

Report of On-Site Evaluation
ACEJMC
Undergraduate program

2012– 2013

Name of Institution: University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Juan Ramirez, Chancellor
Name of Unit: Department of Tele-Radial Communication
Name and Title of Administrator: Juan Luciano, Director of the Department

Date of 2012 - 2013 Accrediting Visit: February 3-6, 2013

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit _____
Recommendation of the previous accrediting team _____
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council _____

Recommendation by 2012 - 2013 Visiting Team: Full Accreditation (Initial)

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Paul Parsons, Professor and Dean
School of Communications, Elon University

Signature _____

Team Members

Doug Boyd, Professor
Department of Communication, University of Kentucky

Signature _____

Jan Quarles, Professor
College of Mass Communication, Middle Tennessee State University

Signature _____

Raul Ramirez, Executive Director, News and Public Affairs
KQED Public Radio, San Francisco

Signature _____

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo

Name of Unit: Department of Tele-Radial Communication (COMU) Year of Visit: 2012-13

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

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

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

Private Public Other (specify)

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

The University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo has legal authorization to provide education beyond secondary level in Puerto Rico. Since enactment of the current Act of the University of Puerto Rico in 1966 with its subsequent amendments¹, interpretive regulations and guiding certifications, the legal and regulatory framework of all University of Puerto Rico colleges has been clearly defined, including their administrative structures and the functions and responsibilities of their respective administrations.

The Act of 1966 calls for a unified public system of higher education governed by a Board of Trustees, which appoints a president of the system. The University of Puerto Rico is composed of eleven autonomous units. Each unit has representation in a University Board. At units' level, the chief executive officer is the Chancellor. The Act of 1966 mandates the establishment of an Academic Senate and an Administrative Board in each unit.

As an institution of higher education that depends on the availability of Federal and Commonwealth funds, UPR-Arecibo is affected by the same laws binding institutions of higher learning in the United States, including, but not limited to, the Student's Right to Know Act, Campus Crime, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, U.S. Higher Education Act, Copyright and other Intellectual Property acts, Occupational Safety Health Act of 1970, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, and American with Disabilities Act. As a public corporation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico its statutes are also applied to UPR-Arecibo (e.g. nondiscrimination, intellectual property, ethics and those ruling financial operations, such as budgets, accounting, purchases, etc. UPR-Arecibo must comply with specific statutes and executive orders aimed at public employees, for example, the Office of Government Ethics.

Other sources of regulatory authority include regulations of the Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education, union contracts, and the Students Regulations Handbook, among others.

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: N/A

¹ Public Law No. 1 of 20 Jan. 1966 (18 L.P.R.A. §§ 601et ss.)

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

The unit has not been evaluated by ACEJMC.

6. Attach a copy of the unit's mission statement. The statement should give the date of adoption and/or the most recent revision.

Mission of the Department of Tele-Radial Communication, UPR-Arecibo:

We offer a recognized Baccalaureate degree in Tele-Radial Communication. Our priority is the formation of future professionals in radio and television. We believe in a complete education of our communication students through the combination of interdisciplinary courses in general education and communications. Similarly, we believe in the development of future communicators committed to the ethical practice of their professions.

As part of our mission, we also seek to bolster the professions related to Tele-Radial Communication. We actively engage in academic research and development, community service, and the dissemination of knowledge in the various areas of mass communication.

To fulfill this Mission, we recruit outstanding students from Puerto Rico and abroad and we attract an outstanding faculty with excellent credentials in teaching undergraduate students, in research and/or in other creative endeavors. (See attachment: Mission Certification.)

This mission was adopted October 20, 2011.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 15 weeks

Summer sessions of 4 weeks

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

Four-year program leading to Bachelor degree

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

Students must approve 128 semester credits for graduation.

