

# Report of On-Site Evaluation

## ACEJMC

### Undergraduate program

2012– 2013

Name of Institution: University of Memphis  
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Shirley Raines, President  
Name of Unit: Department of Journalism  
Name and Title of Administrator: David Arant

Date of 2012 - 2013 Accrediting Visit: Dec. 3-5

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit Feb. 11-14, 2007  
Recommendation of the previous accrediting team Re-accreditation  
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2012 - 2013 Visiting Team: RE-ACCREDITATION

*Prepared and submitted by:*

#### **Team Chair**

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Marie Hardin, Associate Dean  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_ College of Communications, Penn State University

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Team Members**

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Brooke Barnett, Professor and Associate Provost  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_ Elon University

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Steve Geimann, Deputy Leader, US Energy-Trade-Labor Regulation Team  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_ Bloomberg News

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Brad Rawlins, Dean  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_ College of Communications, Arkansas State University

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Patricia Rose, Executive Director  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_ American Academy of Advertising

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

### PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: The University of Memphis  
Name of Unit: Department of Journalism  
Year of Visit: 2012

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

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

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

The history of the University of Memphis dates to September 12, 1912, with the establishment of the West Tennessee State Normal School, which provided for the training of primary and secondary teachers, under the Tennessee General Education law of 1909. The law required the establishment and maintenance of three normal schools, one in each of the three geographic divisions of the state, East, Middle and West Tennessee. In 1941 the institution expanded its liberal arts curriculum and the name was changed to Memphis State College. The undergraduate program was reorganized into three schools, and a graduate school was added in 1951. Memphis State achieved university status in 1957, and on July 1, 1994, the name was officially changed to the University of Memphis.

The Tennessee Board of Regents governs the University of Memphis. The composition and powers of the Board are included in Tennessee Code Annotated 49-8-203. It consists of 18 members appointed by the Governor. They include: 12 lay members with six-year terms, a faculty member and a student member each with one-year terms, one person each representing the three geographic divisions of the state noted above, and four ex-officio members including the Governor, the Commissioner of Higher Education, Commissioner of Agriculture and Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission who is a non-voting member.

**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: Feb. 11-14, 2007

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

1971

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

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

Semesters of 16 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 Department of Journalism is not seeking re-accreditation for its master's program.*

**9. Give the number of credit hours required for graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.**

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism: 120 semester hours.

Master of Arts in Journalism: 30-36 hours.

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

Students take a three-credit, semester-hour internship course, either JOUR 4130 Writing Internship, JOUR 4330 Advertising Internship, JOUR 4430 Public Relations Internship or JOUR 4630 Broadcast News Internship.

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

Name of Concentration	Person in Charge
Advertising	Sandra Utt
Public Relations	Erin Willis
News: Newspaper/magazine emphasis*	Thomas Hrach
News: Web journalism emphasis*	Jin Yang
News: Broadcast News emphasis*	Joe Hayden

\*In 2011 the three separate news concentrations (Newspaper/Magazine, Internet Journalism and Broadcast News) converged into a single News concentration, with three emphases (Newspaper/Magazine, Web Journalism and Broadcast). In fall 2012 most students are in the new News concentration, but a few students remain in the separate news concentrations under the old catalog (Broadcast News, Internet Journalism and Newspaper Magazine).

**12. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:** 17,174

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate majors
Advertising	47
Public Relations	89
News	108
Broadcast News*	9
Newspaper Magazine*	6
Internet Journalism*	4
Majors with undeclared concentration	44
Total	307

\*In 2011 the three separate news concentrations (Newspaper/Magazine, Internet Journalism and Broadcast News) converged into a single News concentration, with three emphases (Newspaper/Magazine, Web Journalism and Broadcast). In fall 2012 most students are in the new News concentration, but a few students remain in the separate news concentrations under the old catalog (Broadcast News, Internet Journalism and Newspaper Magazine).

**14. Number of graduate students enrolled:** 60

**15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newsriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Attach separate pages if necessary.**

**Spring 2012 Journalism Skills Courses**

<i>Subject Area</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Section Number</i>	<i>Actual Enrollment</i>
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	001	14
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	002	15
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	003	14
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	004	11
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	M50	10
JOUR	3120	Reporting	001	10
JOUR	3120	Reporting	002	11
JOUR	3120	Reporting	003	13
JOUR	3130	Feature Writing	001	7
JOUR	3130	Feature Writing	002	7
JOUR	3130	Feature Writing	M50	12
JOUR	3324	Adv Copywriting/Layout	001	8
JOUR	3421	Public relations Writing	001	9
JOUR	3526	Photojournalism/Digital Image	001	13
JOUR	3526	Photojournalism/Digital Image	002	15
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	001	11
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	002	13
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	003	9
JOUR	4120	Advanced Reporting	001	12
JOUR	4120	Advanced Reporting	002	15
JOUR	4124	Computer Assisted Reporting	001	9
JOUR	4140	News Design	001	9
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	001	7
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	002	13
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	003	13
JOUR	4550	Web Publish II: html/CSS	001	14
JOUR	4900	Multimedia Mass Comm	001	4
JOUR	4998	Multimedia News Lab	001	11
JOUR	4998	Multimedia News Lab	002	11

**Fall 2012 Journalism Skills Courses**

<i>Subject Area</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Section Number</i>	<i>Actual Enrollment</i>
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	002	15
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	003	16
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	004	6
JOUR	2121	Media Writing	M50	3
JOUR	2123	Editing	001	12
JOUR	3120	Reporting	001	13
JOUR	3120	Reporting	002	16
JOUR	3130	Feature Writing	001	11
JOUR	3130	Feature Writing	002	7
JOUR	3324	Adv	001	8
JOUR	3421	Copywritng/Layout Public Relations Writing	001	12
JOUR	3421	Public Relations Writing	M50	7
JOUR	3526	Photojournalism/Digital Image	001	16
JOUR	3526	Photojournalism/Digital Image	002	14
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	001	15
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	004	13
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	005	16
JOUR	3900	Visual Media	M50	13
JOUR	4120	Advanced Reporting	001	6
JOUR	4120	Advanced Reporting	002	8
JOUR	4326	Advertising Research	001	13
JOUR	4330	Advertising Internship	001	3
JOUR	4430	Public Relations Internship	001	5
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	001	11
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	002	10
JOUR	4500	Web Publish I: html/CSS	003	15
JOUR	4560	Interactive News/Flash	001	8
JOUR	4629	TV News Writing/Reporting	001	15
JOUR	4630	Broadcast News Internship	001	3
JOUR	4639	TV News Producing	001	15
JOUR	4900	Multimedia Mass Comm	002	9
JOUR	4998	Multimedia News Lab	001	8

