process.

Since the 2013-2014 visit, the School has updated its assessment plan twice. It updated the plan based on the feedback from the last accreditation visit and then again when the Kansas Board of Regents stipulated oral communication must be assessed across all programs.

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

The School has an assessment committee that has members from all sequences. The head of the committee is the Associate Director for Undergraduate Education. The interim School Director stated all faculty are involved in the assessment process and will continue to find ways to make sure they are included.

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

The School’s assessment plan is centered around ACEJMC’s 12 competencies. There are two direct and two indirect measures for each competency.

When reviewing the capstone evaluation for each sequence, it is easy to see students are assessed on each competency because there is a question tied to each one placed on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The school also includes working professionals and alumni in an observational exercise and review of final capstone projects. The rubric used can easily be tied to the competencies as well.

The senior exit survey and the alumni survey both include questions tied to the 12 competencies. The senior exit survey is administered during the last month of each semester. It includes questions such as: “I understand and can apply the First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to the communications profession and as they apply to my sequence areas,” and “I understand the importance of media respecting diversity among audience members in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity in domestic society.” The alumni survey is sent after the student has been out of school for a year. It repeats the exit survey questions.

The School also has an assessment instrument that asks specific content questions tied to the competencies. The 50 multiple-choice question exam is given in MC 010 Pre-major Orientation, MC 580 Storytelling Across Platforms and MC 581 Strategic Communication Campaigns. This exam is used as a pretest/post-test to compare freshmen to seniors. It has not been implemented long enough to compare a student’s scores. Currently, freshmen are compared to seniors, but one cannot determine how an individual’s scores might have changed.

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

It is clear when reviewing syllabi that four of the required courses address all competencies when reviewing the student learning outcomes. As previously mentioned, the learning outcomes might vary for some courses based on the instructor. This is one weakness the School should address.

**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?

Direct measures include the assessment exam, the review of capstone projects and internship evaluations. The assessment exam is administered to freshmen and seniors every semester. Once it has been implemented long enough, it will provide a true pre-test/post-test comparison score for each student. Currently, the exam just indicates how a freshmen's knowledge compares to a graduating senior's knowledge.

The review of the capstone project is conducted by professionals each semester. The capstone rubric asks a question tied to 11 of the 12 competencies on a five-point scale ranging from "inferior" to "excellent." The faculty have set a benchmark score of 3.1 which is average. They expect students to score above a 3.1 on the capstone evaluation.

The internship evaluation is very similar. Internship supervisors are asked a question that is related to the competency on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

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

The indirect measures are the alumni satisfaction survey and the senior exit survey. The senior exit survey is sent out during the last month of each semester. The alumni satisfaction survey is conducted annually.

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

The assessment measures (the exam, the review of senior capstone projects, the observational exercise, internship evaluations, senior exit surveys and alumni surveys) are tied to ACEJMC professional values and competencies. The multiple-choice exam actually measures students' knowledge. The exit survey, alumni survey, capstone evaluation and internship evaluation measures include questions easily tied to the competency on a five-point scale indicating level of agreement respondents can apply to the competency. The observational exercise where industry professionals watch students work through a critique exercise is included under the direct method of evaluation. The qualitative form of assessment is still easily tied to the competencies. These measures are effective.

**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?

Direct measures include the assessment exam, the review of capstone projects and internship evaluations.

The capstone rubric asks a question tied to 11 of the 12 competencies. The faculty expect students to score above a 3.1 on the capstone evaluation. The internship evaluation is very similar.

When reviewing the assessment reports, it was hard to make comparisons across the years. Some reports provided a mean and said the mean was well above the 3.1 School benchmark. Other reports did not include means but rather reported percent scores for each class. The reports are text-heavy when a table with scores for each outcome might make it easier to see comparisons over the accreditation time period. The way the information was reported also changed over time.

The unit does collect and analyze the findings. According to the Interim Director, if the mean score is below 3.1, that competency would be unsatisfactory and an action item would be created to address it. The inconsistency of the reports presented in the appendix made it hard to determine which competencies scored below the baseline.

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

Determining which competencies were not mastered was difficult due to the inconsistency of the yearly reports in the appendix. The School prepares an annual assessment report for the University each year. Not all reports provided a mean score. Some provided percentages and repeated information. For example, information presented in the 2015-16 report was duplicated in the 2016-17 report for the same learning objectives. It was hard to find a pattern to compare what was happening longitudinally when the information presented was exactly the same. It is unclear what competencies had not been mastered.