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

Students must enroll and approve COMU 4335 – Practicum/Seminar, a 3 credit course that Requires students to practice 112 hours in a preselected media outlet during the last year of their program. Students may also earn up to six (6) credits for internship experience in the course INTD 4995– Cooperative Internship.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty

Bachelor degree in Tele-Radial Communications (Electronic media)

Associate degree in Tele Radial Communications*²

Person in Charge

Juan Luciano

Juan Luciano

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

The University of Puerto Rico keeps an enrollment of approximately 4,000 undergraduate students each semester. The following table summarizes enrollment at UPR-Arecibo in the past five years.

Academic year	Enrollment by type of Program				Total enrollment
	Transfer out programs	2 yr. programs	4 yr. programs	Others (professional enhancement, special permits, etc.)	
2008-09	268	378	3380	68	4,094
2009-10	259	323	3695	75	4,352
2010-11	242	288	3399	95	4,024
2011-12	205	219	3063	89	3,576
2012-13	205	216	3188	84	3,693

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	
	2011-2012	First Semester 2012-2013
Bachelor degree in Tele-Radial Communication	327	352
Associate degree in Tele-Radial Communication (see footnote 1)	1	0
Total	328	352

14. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, 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:

Code	Course	Crs.	Type of course ³	Sections offered Fall 2012	# students per section
COMU 3101	Photography for Communication	2	Skills - Lec	MB0 WB5	20 20
COMU 3102	Laboratory for Photography for Communication	1	Skills - Lab	W10 MB5 ME5 M30	9 10 12 9
COMU 3201	Script Writing	2	Skills - Lec	M10 J10	22 21
COMU 3202	Script Writing Practice	1	Skills - Lab	W25 M40 J40	13 15 15
COMU 3211	Principles of Radio	2	Skills - Lec	LB5 M15	20 22
COMU 3212	Laboratory for Principles of Radio	1	Skills-Lab	LD5 L25 ME5 MB0	11 8 11 11
COMU 2043	Principles of Television	2	Skills - Lec	MB5	23
COMU 2046	Principles of Television Practice	1	Skills - Lab	ME5 JE5	13 10
COMU 2041	Advanced Television and Radio Production Workshop	3	Skills - Lec	L25	15
	Advanced Television	0	Skills -	L35	15

³ Skills courses offered by the Department of Tele-Radial Communication can be classified as “skills”, “skills-lecture” or “skills-laboratory”. Courses classified as “skills” are those skills courses that do not include a laboratory, like Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations, Multimedia production and Audio for Media. Other skills courses require students to enroll simultaneously in both laboratory and lecture. For example, students registered in Television production must enroll in a skills-lecture course called COMU 2043 and a skills-lab course called COMU 2046. Since 2004, enrollment in courses classified as “skills-laboratories” have been limited to 15 students per section, while enrollment in courses classified as “skills-lecture” might have more than 20 students per section. This distinction allows our faculty to teach theoretical aspects in the lecture part of the course, while teaching the more practical aspects in the laboratory. Even though this ratio of students per section has been effective, the Department has been authorized by the Institution to limit enrollment in all skills courses to 20 students per section, regardless of whether they are “skills”, “skills-lecture” or “skills-laboratory” beginning in Spring 2013. Journalism courses have always been limited to 20 students per section, even if they are not classified as “Skills-laboratory” courses.

Code	Course	Crs.	Type of course ³	Sections offered Fall 2012	# students per section
COMU 2044	and Radio Production		Lab		
COMU 4055	Principles of Journalism	3	Skills	ME5 M25	15 17
COMU 4007	Advertising Principles	3	Skills	L40 L25	18 16
COMU 4005	Television Advertising	3	Skills	M45 L45	12 9
COMU 4006	Radio Advertising	3	Skills	MB5	14
COMU 3117	Multimedia Production	3	Skills	WB5 L10	17 17
COMU 4027	Audio for the Media	3	Skills	LB5	15
COMU 4065	Advertising and Public Relations Campaigns	3	Skills	M25	16

**15. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2012 – 2013 2 academic year:
Percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2012-2013 academic year:

\$955,356 (Department of Tele-Radial Communication)

Percentage increase or decrease in three years:

Decrease of 0.87% over the past three years

Amount spent this year (2012-2013) on full-time faculty salaries:

\$516,372 (on faculty salaries)

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

<u>Full time faculty member</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Status</u>
Rosamary Berrios	Assistant professor	Active
Denise Coutín	Associate professor	Active
Anilyn Díaz	Assistant professor	Active
José Fonseca	Assistant professor	Active
Ingrid Garriga	Professor	Active

Otilio González	Professor	Active
Emanuel Gutierrez	Associate professor	Active
Juan Luciano	Professor	Active
José Ortega	Assistant professor	Active
Mildred Vélez	Instructor	Active

17. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2012. Also list part-time faculty teaching in Spring 2012.

Part time faculty

Nitza Luna Padilla
Luis Rosario Albert

18. 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>55</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>96%</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>100%</u>
2010-2011 academic year	<u>52</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>92%</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100%</u>

In calculating the 80 credits outside the major, the Department included the course Fundamentals of Electronics. Although this course appeared before 2012 under code COMU 2037-40, its content has always been electronics and electrical properties, topics less related to communication and more to the Physical Sciences. The course was revised and it is now offered with another code under the Department of Physics (FISI 3009).

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

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 University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo was founded in 1967 and today has an enrollment of about 3,700 students. Designated as an undergraduate-only institution, UPR-Arecibo is one of 11 autonomous campuses in the university system. Four campuses offer programs in Communication, and UPR-Arecibo is recognized for its specialty in television and radio.

Within UPR-Arecibo, the Department of Tele-Radial Communication is one of 14 academic units. The unit was established in 1984 and began offering a bachelor's degree in 1990. The program emphasizes producing and directing for television and radio and integrates applied production skills and courses in journalism, public relations and advertising.

In 2008, the department revised its curriculum to align the program with ACEJMC standards, stating, "The program harmoniously combines Arts and Sciences courses with theoretical and skills courses in communication, which allows students to design and produce audio-visual content for various media."

The department is the academic home for 10 full-time faculty members and about 350 students seeking a bachelor's degree in Tele-Radial Communication, representing about 10 percent of the university's student body. Students produce content for an online radio station and an in-house production organization and develop public relations and advertising campaigns through an in-house student-run agency. Student productions are available on Web TV and Radio.

UPR-Arecibo is on the northern shore of Puerto Rico, just a few miles from the world's largest astronomical observatory. The university draws its student body primarily from 15 municipalities in the north-central part of the island. The region's economic base (pharmaceutical plants, fisheries, agriculture, trade, services) has been severely impacted by high unemployment. As a result, many students enrolled at UPR-Arecibo are first-generation college students who come from households living under poverty levels. In fact, 80 percent of UPR-Arecibo students are beneficiaries of the Pell Grant student aid program. The university does offer scholarships and a program to support student retention. The university reports that, in the last seven years, the retention rate from first to second year has improved from 70 percent to 82 percent.

The University of Puerto Rico system heavily relies on allocations from the government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and, on a smaller scale, tuition fees. A fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico since 2007 has significantly affected university budgets, resulting in a decrease of state funding to the university system. In recent years, the university has benefited from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds approved by President Obama. However, given the economic uncertainty,

the system's Board of Trustees has taken precautionary measures such as freezing faculty positions, reducing campus budgets and imposing additional tuition fees on students. As the self-study puts it, "These measures have generated tension and unrest among students." For instance, the Department of Tele-Radial Communication had intended to apply for an ACEJMC site team visit in 2010, but a student strike shut down the entire university system for 62 days.

The mission statement of the Department of Tele-Radial Communication reflects the university's mission of teaching, research and community service. The departmental statement, adopted in 2011, reads: "Our priority is the formation of future professionals in radio and television. We believe in a complete education of our communication students through the combination of interdisciplinary courses in general education and communication. Similarly, we believe in the development of future communicators committed to the ethical practice of their professions. As part of our mission, we also seek to bolster the professions related to Tele-Radial Communication. We actively engage in academic research and development, community service, and the dissemination of knowledge in the various areas of mass communication."