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2012 – 2013 academic year: \$1,306,836.00**

Percentage increase or decrease in three years: +4.2 percent  
 Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$862,901

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

David Arant, Professor  
Carrie Brown-Smith, Assistant Professor  
Pamela Denney, Instructor  
Darrin Devault, Instructor/Coordinator  
Rick Fischer, Professor  
Joseph Hayden, Associate Professor  
Thomas Hrach, Assistant Professor  
Candace Justice, Assistant Professor  
Lurene Kelley, Assistant Professor  
Otis Sanford, Professor  
Ronald Spielberger, Associate Professor  
Sandra Utt, Associate Professor  
Erin Willis, Assistant Professor  
Robert Willis, Instructor/Coordinator  
Jin Yang, Associate Professor

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2012. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching Spring 2012. (If your school has its accreditation visit in 2013, please provide the updated list of faculty at time of visit.)**

**Part-time faculty Fall 2012**

Jay Adkins  
Greg Campbell  
William Dotson  
Vickye Hester  
Beena Jaferey-White  
Kim Keller  
Jane Schneider  
Andrew Smith  
Grant Smith  
Lana Sumpter  
Jason Terrell  
Deborah Townsend  
Alexis Tutor  
David Waters

**Part-time faculty Spring 2012**

Jay Adkins  
Greg Campbell  
Vickye Hester  
Ron Maxey  
Jennifer Simmons  
Andrew Smith  
Grant Smith

Lana Sumpter  
 Jason Terrell  
 David Waters

**Transitional Retirement Tenured Faculty Teaching Spring 2012**

Bill Brody, Professor  
 Elinor Grusin, Professor  
 Jim Redmond, Professor

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

**For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 65 or more semester hours in liberal arts and sciences.**

Year	Total Graduates	80 or more semester hours outside the major		65 or more semester hours in liberal arts/sciences	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2011-2012 academic year	<u>70</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>100</u>
2010-2011 academic year	<u>69</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>100</u>

## **PART II — Standard I: Mission, Governance and Administration**

### **Overview of unit**

The Department of Journalism at the University of Memphis, established in 1956, was first accredited in 1971; its last reaccreditation was in 2007. A new Department chair, David Arant, was named in 2008. Until last year, it offered a single major with five concentrations. In 2011, it streamlined three of the concentrations (Newspaper/Magazine, Internet Journalism and Broadcast News) into one, for a total of three concentrations in the Journalism major (Advertising, News, Public Relations). The Department also has a graduate program that, although reaccredited in 2007, is not under review.

The Department is part of the College of Communication and Fine Arts, which houses five departments and the university's School of Music. The college is one of 11 colleges or schools at the university. The university defines itself as a "major urban research university" and is classified by Carnegie as Doctoral Extensive. The university is part of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system, which is separate from the University of Tennessee system and includes many community colleges. Although the university is classified as research-intensive, teaching loads are high for tenure-line professors (3-3) and for instructors (5-5). The Department chair has worked to lower the loads for instructors to a more manageable 4-4.

The number of students in the undergraduate program has remained relatively stable since the last site visit; a Fall 2006-to-Fall 2012 comparison shows a drop of about two dozen students. The Department lost two faculty positions after the last reaccreditation, but both have been or are being restored as the Department is making two hires this year. Because of retirements during the past seven years, the faculty composition is different: It is younger and is relatively balanced in terms of the ratio of full, associate, and assistant professors.

The Department is operating with a smaller base budget than it did six years ago because of massive cuts in the state's appropriation. However, expenditures have increased because of the Department's foray into online programming. The dean indicated that he expects that budget model to persist into the foreseeable future.

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

- (a) The unit has a mission statement and engages in strategic or long-range planning 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 Department has a mission statement that aligns with the university to be "learner-centered" in the pursuit of education and research. The Department's statement includes emphasis on strong teaching, research, and "engaged scholarship for the local community." The Department's five-year strategic plan was overhauled in Fall 2012 to include year-by-year plans to meet its goals. Some plans for year one include filling the Department's two faculty vacancies, expanding the reach of *The Teen Appeal*, and holding undergraduate recruitment

events in the fall and spring. Five-year plans include growing the undergraduate enrollment to 450.

The Department's Strategic Plan does not include the needs and resources that will be required for the Department's goals and plans. It is also not apparent, based on conversations with the dean, president and others, whether the college or university support the specific actions outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, the Department's document provides a roadmap for action over the next five years, and the Chair annually discusses the Department's accomplishments and its plan with the dean.

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

Policies and mechanisms are in place to allow faculty governance on issues such as curriculum, procedures for assessment, educational policies and resource allocation. Both tenure-line and fixed-term faculty members have a voice in policymaking. Faculty members serve on a number of committees in the Department and in the college, and they vote regularly on items that come forward to the Department meeting. The faculty expressed satisfaction with their level of input, and minutes of Department meetings during the 2011-2012 academic year indicate that input is solicited on all substantive issues. As one faculty member put it, "We are quite democratic."

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

The Department chair reports to the dean in the College of Communication & Fine Arts, along with chairs from four other departments and the director of the School of Music.

The chair was appointed by the dean, on recommendation of the Department, in 2008. The chair has significant administrative experience at the university. Immediately before this appointment, he was an associate dean in the institution's interdisciplinary "University College" for six years. He is well-connected and is seen as collegial and effective. The dean characterized the chair as a "gregarious," energetic leader who had increased the energy level among the faculty and is leading a "fairly happy ship."

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

The chair can come from inside or outside the unit/university and is appointed by the dean in consultation with the faculty (internal appointment) or after a nationally advertised search (external). Faculty members evaluate the Department chair annually through an anonymous questionnaire distributed by the dean's office. The dean also evaluates the chair annually.