The 2017-18 and 2018-19 reports provide a more accurate reflection of what is happening. These reports list the outcomes that need work. For example, in 2017-2018, global diversity, research, history, evaluating others' work, theory and math/statistics were identified as weaknesses. The report then provides information on how the curriculum would be tweaked to address the weaknesses. The same type of information was presented in the 2018-2019.

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

As uneven as the yearly assessment reports are, there is clear evidence that the faculty close the loop. They take the feedback from alumni and professionals and make curriculum tweaks as needed. The new curriculum is an example of taking quantitative and qualitative feedback and implementing it to improve the student experience. The gateway classes are also a great example of using assessment to improve the program.

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

The School implements its assessment plan every year. It collects quantitative and qualitative data yearly to identify if the weaknesses have been addressed. The assessment reports include a plan on how the curriculum will be tweaked to address the weaknesses. Once the assessment survey becomes a true pre/post-test, it will provide a clearer picture of what knowledge students enter the program with and what they leave with.

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

The School is collecting and analyzing assessment data. The issue is in how it presents the data in the yearly reports. The duplication and lack of consistency in presenting the information relates to the instability in the unit. The School has the data, it has a plan on how to use it and it also indicates how to

improve the curriculum to overcome unsatisfactory scores on the assessment measures. It would be easier to see this pattern had the reports presented discrete information and a table that indicated the means longitudinally so the highs and lows over the assessment period could be determined.

**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 maintains contact with alumni to assess their experiences in the profession. An alumni survey is sent every year. Alumni and Advisory Board Members are included in the assessment process. The supplementary information section of the self-study indicated the School used the results of the 2014 alumni survey and senior exit survey to update the curriculum (i.e., the nine-hour Gateway courses).

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

The unit includes members of the profession in the assessment process. The School uses professionals to observe capstone classes, review capstone projects and assess internship performance.

**SUMMARY:**

The School has addressed the concerns of the previous site team by developing an assessment plan that clearly links to ACEJMC's 12 competencies. It has indirect and direct measures to assess each objective. Faculty use the data to improve the curriculum. The weaknesses are the annual reports prepared for the University in which the information is duplicated for multiple years. The last two annual reports indicate the School has finally figured out how to present the information so longitudinal comparisons can be made. The School is collecting data, analyzing data and closing the feedback loop, but the presentation of that information in the yearly assessment reports provided created confusion.

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

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

#### **1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.**

##### **Strengths:**

A revised curriculum that better prepares students for the current media environment and incorporates ACEJMC competencies across all courses

A dedicated faculty with a clear commitment to students and to the mission of the School and the University

The School is well regarded across the campus and the state. One interviewee described it as a “gem” in the University.

The current leadership has stabilized the program and helped develop a vision for the future.

##### **Weaknesses:**

Course content addressing issues of equity and inclusion is not readily visible in many syllabi and students do not perceive diversity as a high priority in the School. While there are notable individual efforts, and a diversity plan and committee are in place, a sense of urgency is lacking.

The current budget is a major hurdle in the School’s efforts to serve its present student population and to achieve its vision for the future.

This is the third site visit that has identified facilities as a weakness. There is an urgent need to find a way to bring all of the School into a single modern facility.

The current computing technology in the School is insufficient to meet the teaching and learning needs of journalism and strategic communication students in the current professional environment.

The current system in place to ensure consistency in course offerings across sections of the same course is not fully effective.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

The School was found out of compliance on Standard 9 Assessment with the following items listed for correction:

- Update assessment plan to incorporate ACEJMC professional values and competencies.

- Apply consistent assessment measures to required courses.
- Implement an evaluation system for internships that allows analysis by cohort and sequence.

It took the following steps to improve its assessment process:

- Developed an assessment exam administered each semester in senior-level capstone classes, which has questions on the 12 learning objectives.
- Engaged industry professionals to review final projects in capstone classes, using a rubric based on applicable learning objectives.
- Started on-site assessment of internships by holding a focus group with internship coordinators to determine which learning objectives best apply to the internship setting.
- Worked with the University Assessment Office to automatically survey graduates who have been in the work force for two years to learn what they think about the curriculum and their educations. The Assessment Office also conducts a senior satisfaction survey each spring semester to help us spot problems in department culture and curriculum.

**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 provided the needed information in a readable format, but it lacked context in a number of areas. Any weaknesses in the report can be attributed to time pressures resulting from leadership changes in the School.