In 2008, the department approved a new strategic plan with six categories – curriculum, teaching and learning, student admission and retention, academic activities (research and community service), faculty and staff, and resources – and 25 objectives. Some of the objectives are specific, such as achieving ACEJMC accreditation and considering the creation of emphasis areas in the curriculum. Other objectives are broad in nature, such as updating theoretical and practical courses.

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

The university operates with an Academic Senate and a variety of committees that deals with faculty personnel decisions, academic and grade issues, budget allocations, and strategic planning. At the departmental level, standing committees include accreditation/curriculum, student affairs, assessment, diversity, personnel, budget and planning, and library. The faculty had three formal meetings in Fall 2012. Committees had their own meetings, and the faculty meets informally on a number of occasions.

(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 director of the department has the confidence of both the faculty and the dean. As a result, the department is viewed favorably across campus as an effective and well-run unit. The site team's communication with media professionals supports the perspective of a department that is effective in serving students.

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

The University of Puerto Rico system has procedures in place for selecting and appointing unit administrators. After considering recommendations of the academic department and consulting with the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Chancellor appoints the department's director.

The Academic Senate of UPR-Arecibo approved a new procedure in 2009-10 that defines the mechanisms to evaluate directors. The procedure requires an evaluation every three years by the Chancellor with the participation of faculty members, staff, students and the professional community. Criteria include availability to faculty and students, the capacity to solve problems, the ability to lead, setting of high standards for the unit, and communicating effectively.

The current director was appointed in 2010 (after serving a number of years as the department's director before becoming Dean of Students at one point). As a result, the new reappointment procedures will be implemented for the first time in the coming year.

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

Depending on the issue, individuals or committees are designated to be avenues to resolve complaints. Student grade issues are presented to an Academic Progress Committee, while student issues with a professor are considered by a Student Ombudsman. Faculty concerns would go to the Dean of Academic Affairs, and a number of personnel are members of a labor association that operates under a collective agreement with the university.

Summary

The department has a clear mission statement and strategic plan, operates in compliance with the norms of shared governance expected of accredited programs, and has effective leadership that is propelling the unit forward. The department is recognized for producing outstanding graduates who go into television and radio, with an increasing number of graduates going into other fields of communication as well.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

OVERVIEW

The bachelor's degree in the Department of Tele-Radial Communication focuses on television and radio direction and production and offers elective courses in journalism (written and broadcast), public relations and advertising. All classes are taught in Spanish.

Students must earn 128 credit hours to graduate. All students take a central core of 27 hours:

- ❖ Fundamentals of Communication (3 credit hours)
- ❖ History and Development of Radio and TV (3)
- ❖ Photography of Communication 1 (2)
- ❖ Laboratory Photography 1 (1)
- ❖ Ethical and Legal Aspects of Television and Radio Communication (3)
- ❖ Script Writing (2)
- ❖ Script Writing Practice (1)
- ❖ Principles of Radio (2)
- ❖ Laboratory for Principles of Radio (1)
- ❖ Principles of Television (2)
- ❖ Principles of Television Practice (1)
- ❖ Radio and Television Programming (3)
- ❖ Practicum/Seminar (3)

Students then take nine hours of core electives, selecting three courses in the department and deciding whether to take a general program of study or selecting, in consultation with professors in the area, a more specific area of interest. The areas available during the self-study year and site visit were:

Production and Direction of Audiovisual Content (Radio/TV)
Journalism and Broadcast News Production (Press/Radio/TV)
Advertising and Advertising Productions (Commercials)
Public Relations
Photography

The area of interest is not indicated on student diplomas, but students who were interviewed showed a high degree of interest in the elective areas. Core electives in the areas are specified for each area from the list below:

Advanced Television and Radio Production Workshop
Intermediate Photography
Communication Media Management
Multimedia Production
Television Advertising

Radio Advertising
Broadcast Journalism
Audio for Media
Principles of Journalism, Written News for Radio and Television
Advertising and Public Relations Campaigns
Principles of Advertising
Graphic Materials Preparation
Advertising Copywriting
Public Relations
Advertising Photography

Unlike some universities that have separate majors or academic sequences, the Department of Tele-Radial Communication has a single major and does not have academic sequences or concentrations. As a result, the sections below are not itemized into curricular subsections as is often the case.

