Revisit Team Report
for Accreditation in Journalism
and Mass Communications

Name of Program: **Department of Communication and Journalism**

Name of Institution: **Shippensburg University**

Date of Original Site Visit: **January 23-26, 2011**

Recommendation: **Accreditation**

Revisit Date: **November 11-14, 2012**

Revisit Team Chair: **Will Norton, Jr., Professor and Dean, Meek School of Journalism and New Media, University of Mississippi**

Revisit Team Member: **Judy Turk, Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University**

Revisit Recommendation: **Accreditation**

1. List each standard in noncompliance and the reasons as cited in the original team report. (Add additional pages as necessary.)

Standard 2: Curriculum

- The unit must fully demonstrate how the curriculum meets the 12 competencies listed by ACEJMC. Those values need to be evidenced by clear learning objectives and outcomes developed in the courses.
- Curriculum must provide precise expectations for the development of portfolio projects within individual courses.
- The unit must reduce its dependency on student run media in teaching basic competencies.
- The unit must ensure that all students are exposed to the learning opportunities that are now only available to those who choose to participate in student run media.

Standard 3: Diversity

- The unit needs to implement the diversity plan completely.
- The unit needs to implement and monitor the effectiveness of recruitment and retention strategies for underrepresented students in the department.
- The unit should ensure that diversity learning outcomes and assignments are clearly articulated in the syllabi.
- The unit should assess that the students value diversity and are competent in applying their skills.

Standard 9: Assessment

- The unit needs to implement the assessment plan.
- The unit needs to incorporate the ACEJMC values and competencies into assessment measurements.
- The unit needs to streamline and reduce the number of the assessment measures.
- The unit must formalize consistent portfolio content and devise appropriate assessment rubrics and collect and report assessment data.

2. Describe any other weakness cited by the cite team in its report and any additional concerns cited by the Council in its letter to the unit regarding provisional status.

The weaknesses cited were related to the standards that were found in non-compliance.

- Substitution of student-run media for direct classroom instruction
- Lack of integration between curriculum and student media
- Lack of recruitment of under-represented students
- Lack of consistent portfolio measurements for assessment
- Lack of assessment data and clarity of assessment measures
- Lack of control over media facilities and resources

3. For each standard that had been in noncompliance, provide a summary of the team's findings regarding corrections and an evaluation of compliance or noncompliance. (Present a separate narrative response for each of the standards in noncompliance. Add additional pages as necessary.)

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

The unit must fully demonstrate how the curriculum meets the 12 competencies listed by ACEJMC. Those values need to be evidenced by clear learning objectives and outcomes developed in the courses.

> The department has addressed this deficiency by revising syllabi so that each one lists the relevant skills and competencies included in the 12 ACEJMC professional values and competencies as well as clear objectives for the courses. Objectives have been tied to learning outcomes that can and will be assessed throughout each course by individual self-evaluation to determine each student's achieved skill level in the appropriate competencies. Expectations for student skill attainment in each course have been stated clearly.

The curriculum must provide precise expectations for the development of portfolio pieces within individual courses.

> Skills courses — such as editing, public affairs reporting, magazine design, digital journalism, public relations writing, promotional publication design, digital photography and electronic media production — require students to produce pieces they can place in a professional portfolio. To strengthen this area of the curriculum and provide a capstone experience in each of the three emphases, the department established new requirements in the final courses of each of the emphases. The three courses COM 424: Electronic Media Production and Performance, COM 432: Public Relations Research and Campaigns, and COM 478: Digital Journalism, require students to produce projects to display the skills they have learned. The capstone projects are listed in each of the syllabi and require students to be able to present their final projects for professional evaluation and assessment.

The unit must reduce its dependency on student-run media in teaching basic competencies.

> The department now focuses on all 12 values and competencies throughout the curriculum — from basic skills classes to the upper-level production and research courses and no longer through purely extra-curricular activities. The provisional accreditation decision in May 2011 gave the unit, fully supported by the dean, additional traction to change student media from student clubs to co-curricular activities linked to specific courses. As part of this focus, students in basic skills classes are required to produce course work that can be published or aired in the student media. In addition, the department created a curricular model that incorporates student-run campus media into its program so that students can apply what they learn

in basic classes to the work they do in student media. Faculty members now can assess the work students are doing in student-run media as part of the newly created COM 355: Practicum class. To create these learning opportunities, the department worked with the university's other stakeholders to revise the structure of the various student media and public relations organizations and created a Campus Media Board to govern the media organizations. Even though student media are specifically linked to more advanced courses, freshmen are encouraged to volunteer with student media and are welcomed.

The unit must ensure that all students are exposed to the learning opportunities that are now only available to those who choose to participate in student-run media.

