

Revisit Team Report

for Accreditation in Journalism and Mass Communications

Name of Program: Journalism and Mass Communication

Name of Institution: University of Colorado, Boulder

Name of Administrator: Christopher Braider, interim director

Date of Original Site Visit: Feb. 28-March 2, 2011

Original Visit Recommendation: Provisional re-accreditation, undergraduate and graduate programs

Revisit Date: Nov. 11-13, 2012

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Revisit Team Member: Sue Burzynski Bullard, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Revisit Recommendation: Re-accreditation, undergraduate and graduate programs

BACKGROUND AND UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO:

It is safe to say the Journalism and Mass Communication situation at the University of Colorado is an unusual case for ACEJMC. Some background, history and explanation are necessary before getting to the standards out of compliance from the original site team visit 21 months ago.

In 2011, the program, then the School of Journalism and Mass Communication was targeted for “discontinuance,” a formal term from the university Board of Regents policies. The process has gone forward, but contrary to popular wisdom and expectation, the program is doing well, enrolling new students under its new “Journalism Plus” model, bringing in new staff to reinvigorate programs for students, beginning a faculty search for a new tenure-track professor of Advertising and, perhaps most importantly, addressing its faculty dysfunction under the leadership of an interim director who comes from the department of French and Italian.

Meanwhile, a university process is under way to consider the creation a new school or college of which Journalism and Mass Communication would likely be a part. Or JMC (as the program is now known) could find itself housed within the university’s mammoth College of Arts and Sciences.

Whatever the outcome, the university’s leadership, including the Chancellor and Provost, is outspoken and adamantly committed to a university that includes significant and successful journalism and mass communication education at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

From the Provost: “We remain committed to journalism education. No one was forced to give up their job. We have approved a new tenure track line in Advertising.”

From the Chancellor: “If I didn’t support it (journalism education), we could have closed the School. Colorado must have a strong program. The flagship university in the state needs to have a strong JMC program.”

Here is a full timeline of the discontinuance process:

--April 23, 2010: School Advisory Board sends a letter to the Chancellor urging closure of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and consolidation with the university’s Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society (ATLAS).

-- Aug. 25, 2010: Provost begins the "discontinuance" process.

-- Nov. 1, 2010: A committee established by the Provost recommended the SJMC program be "discontinued," for the purpose of "strategic realignment," as compared to budgetary reasons. It recommended that journalism be placed in a new unit, if created, or absorbed into the College of Arts and Sciences.

-- Feb. 15, 2011: The Chancellor announces a Journalism Plus action plan in response to the discontinuation report. It pledges to maintain the existing SJMC curriculum for those in the program and those admitted the next fall. Students were to have until May 2013 to complete their SJMC requirements, even if they do not graduate then. That deadline has subsequently been extended to May 2016. He announced that by fall 2012 students who chose to pursue journalism would take it as part of a double major or they could pursue a major elsewhere with a certificate or minor in journalism.

-- On the same day, the Provost accepted a report from the Information, Communication and Technology Exploratory Committee he had launched the previous September. It offered three possible options: a School or College of Information, Communication and Media Technology, an Institute for the Global Digital Future and its preferred option, create both.

-- March 2, 2011: ACEJMC site team recommends provisional reaccreditation of undergraduate and graduate programs. It finds SJMC out of compliance on Standard 1 for both undergraduate and graduate, and standards 3 and 9 for the graduate program. (The undergrad recommendation was accepted by the Accrediting Committee in its March 28, 2011 meeting, but it reversed the site team, voting for denial on the graduate program. The Accrediting Council on April 29, 2011, subsequently voted for provisional reaccreditation on both the undergrad and graduate programs.)

-- April 14, 2011: University regents vote 5-4 for discontinuance of SJMC, effective June 30, 2011.

-- June 17, 2011: French and Italian professor Christopher Braider named interim director of JMC.

-- July 1, 2011: Faculty of SJMC is moved to a temporary administrative home in the graduate school of the university. Faculty with tenure and tenure-track faculty receive new tenure lines in the graduate school.

-- Sept. 7, 2011: Provost announces structure of Journalism Plus (Journalism major plus a second field of study; this is discussed in more detail below).

-- Spring semester, January 2012: First Journalism Plus students begin program.

-- April 16, 2012: Information, Communication, Journalism, Media and Technology Steering Committee, commissioned by the Provost and under direction of the associate vice chancellor for faculty affairs, recommends a new interdisciplinary School or College bringing together Journalism, Advertising/Design, Communication/Media Theory, Media/Performing Arts, Documentary Film/ Film Studies.