- (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.**

Students in the department have completed 80 credits in general education, including 18 credits in languages (Spanish and English), 24 credits in science and mathematics, and 27 in Humanities and Social Sciences (for a total of 69 credits in the liberal arts and sciences). They also must complete 11 credits in general education courses not designated as liberal arts or sciences (including marketing and computer programming) outside the department. Revisions to the department's curriculum in 2008 allow students the opportunity to develop interest areas in addition to their core courses and to choose from a select list of social science and open electives that align with their individual interests.

For academic year 2011-12, the analysis showed that 53 of the 55 graduates (96%) had 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 55 (100%) had 65 or more semester hours in the liberal arts and sciences. In 2010-11, 46 of 52 graduates (or 88%) had 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 52 (100%) had 65 or more semester hours in the liberal arts and sciences. This is due to the fact that in calculating the 80 credits, the department previously counted Fundamentals of Electronics as a communications course. The course is now offered in the Department of Physics.

The department provided the team with the percentages of graduates as required, but did not provide the "number of semester hours taken in non-journalism and mass communications and in liberal arts, sciences and social sciences by all members of each graduating class in the two academic years before an initial accreditation visit" as required. Records at UPR-Arecibo are closely held, and the site team's examination of student records took place with a registrar present. An examination of a sample of records confirmed that students were in compliance with the 80/65 curriculum rules and clearly indicated the core program and elective courses in the major.

(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.)

Core requirements in the department include both professional skills and theoretical and conceptual courses. For instance, students take core lecture and lab courses in Script Writing, Photography and Radio and Television Production for their professional skills, and they are required to complete Fundamentals of Communication (which looks at mass communication theory) History and Development of Radio and Television (which looks at origins and history, technology and globalization), and Ethical and Legal Aspects of Television and Radio Communication (which examines the right to free expression, legal policies and regulations, and ethics and self-regulation).

In addition to the theory, history and law/ethics courses, students in skills courses often are exposed to theory. As one faculty member put it, "Students are happy to learn real-life skills, but they have to have the theoretical approach, too. They need the qualities of good communication in terms of projects, production and history to understand both real life and theory. We mix it all to create a professional human being. We're not just a trade school."

(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.)

Instruction is current, and on observation both faculty members and students were energetic and engaged. As indicated in syllabi, observation and class projects, classes integrate social media and reach deeply into the university and local communities. It is a hallmark of this program that students work so intensively in community service projects, from a creative project on drawing the elderly in the community closer to students to event planning for local, regional and international conferences to production of videos for educational counseling services on campus and for others.

Teaching is a vital part of tenure and then promotion on campus. However, the university does not have formalized programs on campus for recognizing excellence in teaching. The self-study listed numerous workshops related to teaching attended by faculty. Several student recognition awards are given annually.

(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.

Skills and lab courses in the department are taught using several approaches. Skills courses are classified in one of three ways: skills, skills-lecture and skills-laboratory.

Classes classified as "skills" do not include a lab (includes Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations and Multimedia Production and Audio for Media). Other courses require students to sign up for both skills-lecture and skills-laboratory. Enrollment in the lecture portion of the skills classes ranged from 15 to 26, but the lab portions of the classes are held to 15 students (and often fewer) to allow access to technology and hands-on experience. On observation, classes allowed for plentiful faculty-student

interchange. Students in interviews said they had no problems getting the classes they needed to graduate and no problem sharing equipment with another student for class projects. In spring 2013, the department has been given permission to hold all skills courses (regardless of whether they are skills-only or have lectures and labs) to 20 students.

(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.)