The department revised its curriculum to eliminate the former senior capstone course and created a Practicum course that requires all students in the major to participate in student media. The new course, instituted for the first time for the Fall 2012 semester, provides all students learning opportunities available in student media. Faculty workload issues required a three-credit Practicum instead of a one-credit model that previously was proposed. Students are expected to take Practicum in their junior year to prepare them for internships and for their final capstone experiences in COM 424: Electronic Media Production and Performance, COM 432: Public Relations Research and Campaigns, and COM 478: Digital Journalism. Even though seniors were grandfathered under the old curriculum, many seniors chose to enroll in the Practicum course in Fall 2012 for additional hands-on experience. In making student-run media a co-curricular endeavor, the department is able to ensure that all its students will be exposed to the learning environment available at the student-run media. It also provides faculty an opportunity to evaluate and assess work students produce at the student-run media, thereby giving students formal feedback on their efforts.

OVERALL EVALUATION: COMPLIANCE

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

The unit needs to implement the diversity plan completely.

During the last 18 months, the program made significant progress in implementing its diversity plan. The department's most recent hires, a tenure-track assistant professor and a full-time visiting instructor, brought faculty diversity. The department was in the process of filling an open, tenure-eligible position. At the time of the interview the position had been advertised, but no interviews had been scheduled. In its successful search for a person of color (international diversity), the search committee chair employed the strategy of designating a member of the committee as diversity advocate, and that person made individual contacts with PhD programs known to enroll diverse students. The 2012-13 search committee for a public relations vacancy is following that same process.

In addition, this summer, two senior faculty members ended their employment with the university. At the time of the ACEJMC revisit the department was searching for a new tenure-track faculty member in Public Relations. The department also requested permission to hire a new faculty member to teach digital media and communications law and ethics.

The departmental website contains links to several diversity organizations, including the Forum on Media Diversity that is hosted by LSU. A faculty member in the department contributes as editor and web master. In addition, the department has implemented a procedure to reach out to minority groups on campus, diverse high schools in the region and applicants. For example, applicants from underrepresented groups receive additional communication from the department. A new student success group is helping in this effort.

The unit needs to implement and monitor the effectiveness of recruitment and retention strategies for under-represented students in the department.

The department is developing strategies to recruit under-represented students from the state and region, and to measure the achievement of its goals.

The department has a higher percentage of African American and international students than the university average. A report of the university's Institutional Research office indicated that the Department of Communication/Journalism is second on the campus in number of African American males enrolled.

Data show strong retention of students from underrepresented populations. The Spring 2012 cohort showed excellent success, particularly with African American students.

In addition, thanks to active mentoring, a student success group, the United Communications Association, provides opportunities for discussion on a peer basis. An Equity Scorecard process, enthusiastically endorsed by the high administration, has been initiated on the campus to improve diversity and quality of admissions. The program is comprehensive, including access, retention, excellence and completion. The whole admissions process is being redone and a new director of admissions is being hired.

Challenges to recruitment of faculty of color include the percentage of persons of color in the area, the requirement of a PhD degree and low salaries. The campus is a union campus, but the unit is working with the administration to develop some flexibility in hiring. We urge the President and his administrative colleagues to explore creative ways to enhance recruitment of minority faculty and to be flexible concerning the PhD requirements so that the unit will not be as constrained in finding candidates of high-level work experience who would be suitable for a professional program such as the Department of Communication and Journalism.

The unit should ensure that diversity learning outcomes and assignments are clearly articulated in the syllabi.

Diversity outcomes and assignments are delineated in coursework beyond COM 245: Diversity and the Media. For example, core classes such as COM 112: Media Writing and COM 345: Communications Law and Ethics have assignments and exercises related to diversity. In addition, many other courses have assignments that further develop student competence in this area. For example, public relations courses, including COM 241: PR Writing and COM 381: Promotional Publications; several Electronic Media courses, including COM 424: Producing and Performance and COM 484: Programming and Management; and Print Media courses, including COM 375: Public Affairs Reporting have regular components related to diversity. Many of the electronic and print projects are aired or published in student media, and often the public relations projects are done as pro bono work that is turned over to a local community organization.

The unit should assess that the students value diversity and are competent in applying their skills.

The university and department have independently recruited speakers from under-represented groups in the various professional emphases. These guests have exposed students to a wide variety of social and cultural perspectives.

A survey in 2008 of recent alumni indicated that 70 percent of graduates reported strong understanding of diversity. These students were not uniformly exposed to the increased focus of the current program on domestic and international diversity.

Eighty-seven percent of the graduating class during Spring 2012 reported that the Department of Communication/Journalism provided them with an adequate understanding of diversity and how it relates to the profession.