In the dean's last evaluation of the chair (2011), he characterized the faculty's view of him as "mainly excellent." The biggest concern among faculty, the dean noted, was that the Department chair might be overworked. He added: "Journalism is actually doing far better than most [units] thanks to David's leadership ... I enjoy very much working with David to improve the department and the college, and I speak for the rest of my staff as well."

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

The Department chair maintains an "open-door" policy; faculty members say he is easily accessible to hear their concerns. Students may also bring concerns to the chair. The Department, college and university have a procedure through which formal complaints by faculty and students (including grade appeals) are addressed. Departmental files indicate that the chair is diligent on documenting and addressing formal complaints.

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

**COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction**

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

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

- (a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of the unit.

The Department meets the Council's standard. In the previous two academic years, all 139 graduates had 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 65 or more hours in the liberal arts and sciences.

- (b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses and professional skills courses to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council. (If the unit has more than one sequence, evaluate each sequence.)

The Department started the 2011-2012 academic year with three concentrations, replacing five sequences. The faculty decided after the previous accreditation visit to collapse Broadcast News, Internet Journalism and Newspaper/Magazine into a new News concentration. Public Relations and Advertising remain separate concentrations.

The News concentration had the most majors in fall 2012, with 108 majors, followed by Public Relations with 89 and Advertising with 47. The Department identified 19 students remaining in the former News sequences.

All students are required to take three courses accounting for 12 credit hours: Survey of Mass Communication, Media Writing and Mass Communication Law. Of the three, Media Writing is a skill course offered in multiple sections. Students then select one course from among three: Mass Media, Diversity and Society; Mass Media Ethics; or History of Mass Communication.

Before entering the Media Writing course, students must earn a grade of 60 percent on the Department's English Proficiency Test, which is used to assess deficiencies among students. Students with low scores on the tests are offered on-campus or online tutorials to help improve their writing. The Department hired a magazine writer as a coach who is available five hours a week to tutor students.

**ADVERTISING:** Students in the concentration take six required courses: Survey of Advertising, Advertising Copy Writing and Layout, Visual Media, Ad Research, Media Planning, and Strategic Advertising Campaigns. The concentration is completed with two electives, one each from either Web Publishing and Multimedia Mass Communication or Introduction to Public Relations and Advertising Internship. While students pick one course among ethics, diversity and history, students said many classes have ethics and diversity components. Survey of Advertising covers the history and roles of advertising professionals

and institutions, the effects of the First Amendment on U.S. advertising, an overview of selected communication theories used in mass media, and an appreciation of the diversity of groups in a global society. Students must also take two outside marketing courses: Principles of Marketing and Consumer Behavior. The required courses, combined with the electives, offer a breadth and depth of skills and competencies normally associated with advertising courses.

**NEWS:** Students in the now-combined concentration take five courses: Reporting, Photojournalism/Digital Imaging, Advanced Reporting, Web Publishing I: html/CSS and Multimedia News Lab, the capstone class. Within the News concentration, students pick among four emphases: Newspaper/Magazine, Broadcast, Web Journalism or Custom. Each has three courses, all skills based. Students were enthusiastic about the converged News concentration. One student said, “We can graduate faster with the skills we need to be successful in a variety of news jobs.” Many students commented on the quality of writing instruction and said that writing emphasis serves them well, no matter which emphasis they chose in the concentration. Students could graduate without taking an ethics course, as noted in the self study. When asked about this, students said that history, diversity and ethics were infused throughout the curriculum, citing the example of the history course, which dealt with diversity and ethics throughout.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** The concentration requires practical courses beyond the Journalism core requirements, including Introduction to Public Relations, PR Research, PR Writing, Visual Media, PR Case Studies and PR Campaigns. Theory and principles related to the practice of public relations are taught early in the program, primarily in the Introduction to Public Relations course, and are applied in the skills courses. The capstone course, PR Campaigns, requires students to support their strategies by applying communication theories. Students said they understood the theories that guide their strategies, but when prompted had a difficult time naming or describing any theory.

In 2008, the Department hired an online program coordinator/instructor and began offering an online undergraduate public relations program. Students can complete the entire program with online courses that are offered asynchronously during a semester. The online program offers the same classes, uses the same syllabi, requires the same assignments and is taught by the same full-time and adjunct faculty as on campus courses. The courses are not correspondence courses, per se, because they have scheduled assignments, exams, and projects. The students interact using message boards, social media and Skype. Students in the on-campus program can also take the online courses. This is one of the innovative ways that the Department has made learning accessible to nontraditional students. The online course has 30 students enrolled, with the capacity to expand to 50 students.

(c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued. (If the unit has more than one sequence, address the quality of instruction by sequence.)

An associate professor won the university’s highest teaching award in 2008 and an assistant professor was a finalist in 2009. An associate professor was Communications Educator of the Year by the Memphis Advertising Federation in 2007.

**ADVERTISING:** Students said their courses have rigor. Local advertising professionals reported students are prepared for entry-level jobs. Students said faculty are available beyond their posted office hours and always are willing to help with career advice. The campus Ad Fed chapter has participated in the Ad Fed NSAC competition and the team placed second at district competition in 2008 and 2012. In 2011 and 2012, a presentation team member won “Best Presenter Award.” Advertising students said more graphic-design training is needed for those interested in the creative side of the profession. They said the combined copy and layout course doesn’t provide them with sufficient experience in either skill. Advertising professionals said students need a broader-based understanding of the communications field. Based on the profession’s needs, as the line blurs between advertising and public relations, the faculty told the team they may give students a more encompassing communications background.

An advertising student was named a finalist in the American Advertising Federation’s 2013 “Most Promising Minority Students” program.