All students must pass the Practicum course during their senior year to graduate. The course involves an intensive professional work experience with both classroom lectures and 150 practice hours at the workplace. Students produce a report on their practice site and they are evaluated by both the professor and the workplace supervisor. Students report that the support they receive in obtaining a good placement varies by faculty member, with some being more involved than others.

Of note is the high level of student participation in communication projects for the university and community, real-world experiences (often done with professionals) and evaluated for class credit. For instance, students have worked on international conferences featuring well-known Hispanic writers, planning all of the media and working on public relations aspects of the events. A faculty member in the Spanish Department said they “could not do the conference without such student help,” and students do these activities as part of class. As another example, students have produced videos for university and community clients as part of their coursework.

At Arecibo, the term "internship" means a workplace experience done in a university-level program. Those experiences may be taken at any time, not at the end of the program, and are not as closely supervised as the departmental Practicum course. Opportunities in the university program include study abroad.

Summary

In keeping with its name, the department has a core curriculum with a narrower-than-usual focus: television and radio. The curriculum meets the 80/65 standard, and a spot check of student records shows compliance with this standard (although the department did not provide a listing of all students as specified for a program seeking initial accreditation). Coursework is clearly delineated and provides students the opportunity to gain grounding in radio and television production with additional areas of interest. This blend helps students prepare for a variety of job possibilities, including media entrepreneurship. Instruction is energetic, and students are complimentary of their professors and their classroom experiences. Students are articulate and motivated to do well.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

OVERVIEW

The University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo is an institution directed to serve Hispanic students. In terms of diverse faculty and student populations, 100% of the full-time and part-time faculty are Hispanic/Latino (any race), and the student population is 100% Hispanic/Latino (any race) from 2009-12. The ethnic fusion of the population includes Taino Indians, European descendants and African descendants who have meshed into a Puerto Rican cultural identity (“puertorriqueñidad”). When the university collects data, only this one ethnic category is used.

The Department of Tele-Radial Communication has defined its focus on diversity and inclusiveness as gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

(a) The unit has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan.

The department approved a diversity plan in 2010 and created a committee to oversee the plan. The committee, while assuring that the department was working to have the most diverse faculty and student populations possible given its geographic region, worked intensively to focus on helping students understand diversity of audience. The department supports these activities and provides support to encourage learning about diversity. The plan clearly outlines the ways that activities will be evaluated and enumerates the activities done during the self-study period. Faculty members appear actively committed to the plan.

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

The department has an open environment and acceptance of diversity in every way, and this was observed consistently during the site visit. Curricular materials reflect a strong focus on diversity of audiences, and faculty members work to develop both student and community awareness on diversity issues. For example, one professor leads the Group Against Homophobia and classes have produced creative materials. Another faculty member works both in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean with the Institutional Committee on Women and Gender to increase awareness of domestic violence. She presented to the Association of Journalists in Puerto Rico her content analysis of the way domestic violence is portrayed.

Students are involved in numerous ways. The Radio and Television Programming course has been revised to focus on diversity issues in programming, and numerous student project examples were provided to the team. In addition to that course, syllabi indicated that students in production classes were developing PSAs, radio and television programs, and photography projects related to diversity themes. The UPRA web radio programming and planned UPRA Web TV2 programming include a strong focus on themes of elderly community issues, lesbian/transgender and gay issues, and religious diversity issues. Numerous guest speakers visit campus to talk about issues of diversity.

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

Female professors comprise 50% of the full-time faculty in the department. With the exception of one instructor, all women are tenured. One woman is a full professor, one is an associate professor, and two are assistant professors. The department has had no full-time openings since 2009. Few individuals leave their positions, and economic constraints have lessened the opportunities for new positions. Part-time positions are not advertised; faculty are drawn from a pool of professionals. One part-time teacher, a female, was hired in 2009-10, two females in 2010-11 and one in 2011-12.

One of the department's personnel committee members noted that one international individual, from Mexico, was interviewed in years past, but she found the commuting distance from an urban area too great. In that way, the department faces recruiting challenges akin to those of rural universities in the United States.