-- Nov. 11, 2012: ACEJMC revisit team arrives.

-- Spring 2013: Team of outside evaluators/experts visits to advise the university on a new structure. Decision on the structure by the Provost is to follow.

-- Fall 2014 (tentative): Formation of new School/College/units.

JOURNALISM PLUS: The new curricular rubric for JMC students took effect in spring semester 2012. That means it is in its third semester as the Committee and Council consider this report.

The heart of it is requiring an additional field of study for JMC majors, ranging from 30 to 33 credit hours, in addition to the 28 or more credit hours they may take in their JMC fields of concentration (News-Editorial, Broadcast Journalism, Broadcast Production, Advertising, Media Studies). JMC, under the leadership and hard work of its assistant dean and associate director for undergraduate studies, has forged 31 partnerships across the campus with a variety of other disciplines that include particular curricular mixes and a prescribed number of upper-division courses. As many as a half-dozen more may be added for the spring semester of 2013.

Here's a sampling of the partner departments: Anthropology, Art History, Studio Arts, Classics, English/Creative Writing, Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, Film Studies, French and Italian, Humanities. The most popular among the 400 students now enrolled in Journalism Plus are Communication and Psychology. (There are 350 majors still in the program in effect at the time of discontinuance.)

Women and Gender Studies has flyers up in the JMC building seeking Journalism Plus students. Other departments are reaching out to JMC seeking to be added to Journalism Plus. Germanic and Slavic Languages has recently contacted the assistant dean.

The purpose of Journalism Plus reflects the regents' desire and Central Administration's commitment for JMC education to remain a strong part of the University of Colorado. It is also designed, as one put it, to create journalists with special knowledge and expertise. As another senior official said: Discontinuance was designed "to shake the place up and get a conversation going."

The way Journalism Plus was launched turned into a positive for JMC. At one point in the conversation it appeared the university was headed to "Major plus Journalism," that is, journalism as a minor or certificate program. As deliberations played out it was decided to keep the BSJ degree intact with JMC leading the conversation and the "plus" added.

Why Journalism Plus and not a double major, because as a practical matter that's what it is? An existing university rule requires double majors to complete 145 credit hours compared to the normal 120. That is on the verge of being abolished, with one internal step remaining. Again, through the creative work of the assistant dean, JMC has figured out how its majors can complete Journalism Plus/a double major, fulfill JMC's Arts and Sciences breadth requirements, adhere to ACEJMC standards and finish in four years.

(The university does not have campus-wide general-education requirements.)

The Provost was responsible for a key step in the launching of Journalism Plus. He had the registrar code Journalism Plus students as majors in their second field of study, thus allowing them to get the classes they needed. He says the program is already having positive peripheral impact around campus. Business may be next with a similar program. The Provost says one of his goals is to develop distinctive programs that distinguish Colorado from other programs and universities. He cites Journalism/Media and Environment/Sustainability as two strong candidates.

The Chancellor says he is most pleased with where JMC is today. He doesn't see much change if it ends up in the new proposed college or perhaps as a department or school in Arts and Sciences. He wants to watch the evolution of Journalism Plus. He calls it "a program that makes sense for students."

"A new college that throws out what we're doing would be crazy," he said in response to concern expressed by the revisit team that the latest report on a new college might be read as de-emphasizing journalism.

While the responsibility of the revisit team is to assess JMC's response to the standards out of compliance and to recommend whether or not reaccreditation is warranted for the next four years, we felt this background and information was necessary for the Committee and Council given the vigorous conversation previously and the ongoing widely held belief (even somewhat on the Colorado campus) that journalism and mass communication education at the University of Colorado is no more. In fact, while the future remains uncertain and faculty understandably feel in limbo while the discussions play out on the future home of JMC, the education of students continues and with new energy as a result of Journalism Plus and other factors to be discussed ahead. Importantly, JMC's budget is intact, the faculty is working more collaboratively and students are generally happy, even as many struggle to master the nuances of Journalism Plus.