**NEWS:** Students said they appreciated the efforts by the faculty to keep courses current with changes occurring in the field. News faculty members won high marks from their students for the quality of their teaching, as well as their dedication and commitment to students both within and outside the classroom. Students particularly noted the emphasis on internships and jobs. The faculty seem genuinely interested in working with students from a variety of backgrounds, life experience and preparedness. Classroom observation showed enthusiastic faculty who were able to keep students’ attention and challenge them to think critically and improve their work. *The Daily Helmsman*, which counts as staff members many journalism students, has won numerous awards from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation collegiate writing competition, Society of Professional Journalists, Investigative Reporters and Editors, Southeast Journalism Conference and the Student Press Law Center.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** The curriculum is certified by the Public Relations Society of America. In addition to having courses in writing, production and campaigns, the curriculum has a research course specifically related to public relations. Students, alumni, and internship providers noted the strong strategic communication preparation of the curriculum. Students learn the four-step process of research, action-planning, execution and evaluation. Students said the courses build on each other and said they receive excellent preparation for internships and first jobs. The faculty plans to require students to take PR Case Studies earlier, and push PR Research closer to PR Campaigns. Faculty and students said this provides a more logical progression of the knowledge and skills needed in the program.

Students are aware of the current developments in public relations. The faculty said social media is infused in every course. Full-time and adjunct faculty members have professional experience, ranging from 4 to 15 years. Students said they appreciated the experience they offer, the way they are able to give context to principles and theories by sharing experiences, and their interest in the success of the students. They also expressed that the Journalism faculty are much more accessible and involved than what they have experienced with faculty in other programs.

PR students have won numerous awards in regional and national competitions.

- (d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1.

All 32 skills courses offered in fall 2012 and 29 in spring 2010 had 16 or fewer students enrolled in the spring and fall 2012 semesters.

- (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. (If the unit has more than one sequence, address the opportunities by sequence.)

Internships are not required for students to graduate, although faculty members strongly encourage students to seek work-experience opportunities. The Department is considering adding the requirement, after the Council's curricular balance requirements are eased, scheduled for the 2013-2014 academic year. The Department has an internship coordinator, who works with supervisors and the interns during the semester. The Department has arrangements with more than two dozen companies that give internships, although most are offered without pay.

Workplace supervisors complete an evaluation form to report student performance, which lets the student see how rewards and sanctions operate. The coordinator also discusses student progress with the supervisors during the course of the internship. Evaluation methods are typically tailored to the particular internship.

Employers in the Memphis area praised the quality of the work of interns, although at least two noted that the students were reluctant to conduct telephone interviews or visit news sources in person, preferring to contact subjects using social media. Faculty members said the Media Writing course has been revised to require more reporting experiences using telephone and in-person interviews.

Intern supervisors at broadcast outlets noted that some students lacked on-camera experience, which also was cited as an area for future development by News faculty.

**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 plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty/staff and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan.**

The Department of Journalism's Affirmative Action Plan, like the University of Memphis' plan on which it is based, addresses not only racial minorities, but also women, persons with disabilities, disabled veterans, and veterans. The plan (adopted 1990 and revised spring 2012) stems from the above; its goals are:

- 1) Developing and maintaining a multicultural environment;
- 2) Encouraging diverse pools of candidates for all faculty and staff position;
- 3) Aggressively mentoring and supporting women and minority faculty;
- 4) Guiding and supporting the academic career of women and minority faculty;
- 5) Making faculty responsible to promote a diverse faculty, student body and culture.

In addition, the Department has a Plan for Inclusiveness (adopted 2004) with five guiding principles:

- 1) Aggressively foster a positive climate within which students, faculty and staff can exist in harmony;
- 2) involve students in external outside community organizations;
- 3) emphasize advising and mentoring of students;
- 4) mentor new faculty;
- 5) recognize service of faculty.

**(b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.**

The self-study cited more than 12 courses with diversity components. Much of the diversity discussion is about African-Americans and African-American racial issues, perhaps not surprising considering the city has an African-American population of 63 percent and the Department's student population is about 30 percent African-American. However, some courses have components on American Indian issues. Students reported that diversity issues are covered in numerous classes, including the History of Mass Media.

Each year the University of Memphis Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists hosts local African-American media professionals and provides networking opportunities. The other student media professional organizations host a diverse group of practitioners as program speakers and workshop leaders. Last year the Department hosted speakers such as Memphis Music Foundation Chairman Al Bell.

In addition, the Department has an active study-abroad program. Students have traveled to Germany, Spain and Italy for summer courses. The Department is currently developing a

program in China. One student stated that she has been on two of these programs and that they changed her perspective on life.

**(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and supports their retention, progress and success.**

Of the 15 full-time faculty positions, seven are women. Five of the ten tenured / tenure-track faculty members are women. Of the full-time faculty members, one is Asian, one is Asian-American, and one is African-American. The latter is the holder of the endowed Hardin Chair of Excellence in Journalism. The Department's two staff members are both females: one is African American, the other Latina. Additionally, the coordinator of *The Teen Appeal* is an African-American female.

Both the chair and faculty aspire to a more diverse faculty. Of the five full time faculty hired during the past three years, two were minorities and three were women. The department has supplemented the above diversity numbers by hiring seven women and ten men as adjuncts. Of these, more than 20 percent are minority: two are African American, one Asian-American and one is Hispanic.

The Department is currently trying to fill two positions and had hoped to fill both with minorities. One position was offered to an African-American man; the candidate was given a competing offer from the institution at which he was completing his doctorate, and he opted to stay there. The other offer was accepted by a white man. According to the Department Chair, none of the finalists for the position were minorities. Recruiting additional African American faculty members remains a strong priority for the unit, according to the Department Chair, who indicated that the Provost has been supportive in providing funds for that priority.

**(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.**

While the university is located in Memphis, it considers its service area to be Tennessee, and parts of northern Mississippi and eastern Arkansas. The Department of Education reports that the majority of this total population is white (69 percent), followed by African American (25 percent) and Hispanic (4 percent). The Department's minority numbers exceed this, with 38 percent of the student body reported to be African-American and 3 percent Hispanic. During the spring 2012 semester, the department had 234 females among 353 students.

The Department recruits student through fairs, Campus Day, and freshman orientation. Its major outreach and recruitment mechanism, however, is *The Teen Appeal* – the citywide high school student newspaper targeted to the Memphis high schools, of which the student body is 85 percent African-American. This paper, in existence for 15 years, is published by the Department of Journalism in partnership with *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis City Schools, and the Scripps-Howard Foundation. Not only does this project generate huge awareness for the Department, more importantly it exposes high school students to the world of journalism.