In addition, assessment of Com 245: Diversity and the Media showed that 93 percent of students attained the required competency in the diversity assessment exercise.

OVERALL EVALUATION: COMPLIANCE

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The unit needs to implement the assessment plan.

Members of the Department of Communication/Journalism have worked diligently to revise the assessment plan and implement it. While it is comprehensive, data for some measures were being collected for the first time during the Fall 2012 semester, and

were not available at the time of the revisit. However, the more complicated assessment plan that had been in place at the time of the first visit, remained in force until the Fall 2012 semester and resulted in several changes within the unit:

- The old assessment plan resulted in the department establishing the Media Writing course and adding special tutoring for students to improve their chances of passing the second proficiency test.
- The old assessment plan showed that some students needed special instruction in grammar. Thus, those students who do not pass a Media Writing pre-test given at the start of the semester, receive special help to enable them to be better prepared to take the proficiency exam. The test is administered twice a semester during Media Writing. Students must score 70 percent or more on the proficiency test to pass this essential course in the program.
- Assessment of portfolios has resulted in additional emphasis on writing.
- The old assessment plan also showed that instruction in law was not consistent and effective. This resulted in changes in staff assignments and placing greater emphasis on quality of writing in written assignments.
- The unit revised the evaluation form it uses to measure whether designated research projects satisfy one or more ACEJMC learning outcomes.

The unit needs to incorporate the ACEJMC values and competencies into assessment measurements.

All courses that are part of the assessment plan have specific faculty-designed measures and rubrics that are linked to specific aspects of the 12 Values and Competencies as articulated by the Council.

In addition, the department's internship packet incorporates the evaluation of on-site internship supervisors regarding student mastery of the required values and competencies.

Finally, outside professionals regularly evaluate student work using ACEJMC's 12 values and competencies in order to provide independent guidance from outside the unit on student readiness for the profession.

The unit needs to streamline and reduce the number of the assessment measures.

The department revised its assessment plan. The new plan is both more manageable and sustainable. Professionals from the program's newly rejuvenated Advisory Council independently evaluate student work. The department relies on indirect measures such as alumni surveys, exit surveys and student performances in regional and national competitions as elements of the revised plan.

The unit must formalize consistent portfolio content and devise appropriate assessment rubrics and collect and report assessment data.

The program has moved away from a general and ambiguous portfolio requirement in favor of a model of assessment directly drawn from ACEJMC's 12 Values and Competencies. The faculty eliminated the general senior capstone course, taught to all majors, in favor of track-specific capstone courses that produce projects in line with the expectations of a student's specific professional emphasis.

The program has revised many rubrics and has posted these under its learning management system, Desire2Learn (D2L).

OVERALL EVALUATION: COMPLIANCE

4. For EACH of the other weaknesses cited by the site team or concerns cited by the Council, provide a summary of the team's findings regarding corrections.

1. Substitution of student-run media for direct classroom instruction

Instruction in classes is good, and students are required to work on various staff of student media. Their work is graded by faculty and also evaluated by student leaders of the various student media. This work results in items that are placed in portfolios for assessment by professionals.

2. Lack of integration between curriculum and student media

Campus media and the department work together. Student Government, the Student Affairs division, the Information Technologies and Services division, the Academic Affairs division of the university and the department and college all worked cooperatively to achieve a common framework for budgeting and policy. This framework ensures that students in the department are required to work for student media to support their academic work while allowing campus media to remain a vibrant part of campus life and fulfill the information needs of the larger community. Many juniors enrolled this fall in the Practicum course said they would continue to be involved with student media even after the course ends.

3. Lack of recruitment of underrepresented students

The department has implemented a new recruiting process for under-represented students. The process will be recalibrated as the newly approved Equity Scorecard process is implemented across the campus.

4. Lack of consistent portfolio measurements for assessment

A systematic and consistent assessment of student work is a regular activity in the department.

5. Lack of assessment data and clarity of assessment measures

Assessment data exists from the previous process and assessment measures have been simplified in the new system to provide clarity. Reviews by professionals and pre-test and post-test assessments have improved the curriculum.

The department has revised the structure of student media to include a clear role for the Department of Communication/Journalism.

In addition, since the time of the last visit, the department was awarded several Technology Fee Grants that provide additional resources and state-of-the-art facilities for student learning. The department has 22 new digital cameras, a new Dell PC classroom lab, two new Apple TV setups, a 30-station iPad laboratory with a supplemental budget for equipment and applications, and a six-figure video production van.

The department continues to seek additional funding opportunities through the Shippensburg University Foundation to lessen reliance on annual appropriations for media equipment.