1. List each standard in noncompliance and the reasons as cited in the original team report.

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration
(Undergraduate and graduate)

Reasons cited: Even without the discontinuance process, the situation at Colorado is one of high dysfunction and intractable disputes. As noted above, replacing the Dean is not enough to fix the problem. The School is a mass of contradictions: accomplished academics who form a bloc to prevent forward movement; a caring Dean who has failed in his aspirations; a committed Advisory Board who has turned against the School. Yet students are graduating, generally seem content and are finding jobs. Where so many of the schools evaluated by ACEJMC have at least found some level of peace among faculty factions, the situation for reasons historical and contemporary has reached a point of almost open insurrection that has led the university leadership to step in and, as a result,

the end of the SJMC appears almost inevitable. Hence, a finding of non-compliance on governance is equally inevitable.

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness (Graduate)

Reasons cited: The School has certainly made some efforts to improve diversity in the curriculum and in its graduate student population; examples of such efforts include representation at conventions such as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists to recruit students to the master's program.

The efforts, however, have not led to a truly "diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects society" with "effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population" and one in which the curriculum "fosters understanding of issues" in regard to issues of diversity. A survey of syllabi at the graduate level, for instance, demonstrates little commitment to such topics in the courses; interviews with students in the program also indicate that diversity-related issues are not adequately emphasized in their coursework.

According to data provided by the School, 59 students were registered in the master's programs (including Newsgathering) in 2010; of those, only one identifies as part of a racial/ethnic minority – a Newsgathering student who is Hispanic. More than half of the students at the master's level are women. One reason for the lack of racial/ethnic diversity at the master's level is in the very small number of applications; of the 90 Newsgathering applications in the most recent cycle, just five were from racial/ethnic minorities.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Graduate)

Reasons cited: The School's self-study indicates that faculty have endorsed a general set of goals for the program, including setting "high standards for professional achievement" by students in preparation for work in mass communications fields. Efforts to assess the program's curriculum and courses toward those goals have not been productive, however, although the degree has existed since 1992. The self-study indicates that recent assessment efforts involved just three professional projects of the dozens produced in the School over the past several years. Results of such a minimal assessment effort cannot meaningfully contribute to improving coursework or the curriculum.

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

Diversity needs to be much more thoroughly incorporated into the curriculum:

The site team wrote: The course descriptions and syllabi do not consistently reflect an attention to diversity. However, the School says faculty members have been told that diversity should be a part of every course. In 2009 the School brought in an outside expert who found diversity-teaching opportunities in about 40 courses. The expert recommended that each course have at least one session where diversity is the focus. However, the expert found that only 13 courses included such a session. Some students said that the focus on diversity is not strong in every course, and that in some courses diversity is only “touched on.” The expert found that upper-level courses in public affairs and TV reporting, international journalism, environmental journalism, and science writing were most likely to include a class with specific focus. The expert urged more focus in core courses. The Dean shared the report with faculty members on the Diversity Committee in 2011 and intended to share it with the faculty shortly after the site team visit. He added that until the discontinuance controversy the School intended to mount an energetic campaign on diversity. But that campaign was largely set aside under the new conditions.

Too many classes are not being taught by regular faculty:

The site team wrote: Nearly half (45 percent) of the courses in SJMC are taught by either adjunct instructors or graduate students. This number is a concern because accreditation requires that full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, scholarship and service. That being said, for the most part, the adjunct instructors are respected by the students. The advertising sequence uses full-time faculty to teach all the core courses and then uses adjuncts (most of whom are working professionals with extensive advertising experience) to teach electives that focus on particular skills that the adjuncts can best address. Other sequences use a similar approach to strategically take advantage of well-trained faculty and working professionals who can provide current examples from the industry.

An aged and too small building requires classes to be scattered over a wide area of campus:

The site team wrote: The School is housed in one of the university’s older buildings known as the Armory. It is a 20,000 square foot, 95-year-old structure. Space is a problem. A senior faculty member noted that the typical building on campus is inviting, modern and spacious: “You walk into the Armory and the message immediately is that this is not an important part of the university. This is fourth class compared to other units.” Some faculty members felt the Armory is below the standard of the homes for journalism schools at many universities across the region and across the nation. A faculty member said “You will note that there are no flat-screen TV’s with CNN on all

the time. We don't need five more cameras. We need a building that reflects the University's commitment to high-quality journalism." There are no plans for a new building. Instead, the School had hoped to eventually build an 18,000 square-foot addition to the Armory.