Each summer the Department conducts a week-long training camp for students interested in working on the paper. Following the boot camp, the students produce a monthly newspaper under the direction of a project coordinator and the journalism faculty. More than 1,000 students have received journalism training at the camps over the past 15 years; approximately 20 students a year become regular staff members and attend meetings at the university. Data indicates that at least 74 of the program's staff members continued to pursue journalism in various colleges. This program is unique within the United States and has influenced the growth of minority journalists.

**(e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.**

The Department nurtures an environment that is inclusive of all forms of diversity, and easily adheres to university standards on diversity in curricula, student body and faculty. In addition, the university provides online tutorials that address sexual harassment, discrimination and diversity for administrators, faculty and staff.

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

**COMPLIANCE**

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

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

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

Hiring tenure-track faculty usually involves a six-month search advertised in national venues and follows a standard process. Part-time faculty searches have been less formal, but beginning in fall 2012, adjunct positions are advertised on a university-wide site where the chair can then find qualified adjunct instructors from a list of applicants.

Faculty evaluation occurs with several formal procedures. Each faculty member completes an online annual activities report, from which the chair writes an evaluation. The chair discusses areas for improvement in a face-to-face meeting before the evaluation is forwarded to the dean for review. Faculty discussed the merit of these in-person conversations.

Junior faculty members go through a mid-tenure review in their third year so senior faculty members can gauge whether they are on-track for tenure and promotion. New faculty members are assigned an official faculty mentor. Faculty praised the mentorship from faculty colleagues in the department, both through the formal process and also through informal collegial conversations.

Full-time tenure-track faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service. Full-time faculty generally carry 3:3 teaching loads, and the general breakdown of expectations for teaching/research/service is 60/20/20. Most of the class sections are taught by full-time faculty members.

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

The Department of Journalism faculty is currently composed of 10 tenured or tenure-track professors and five non-tenure-track positions. All faculty members have professional media experience. Faculty are all teaching in their areas of expertise. Once the last open faculty position is filled and a colleague leaving the university is replaced, the faculty will have 16 full-time faculty positions.

Faculty members have a broad range of experiences in both academic and professional settings, and are widely viewed as committed, collegial and capable. Leaders at the university see the faculty as being as credentialed and as productive or more productive than other faculty members on campus.

Faculty members are active in a range of organizations and associations in both the professional and academic realms. Faculty travel is supported by departmental funds generated from fees associated with online courses.

Three publications are produced within the department: *The Daily Helmsman*, which is the student-run university newspaper that is published four days a week; and *The Teen Appeal*,

which is produced by Memphis-area high school students and published monthly. The *Newspaper Research Journal*, co-edited by Department faculty members, was cited by the dean as a marker of excellence for the Department.

(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input. The Department uses multiple methods to evaluate instruction: annual review by the Department chair and by colleagues as part of the promotion and tenure process; evaluation of course syllabi, materials and instruction as part of the unit's intensive course-assessment process; and the Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) tool, an online form completed by students about their courses.

All teachers receive online course evaluations by their students after each semester. SETE scores are an important part of promotion and tenure and annual evaluation. The chair and assistant chair both report that SETE scores are not significantly lower for online courses than for on campus courses for the unit. Students taking the SETE are able to see their grades a bit earlier than those who do not, producing a response rate that can sometimes exceed 90 percent.

The Department chair observes faculty teaching and provides feedback. For instance, during 2011-2012, the chair observed every full-time faculty member teach at least one course – a requirement of the dean for all department chairs in the college. Peer review of teaching is also part of the P&T process. The Department's intensive course assessment process also encourages peers to discuss and evaluate the instruction in sections of the same course, sharing best practices. Teaching seems to be highly valued among faculty members; as one observed, "It is important in this Department. We really care about teaching."

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

Site-team conversations with administrators, faculty and staff outside the Department indicate that the unit is seen as a good citizen and integral to the university and community. The university president characterized the student newspaper, for instance, as "extraordinary." She also noted that "journalism is integral to a public institution, because it plays a crucial role in society," and that she felt the Department was playing a strong role in that regard.

Faculty within the unit appear to be very well respected within the university community both for the quality of their program as well as for the contributions they make to campus life. They serve in significant service roles university wide. In interaction on campus, all external constituents described an effective faculty that is broadly recognized for its dedication and talent.

**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.

Research is clearly a part of the University of Memphis expectations for tenure-track faculty, which “requires that faculty members seeking tenure or promotion be productive in academic scholarship and professional service.”

No faculty member has been denied tenure or promotion since the last accreditation review. Out of the 15 current full-time faculty members, three are full professors, one of whom is the chair and the other is an endowed chair who is not tenure track. Three are instructors, four are tenured associate professors, three are assistant professors seeking tenure, and two are non-tenure-track assistant professors. No faculty members applied for or became full professors since the last review.

New faculty members seeking tenure are typically given a reduced teaching load their first year to complete a dissertation or begin their research agenda. Faculty members say they are clear on the tenure expectations for scholarship and professional activity.

Faculty members may apply for the Professional Development Assignment (PDA), a university fund that provides full salary for one semester’s leave or half salary for two semesters. Faculty members may also apply for leaves without pay for up to a year. During the past six years, only one professor has received a PDA.

Faculty members are pleased with the travel support for conference paper presentation.

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

The Promotion and Tenure process involves committees at the department, college and provost levels. The tenure-track probationary period is six years, and in the fall semester of the sixth year the applicant submits a complete dossier in application for tenure and promotion. There are circumstances, however, that permit a suspension of the normal timetable to accommodate personal, family and medical emergencies.

Ads for jobs specify expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity. As detailed in the department’s Tenure and Promotion Policy document, the unit’s full-time faculty members are expected to meet standards in the areas of teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service. Full-time tenure-track faculty generally carry 3:3 teaching loads, and the general breakdown of expectations for teaching/research/service is 60/20/20 (with half the service expectation consisting of community outreach, and the other half university and professional service).

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

Colleagues appear to be succeeding with a variety of types of professional activity including book and journal writing. The university and Department guidelines value various types of professional activity. A number of articles are in the unit's own peer-reviewed journal.

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.

Most faculty members are engaged in research/creative activity. Some faculty have impressive records in journal and book publishing, despite robust teaching and service loads.

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

The unit used to hold a brown bag for faculty research and many members would like to see that resurrected. Informal email and notification of books and other publications is current practice. The faculty is small enough that this seems to work. The Department is excelling overall in scholarly work. Some faculty members are prominent scholars, and many are quite active in presentations. Productivity seems to align with the teaching load and percentage of time devoted to professional activity for each faculty member. The Department has provided funds for conference attendance and all of the school's faculty members take advantage of those opportunities. Some faculty also received research leave or took unpaid leave to further scholarship. Overall, this is a productive faculty in terms of scholarship and professional activity, and one that is willing to and interested in engaging in conversations about the future of the profession and the best ways to prepare students for professional lives.

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

### **COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 6: Student Services**

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

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

Students who declare Journalism as a major are assigned an adviser. The assistant chair meets with students who haven't chosen a concentration and assigns those who have to faculty in those concentration areas. Students are allowed to change their advisers once they are in the concentration area. All students must meet with an adviser before they are cleared to register for courses. The university has implemented a new online degree audit system that assists students with keeping track of graduation requirements. During the visit, students and university officials praised the advising provided in the Department. The unit receives very high marks from the annual evaluation of advising conducted by the college. Five of the faculty have been honored with College Adviser of the Year awards, and one has been recognized at the university and regional levels for his role as an adviser. Students are given both degree requirements and career advice when meeting with their advisers.

- (b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Faculty are required to have at least five office hours per week, but many faculty described their policy as open-door and open-access. Students remarked on how available the journalism faculty are compared with other faculty on campus. The students enrolled in online programs are assigned advisers who use Adobe Connect for audio conferencing during the advising session.

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

Prospective and current students receive *Journalism at the University of Memphis*, a self-published booklet that includes a description of the Department, policies, descriptions of concentrations and course requirements, and a list of the Department's course descriptions. Students said they were well-informed about Department activities, requirements and policies and that their primary sources were Department emails, the Department website, faculty announcements in classes and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. For example, students can learn about internship and job opportunities by following the Career Center Twitter account and Facebook page. The Department also has social media accounts with Storify, Tumblr, Wiggio, YouTube and Posterous.

- (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 Daily Helmsman* is an independent student newspaper that is open to all university majors to write and edit stories. Many of the journalism students—from all of the concentrations—

write for the award-winning paper. The paper is supported by annual student fees and advertising revenue. The Department provides a faculty general manager, a faculty advertising manager, and a bookkeeper who are supported by soft-money generated from advertising revenue. The advertising revenue has decreased by 25 percent over the past few years, but still provides enough revenue to support the positions. The paper is primarily a print vehicle with supported Web version. Students use Twitter and Facebook to promote the stories.

The paper is fiercely independent and has published investigative stories about the university that have caused significant irritation. This year, for its coverage of the university's student government association and several administrators, the paper received the 2012 College Press Freedom Award from the Student Press Law Center and the Associated College Press. The backlash to the stories appears to be a proposed 30 percent cut in the annual student fees given to the *Helmsman*. The funding has been restored.

Students emphasizing in broadcast news produce *Insight*, a weekly 30-minute show made up of two 15-minute newscasts that is broadcast on Comcast. Students interested in radio news develop news packages and sports programs for the campus radio station, WUMR. The TV studio, radio station, and the broadcast production courses are all operated by the Communication Department. Students say they have easy access to these facilities, which are a short walk from the journalism building, and faculty describe the relationship between the two departments as cooperative.

The student professional organizations include Ad Fed, Public Relations Student Society of America, Society of Professional Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists. Each of these organizations is active by providing co-curricular educational experiences, such as guest speakers from the professions and workshops. The AAF, PRSSA and SPJ chapters have won awards for their activities. The Ad Fed has been competitive in the regional AAF student competition, and the SPJ chapter sponsors, in conjunction with the Journalism Department, an annual Freedom of Information Congress that has invited prominent speakers, including journalists from *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and other news outlets. The NABJ chapter is not nationally affiliated at the moment because of a lack of professional sponsorship. The PRSSA chapter is rebuilding after a down year that resulted from poor student leadership and minimal faculty supervision.

The active Journalism Alumni Club developed an innovative mentoring program, whereby more than 40 students have been mentored by alumni in professional communications positions. The program is on hiatus while the Alumni Club figures out a way to increase the participation.

(e) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success.

The self-study provides comprehensive data on first-year student retention, semester-to-semester, and year-to-year retention. The Department retained 91 percent of its students from spring to fall semester in 2011. It retained 83 percent of its students from 2010 to 2011, ranking fifth among the 17 college degree programs.

The university provides the unit with data on first-year student graduation rates, but not for graduation rates of all Journalism majors. Very few of the Journalism majors entered the program as first-year students. (For the most recent graduating class of 70 students, only 15 started in their first year). The first-year student-to-graduation rates are low; only 6.7 percent of the students starting in 2008 graduated in 2012. The percentage of first-year students who graduate from the program in 5-7 years increases to about 20 percent. However, these percentages do not reflect the overall graduation rates of students who became Journalism majors.

The primary strategy for improving retention and graduation rates is strong faculty advising.

**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.

Similar to other Tennessee state universities, the vast majority of the unit's resources (92 percent) are committed to personnel. The Department's total budget for 2011-12 was \$1,302,066. The base budget of \$1,180,256 has remained relatively flat for the last six years; the only addition has been one faculty line and two across-the-board salary increases. Salaries seem to be in line with similar positions within the area. However, the Department captures online course fees (\$100 per credit hour), which has provided an additional \$73,450 in discretionary money to cover Department needs and to support faculty research and travel.

The faculty met to discuss the distribution of the discretionary money and did allocate it to priorities within its strategic plan.

- (b) The resources that the institution provides are fair in relation to those provided other units.

Current resources (including the online fee money) are sufficient for the program at its current enrollment level. The department is under the auspices of the College of Communication and Fine Arts. The dean has a keen appreciation for the work of the Department and its needs and is highly supportive. Additionally, the unit perceives itself as treated fairly, in general, by the university and college in light of the economic times. It should be noted that the Hardin Chair of Excellence and two faculty lines are funded either by endowments or revenue from the student newspaper, *The Daily Helmsman*. The department has been entrepreneurial in obtaining extra funding from online programs. This is in addition to \$2,514,571 in external accounts, 95 percent of which are endowed.