Stronger ties needed between assessment plan and actual outcomes:

The site team wrote: The unit has collected data and claims that it has used the data to improve curriculum—particularly in relation to the revised curriculum that was set to begin in Fall 2011. (*NOTE: New curriculum was not implemented due to discontinuance process.*) The evidence of this is mixed, however. For example, the revised curriculum places an increased importance on writing even though the assessment measures indicate that the undergraduate students scored high on writing (81 percent scored “extremely/fairly well”). The new curriculum also is including a required ethics course (the assessment report showed 91 percent scored “extremely/fairly well”). However, the new curriculum does not include a new required course focusing on the understanding of history and institutions even though the assessment measures showed that students did not understand history adequately (no one scored “extra” or “fairly well”). This is not to indicate that the new curriculum is lacking, or that it is focusing on the wrong subjects. It is, however, an example that illustrates a potential disconnect between claiming that the data were used to help revise the curriculum and understanding how this is the case.

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

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration (Undergraduate and graduate)

Summary of findings: The selection of Christopher Braider, a venerable professor in the university's French and Italian department, as interim director for JMC was initially greeted with some skepticism or as a sign of abandonment of journalism education. But the Provost's decision to select an interim leader who did not have any ties to the old school has turned out to be a very successful move. Braider (who was signed up for two years and will now serve at least three) has bolstered his leadership credentials. His success in JMC has at least delayed for now his getting back to his scholarly pursuits around 17th century French literature.

Key to his success has been a no-nonsense, sometimes-in-your-face style and zero tolerance for the internecine warfare that had poisoned the atmosphere in the old SJMC. Put another way: the faculty is the same, the building is the same, but people feel better. And as was the case before, the quality of instruction and student satisfaction remain high.

The Chancellor: “(He) has moved from a program with weak leadership and dysfunctional faculty to strong leadership and a productive faculty.”

The Dean of the Graduate School, where JMC is temporarily housed: It is “exceptionally better” in terms of leadership.

The Provost: “He has been fair and firm.”

Credit is given to the faculty as well, realizing what was at stake and the power of the “discontinuance” label. Many noted that faculty meetings are very different and more productive. The interim director gets credit for listening and for being open to other ideas, though there is some concern that longer-term impact of decisions he makes won’t be fully considered since he won’t be in the mix once JMC moves to a new academic home.

The interim director has not just been a caretaker while the university’s broader change process played out.

- He launched and with the faculty adopted a simplified set of by-laws for JMC.
- He created a three-member executive committee, which advises him on policy and administrative matters. Such a body existed previously but had fallen into disuse. The three members are elected by the entire faculty with a member selected from each academic rank.
- Staff realignments were made, including the hiring of a veteran and respected Colorado journalist as communications director (who is charged with building external connections as well as being also deeply involved in diversity efforts), and a new internship director (a former adjunct from Broadcast whose energy is off the chart and who has modernized the already successful intern system – 70 students have internships during the fall semester). A financial staff position also was added. Staff reporting relationships were streamlined as well.
- Creation last summer of News Corps, a form of the “teaching hospital” model that has been much discussed of late. It began with a handful of students last summer doing rapid response work just after the Colorado wildfires broke out and in response to the Aurora movie-theater shooting. It is now a class taught by a respected instructor and is expected to grow as more media partnerships are created. News Corps students got national media attention this fall for reports on political advertising in swing-state Colorado. News Corps also has recently received a \$100,000 donation and students now have “go packs,” with necessary equipment to cover a breaking story across platforms.
- As noted, a search for a tenure-track Advertising faculty member has been approved.

In short, the rifts between media research faculty and practitioner faculty that were a significant contributor to the SJMC discontinuance have been dramatically reduced. Give the interim director his due – though some grumble things aren’t as good as perhaps they seem – and credit the faculty for setting aside some of the polarizing differences. There is

a sense of optimism inside the JMC building that could not be found when the original site team visited. The problems of governance are no more.

Overall evaluation: **COMPLIANCE**

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness (Graduate)

Summary of findings: Although JMC has not resolved all of the issues raised in the 2011 site team report, it is moving in the right direction. It is actively trying to increase the diversity of both its student and faculty population, and it's attempting to make diversity a bigger part of its curriculum and culture.

No new full-time faculty has been added since the original site team report. But JMC has made a deliberate attempt to recruit journalists of color to its adjunct faculty. When two positions opened in fall 2012, they were filled by an African-American woman who works at the NBC affiliate in Denver and an African-American alumnus of the doctoral program.

And though hiring has been slowed while JMC transitions to a new home, its new communications manager and its diversity coordinator are aggressively making connections with news organizations and journalism associations to build a bank of resumes for future hires. When a team from JMC attended the UNITY convention in Las Vegas last summer, one of its goals was to network with potential candidates for future positions.