That said, the Department of Journalism funding, based on the number of student majors and graduates in the unit, is lower than other units in the college and university. A study by the Provost's Office found that the Department had the second-lowest cost per graduate among all university units. Online fees and endowments have become critical to the operation of the unit.

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

The Department calls the Meeman Journalism Building home, which is a three-story, 52,000 square-foot facility that was dedicated in 1971. The Department has exclusive use of the building, with the exception of some photography labs, classrooms, and faculty offices that are used by the Art Department. The building is somewhat dated with its cinderblock walls and formica tiles, but is in relatively good repair. All of the faculty offices, classrooms (including a 140-seat lecture hall) and labs that support the concentrations are in the building. The only exception is the broadcast studio, which is housed in the Communication and Fine Arts Building. Space is also provided for *The Daily Helmsman*, *The Teen Appeal*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, and a two-room video production facility for the Associate Provost for Extended Programs.

All of the classrooms are equipped as “smart classrooms” with computer stations, audio/video capabilities and projection systems. The building is completely Wi-Fi accessible. There are two PC teaching labs (with 16 CPUs each) and two Mac teaching labs (one with 17 and another with 12 CPUs). The computers have been replaced in the last two years and are installed with recent versions of software, including Final Cut Pro and Adobe Creative Suite 5 (CS6 has been ordered). Lab computers also have SPSS and SAS statistical packages installed. The new multimedia news lab has 16 iMacs and is equipped with CS5, Final Cut Pro 7, and EZ News. A broadcast news edit suite contains two Mac editing stations and four monitors, and is used for editing video projects and is often available late evenings and on weekends.

When the labs are not being used for classes, they are available as open labs. Students mentioned a need for more access to open labs, especially at the end of the semester.

The TV studio is managed by the Communication Department and features professional lighting, three Sony CA-537 cameras, and an anchor set donated by WREG-TV (Ch. 3, CBS) in 2011. The control room, located in a room overlooking the studio, contains a professional switcher and a Mackie 32-channel audio board, along with tape-op player/recorders and Compix- and teleprompter-equipped computers. The equipment is not digital or HD and does not provide hands-on experience with current technology.

Overall, the space and technology are sufficient for current student demand.

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

The Department provides AP News Link to *The Daily Helmsman* and newswriting labs, 16 HD Flip cameras and mini-tripods used in basic reporting classes, and Snapstream, a digital recording system. The Department also purchased 20 Panasonic AG-HMC 40P digital video cameras. The field camera equipment is kept in the Communication Department’s equipment room and is available for checkout by journalism students.

Computers in student labs are replaced every two years. The old lab computers are then available to be used in faculty offices. However, the Department has used the funds generated by online course fees to replace faculty computers more often. The chair said that faculty computers are replaced when they are needed and that there isn’t a standardized replacement schedule. Furniture in labs, faculty offices and other spaces in the building have also been replaced recently using the online class fee funds.

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

The Department has a reading room that includes copies of some periodicals, journals and trade publications. The university’s main library, housed in a relatively new facility, is nearby. The main library provides access to numerous databases and reference sources relevant to the field, and is also home to several computer labs, as well as computing terminals. In addition, the library receives numerous journals and trade publications of relevance to journalism

students and faculty members. Students and faculty have use of a wide range of online sources from which to conduct research.

Students mentioned that many courses within the Department include requirements that involve library research and the use of online reference databases.

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

**COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service**

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

- (a) The unit is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching **current** and to promote the exchange of ideas.

The Department has a Journalism Alumni Board that meets monthly. The group provided mentoring for students, and more than 40 have taken advantage of the program since it began in 2004. The club president reported the program was being re-evaluated at the time of the visit, and it should be restarted shortly. The Club also sponsors an annual awards banquet, which serves as a way to raise funds.

The Department chair and other faculty members often attend the meetings, to update the board on activities and get feedback on developments among the professions.

An e-mail newsletter, *Meeman Matters*, is distributed to all alumni. The Department website listed two recent newsletters, for summer 2011 and 2010. Alumni also are reached at least once a year by university and college publications.

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

The Department is home for the *Newspaper Research Journal*, which is published quarterly and focuses on issues related to the publishing and journalism professions. The editor is an associate professor on the faculty for 28 years.

The Department also hosted an Investigative Reporters and Editors workshop during the academic year offering training on using the Internet, key documents and data to help develop enterprise stories.

- (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.

Faculty are encouraged and supported in their participation in professional conferences. The Department hosts student chapters of the American Advertising Federation, Society of Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Student Society of America and the National Association of Black Journalists. The Department also supports the Freedom of Information Congress. Until recently, a faculty member was the executive director of the College Media Advisers. The position was relocated during a management transition by the association.

Faculty members also are active in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, reviewing manuscripts for divisions and interest groups, presenting research and moderating discussions. Faculty members have served on accreditation site visits for ACEJMC and PRSA.

(d) The unit contributes to its communities through service projects, internship and job placements, and faculty involvement in civic activities related to journalism and mass communication.

The Faculty Handbook notes that basic citizenship within the university includes serving on Departmental committees, advising students and participating in college and university committees. The category also includes academic advising of students. A faculty member acts as internship and job-placement coordinator.

Students have served the public through the campaigns, writing and research classes with 46 projects, including a children's seatbelt campaign, various environmental initiatives, health services and the Tennessee State Guard.

The Department also produces MicroMemphis, a hyper-local news hub that lets students cover one neighborhood in the Memphis area.

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

The Department has been an active participant in producing *The Teen Appeal*, a monthly high school newspaper, a publication distributed in all Memphis high schools. The publication, which was started 16 years ago, is funded by the Scripps Howard Foundation, the Department and the *Commercial Appeal* newspaper. High school students take part in a one-week workshop the month before school begins, and many of the reporters and editors have gone on to attend college, many at the University of Memphis.

**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 this Council.

Learning goals for the major are clearly articulated on syllabi and in the Department’s assessment plan. Those learning goals are – word-for-word – those of the Council. The Department has carefully considered which of the 12 learning goals should be adopted for each course, and those goals are outlined on syllabi and used for assessment at the course level.