The trip to UNITY served other needs as well. The JMC director led a team that included four undergraduates and two alumnae at JMC's expense. The trip allowed JMC to recruit prospective graduate students, meet with professionals of color to discuss best practices of diversity, and speak with corporate recruiters about its current students of color. Some of the connections made at UNITY have already paid off. The JMC director invited Robert Hernandez of USC-Annenberg to be the Hearst Professional-in-Residence this fall after meeting him at UNITY. And the director of graduate studies is inviting applications from potential students JMC's team met with at UNITY.

The newsgathering master's program has 40 students including 29 female and 11 male. Four of those are in a protected class and two more are international students. That's a significant improvement from the 2011 report but is still a long way from reflecting the overall minority population of the campus or the state. However, JMC is making a concerted effort to entice graduate students of color. In 2011-2012, 13 candidates in protected classes applied. Nine were accepted and five of those were offered full teaching assistantships and tuition waivers. Only two of those students accepted the offers because of tough competition from better-endowed schools. One bright spot: Although overall application figures fell by 19 percent in 2011 and 2012, self-identified protected class applicants rose by 62 percent. JMC is committed to targeting assistantships for diverse students when possible.

Although JMC has been limited in what it can do to attract faculty or students, it has focused attention successfully on changing its culture. Many public events and professional visits have included diverse speakers and topics. Among them: a public panel on Women in Sports Journalism, a lecture by Keith Woods, director of diversity at NPR, a lecture on Arab Spring by Nader Hashemi, a commencement address by JMC alumnus Efre Rodriguez, who is now an advertising executive. JMC is using the Hearst Professional-in-Residence program to bring journalists from diverse communities to the classroom. Hernandez spent October 2012 talking with students about diversity, digital technologies and social media. Dori Maynard, of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, has been invited to visit later in the year. Other visitors will include Donna Bryson, a journalist of color who is chief of bureau for the Associated Press in South Africa, and Stacey Baca, a weekend anchor at the ABC affiliate in Chicago. Both are alumni.

JMC's commitment to diversity is reflected in its brochures and on its website, which are used as recruiting tools for new students.

Although a review of graduate syllabi did not provide clear evidence of attention to diversity in every course, a group of graduate students said they believe diversity is infused in the curriculum. As one example, a student cited a precision journalism class that focused on demographics and census data. The class looked at childhood obesity rates, particularly in minority communities. Newsgathering courses have focused on homelessness and people with disabilities, two underserved communities. A Spanish international graduate student also praised faculty and staff efforts to help graduate students succeed, particularly those students outside of their native environments. She worried before coming to Colorado about finding an internship because Spanish is her first language. But JMC's diversity coordinator has helped her land internships. Both Communications Manager Michelle Fulcher and Diversity Coordinator Dave Martinez deserve special mention for their efforts to improve diversity in the graduate program.

In summary, although JMC still has work to do in this standard, substantive progress has been made in a short time.

Overall evaluation: **COMPLIANCE**

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Graduate)

Summary of findings: Since the 2011 site team visit, JMC has made a significant effort to improve the assessment of student learning. JMC adopted an assessment plan that includes these direct measures: pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' knowledge and acquisition of key values and competencies when students start and end their course of studies; standardized evaluations by employers of student interns; and a review of capstone professional projects by outside professionals. The assessment plan also calls for indirect measures: exit interviews with students graduating or withdrawing from the

program; a more extensive survey of alumni to measure training in core competencies; and better tracking of graduate employment.

Although it is too soon to see results from all elements of the plan, significant change is occurring based on one key element: the evaluation of graduate student capstone professional projects. A review of projects by professional journalists last summer found three-fourths of the projects deficient in two areas: visual content, and tools and technologies. JMC has used the results exactly as assessment is intended: It is making changes in the curriculum to address the deficiencies identified through assessment. All of the newsgathering graduate students and their project advisers now follow a more formal process, which begins with the signing of a project contract that outlines what the final product will be. The idea is to improve both the advising process and to clarify the expectations for final projects. Each student also must adhere to a professional project checklist, ensuring that all elements of a project have been completed including visual and multimedia elements. Finally, a five-member curricular committee is reviewing the JMC master's program (both professional and research) to address the program's weaknesses and to ensure its rigor. The former dean, who crafted the assessment plan, also has recommended that the committee consider requiring a course in multimedia storytelling in the professional master's program. Ultimately, the director of the graduate program expects the committee to recommend a more converged approach overall (now students choose print, broadcast or a combination of the two). This will help ensure that students have moved into today's multimedia world. A new set of guidelines for professional projects is expected to require multimedia elements.

As for other elements of the assessment plan, it is too soon to see much concrete data. But JMC is responding to the data it does have thus far. For instance, it's too early to see the results of pre-tests and post-tests on student learning in competency areas within the same cohort. Nonetheless, JMC has reviewed data from multiple-choice tests given to entering first-year students and graduating second-year students. Second-year students scored higher overall on the test, as expected. But first-year students scored slightly higher in two areas: global diversity, and history and institutions. JMC is looking at curricular changes that might be needed based on that early data, including the idea of requiring courses that address global diversity and history.

Although the JMC's new internship coordinator has only been in place since last summer, she has taken major strides to improve the program. Her new internship website makes it easy for interns and employers to provide regular feedback on the quality of the internships and the quality of the interns' work. Students are evaluated midway through the internship and again at the end of the internship. The survey at the end of the internship asks employers to evaluate interns' mastery of ACEJMC competencies.

The alumni survey has been revamped to ask alumni about the quality of their instruction in ACEJMC competencies and one additional JMC competency. Student course evaluations also have been retooled to look more directly at mastery of competencies.

In summary, JMC has adopted a comprehensive, responsive assessment plan. Although it is too early to see the results of every aspect of the plan, it is clear JMC and its faculty is using the early assessment results to enact curricular changes that will add rigor to its program.

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.

Diversity needs to be much more thoroughly incorporated into the curriculum: There is a renewed vigor on diversity throughout JMC, thanks in part to a diversity director who seems to work 24/7 and the hiring of a communications director who also has a heavy focus on diversity matters. While there have been no faculty hires since the site team visited, the new energy has resulted in the hiring of two adjuncts of color, more outside diverse speakers, a recruiting trip to the UNITY conference and more. While students say diversity is standard in their coursework, syllabi suggest there is still more work to do.

Too many classes are not being taught by regular faculty: In Fall 2012, faculty taught 62 of 89 courses – 70 percent -- a dramatic increase from numbers reported by the site team. In addition, the interim director and his Executive Committee are working on course-release policies. The net should further increase the number of courses taught by faculty.

An aged and too small building requires classes to be scattered over a wide area of campus: Little has changed with the building. Other than skills classes in the Armory's labs, most JMC classes are held elsewhere on campus. Fortunately, none of the travels students and faculty must make are too onerous. While the conditions for students are less than ideal, they get the work done and, for example, produce cable newscasts that are edited and produced in the Armory and aired from an excellent studio facility in the ATLAS building.

Stronger ties needed between assessment plan and actual outcomes: Assessment has taken on a much stronger role at JMC thanks to the good work of the former dean, who has returned to the faculty. He has created a plan that utilizes direct and indirect measures for both graduates and undergraduates. Portfolio review of graduate students by professionals has already yielded a tightening up of approval of final projects and will yield work that has stronger digital components as well as more sound fundamental journalism. A curricular committee is expected to make recommendations that will likely push toward a more converged approach instead of a print/broadcast divide. The committee's work is a direct result of the deficiencies identified by the review of professional projects.

5. Summary conclusion

Though the pain of discontinuance is not too far past and digging out from its impact will take significant effort by the university, Colorado's program in Journalism and Mass Communication has found its footing and is moving ahead with a much more hopeful tone. Much uncertainty remains, but the strong assurances from Central Administration that journalism education will remain a part of the fabric of CU and the steady hand brought by the interim director have helped enormously. The future structure that includes JMC could be known as early as this spring. Meanwhile, Journalism Plus has brought an academic richness to JMC that has given it more credibility with the university's leaders and helped bring JMC more "across the street" into the university community. (Its building is across a busy street from the center of campus.)

Much hinges on the coming decisions. Curricular overhaul and convergence is needed at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Still, faculty gets credit for increasingly adding digital media to existing courses including at the introductory level, something less turbulent programs have failed to achieve. The introduction of D-Lab, special seminars teaching digital techniques and software outside of regular classes, has increased student learning. News Corps shows great potential. As noted above, there is still work to do on diversity and assessment, especially on the graduate side. As the site team noted two years ago, this is a place with solid students, good teaching and a strong track record for internships. All that remains true and with a forward lean today.

Ultimately, the future of JMC education at Colorado depends on the university leadership fulfilling its commitment. As one faculty member put it: "I've seen nothing to make me doubt what they are saying."