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

The Department’s assessment plan has been drafted and redrafted; it was last revised in Fall 2010 although detail about activity and results has been updated as recently as 2012. The plan outlines use of three direct measures and five indirect measures to pursue curricular improvement around two themes: writing quality and changes in newsgathering and reporting. Indirect measures include such fixtures as internship evaluations, placement rates, student performances in competitions, exit interviews, and alumni surveys. Direct measures are:

*English Proficiency Test:* The EPT has been used by the Department as an entrance exam for the first writing course in the major, Media Writing, since the 1980s. Students must correctly answer 60 percent of the questions (the test is currently 50 questions) to pass. The exam has been revised several times, most recently in 2012. The test gives faculty members a good sense of the grammar skills of incoming students and is used to continually improve the approach used in the Media Writing course. There is, however, no “post-test” for the EPT to inform faculty about how the course or the Department’s other measures, such as a part-time writing coach that students can see by appointment, might specifically be addressing students’ deficiencies in language proficiencies.

*Senior Test:* This test has been administered by the Department for many years as part of the senior checkout process, and years of data have been collected. Like the EPT, it has been revised more than once, and there are plans to revise it again based on changes in the News concentration and changes in the industry. The assistant chair, who oversees the Department’s assessment activities, called the test a “moving target” and characterized effective use of the test for programmatic assessment as a “slow process.” The Senior Test is not designed to directly address the program’s values and competencies but is instead tied to the program’s core classes and the concentrations. There is no companion “pre-test” for the Senior Test. The Department chair and assistant chair both said that test results are reviewed but have not resulted in many curricular adjustments. The assistant chair said a committee will be looking at ways to strengthen use of the Senior Test in assessment.

*Course-embedded assessment activities.* This is the heart of the Department’s assessment efforts. The course-embedded activities bring the faculty together around shared learning goals for each course, emphasize consistency across course sections, facilitate conversations around good teaching, and strategically bring in professionals to help the faculty. A lead instructor has been appointed for each multi-section course. The Department has a timeline for the

assessment (and re-assessment) of each course, carefully planned to lead to improvement for each concentration. The self study provides detail on rubrics used to assess each course and the steps such assessment involves, including the integration of a panel of professionals (including alumni) to evaluate student work. This time- and labor-intensive activity by the faculty has led to “closing the loop,” which is key to a successful assessment process.

(c) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to gain feedback for improving curriculum and instruction.

Departmental alumni seem to be loyal, active and ready to serve students. An example of this dedication is the fact that the alumni group meets monthly and that alumni are among the professionals who participate in course-embedded assessment. Although the Department surveys its alumni in regard to job placement, the self study notes that the survey “should be expanded to include questions of curriculum and instruction and their satisfaction with their educational experiences.”

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

The Department calls on professionals at a key juncture in the assessment process: After a course has been linked with appropriate values and competencies, appropriate performance standards for students have been identified, and initial adjustments to the course have been made. The involvement of professionals is called “Closing the Loop” and involves the evaluation of student work by a panel of professionals. The feedback is used to again improve the course across sections. An example is in the Advertising Campaigns class. A panel of professionals evaluated student work (that had already won second place in a District AAF competition) and made suggestions for improving the course; those improvements, including more in-class brainstorming exercises to sharpen students’ creative-thinking skills, were scheduled for the Spring 2013 offering of Campaigns.

(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and uses the data to improve curriculum and instruction.

The unit collects a great deal of data from all of its assessment activities (the two exams and the course-embedded assessment) and uses it to varying degrees to improve curriculum and instruction. The Senior Test and EPT have, over the years, produced data, but use of this data to improve the curriculum seems to be spotty. Student performance on the Senior Test has been used on occasion to improve course content, but otherwise, test results are not used in assessment.

Student performance on the EPT has been a springboard for discussions about how to help students improve their language-precision skills, especially in the Media Writing course. Although the EPT provides a direct measure of students’ grammar-related knowledge prior to entering the major, it is not a direct measure of student-learning outcomes, and has limited value related to assessment.

The most significant improvements to the curriculum seem to have come from the course-embedded assessment, and those improvements have (logically) been mostly at the course level. An example is Media Writing, where the Department’s writing coach was integrated more meaningfully into the course, a new textbook was adopted and instructors agreed to

meet informally to share ideas throughout the semester. This is not to say that all improvements are only at the course level; the News concentration, in which three key courses have been assessed in tandem, has been improved as a result of these activities.

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

**COMPLIANCE**

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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

#### **Strengths:**

- A collegial, hard-working group of faculty members who genuinely seem to like and respect one another and who all “chip in” for the greater good. A lot is asked of this faculty – and they deliver.
- A highly dedicated Department chair who has good political instincts for strengthening key Department initiatives, is budget-savvy, and who is liked and respected by those inside and outside the unit.
- An online Public Relations concentration that does not sacrifice quality and is a revenue-generator for the Department. The Department is seen, university-wide, as a leader in online education.
- Strong advising and student mentoring by faculty members, some of whom have won university-wide awards for their advising. Students praise the faculty and staff for being caring, committed and available.
- *The Teen Appeal*. It remains a jewel in this Department’s strong service portfolio.

#### **Challenges:**

- To more effectively, powerfully use programmatic data on student learning to improve assessment and instruction.
- To continue to be vigilant in improving diversity – especially racial diversity – among the full-time, tenure-track faculty.
- To better serve broadcasting students and attract strong faculty with facilities and equipment that reflect technological realities in the industry.

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

N/A

3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that must be corrected 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 must be corrected 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 that 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.

Three weaknesses were noted in the last team report:

- *“Limited systematic involvement of professionals in assessment activities.”* The Department has made the input of professionals an integral part of the course-embedded assessment.
- *“Students in all sequences do not receive exposure to minority faculty members.”* Although the hiring of full-time, tenure-track minority faculty remains a challenge for this Department, the hiring of adjunct faculty and an endowed chair bring more diversity to classes across concentrations.
- *“Current faculty expertise does not always align with student numbers.”* The News concentration attracts the largest number of students and has the largest number of faculty. None of the three concentrations seems to be under-resourced, in comparison with the others.

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

The site team found the self study to be a little “overwritten” (repetitive or overly detailed in places). However, it was consistent and relatively error free. The Department should be commended for its careful work on the self study.