(d) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education in the region or population it serves, with special attention to recruiting under-represented groups. The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and supports their retention, progress and success.

The department admits students from all 78 municipalities of Puerto Rico, but most of the students are drawn from 15 municipalities in the north-central region of the island and most come from the regions of Arecibo and Morovis. More than 99% of the students identify themselves as Hispanic, and all classes are taught in Spanish. Many students at Arecibo are first-generation college students and the vast majority have Pell grants. Most come from public schools. The department does not indicate over-representation or under-representation, given the university's focus in Hispanic students. However, it strives to address issues due to economic resources or geographic location.

Recruiting activities include twice-yearly UPRA fests, one for 11th grade and one for 12th grade. The fests are three-day events, produced in the university's theatre for a live audience of 400 and broadcast to public schools and some private schools. Faculty from all areas of campus provide information on their programs and college life. Students receive meals and transportation to attend. Television production students produce the broadcast.

A summer camp is held for graduating high school seniors from rural areas recommended by their professors. The students take one week of programs and activities in the department's communication areas. In addition, throughout the year, a faculty member travels to high schools with members of the Admissions Office and presents a short program on studying at UPR-Arecibo.

(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 University of Puerto Rico is a public institution and observes all laws and regulations regarding discrimination in the workplace and has its own anti-discrimination policy. In addition, the campus

has a policy that prohibits sexual harassment and discrimination against people with disabilities and veterans. The university coordinates educational services for those with disabilities. On observation, many parts of the campus are wheelchair-friendly, and when classrooms are not accessible to a disabled student, the class is moved to a facility accessible to that student. Students with disabilities were observed making their way into classrooms and coping well with the environment. It is clear from the activities and from interviews with both faculty and students that the department takes its commitment to diversity seriously and acts on it in many ways.

Summary

The open atmosphere of acceptance of and commitment to diversity as defined by the department is palpable and to be commended. Faculty have worked hard to incorporate more classroom activity on issues of diversity, and the activities of both faculty and students have carried them outward into the community surrounding the university. The diversity plan is thorough and activities are being evaluated. The examples of awareness campaigns produced by students are plentiful and impressive in their creativity. The department has had some constraints in hiring more diverse faculty as new positions have not been available.

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.

The department has 10 full-time faculty members and two part-time instructors. There was a time when the department had up to 13 full-time faculty members and more part-time hires, but budget reductions mandated cutbacks.

The following academic ranks and tenure status apply to the 10 full-time faculty:

Full Professor, Tenured	3
Associate Professor, Tenured	2
Assistant Professors, Tenured	4
Instructor, Tenure Ineligible	1

Departmental faculty are an amazingly stable group. Full-time faculty members have an average of 15 years of teaching in this academic unit, with the following years for each rank:

Full Professor	26
Associate Professor	12
Assistant Professor	14
Instructor	8

The department has written criteria for the selection and evaluation of faculty.

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

All required courses and the vast majority of other courses are taught by full-time faculty. The exceptions are about four non-required courses each semester taught by part-time instructors. The department has no graduate program, thus there is no instruction from teaching assistants.

(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 University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo is a teaching-oriented institution, not a research university. Full-time faculty members, regardless of rank, teach a 12-hour a semester load, 4 x 4 annually (with little or no release time). With that said, the two full-time faculty with Ph.D.s have professional experience. Some faculty members with professional experience have terminal master's degrees. Part-time faculty are hired for their specific professional skills in an area such as photography. Several faculty members remain active as professionals, which helps with student internships and after-graduation employment opportunities.

Most faculty are members of professional and scholarly associations, and faculty development opportunities are made available.

(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.

The department follows the university-mandated process, allowing each student to evaluate each class each semester. Students utilize a 27-question form with replies placed on a standard scan sheet. In addition, there are spaces for students to write comments about the instructor and course. Given the high value placed on excellent teaching for promotion to the next academic rank, the department pays a great deal of attention to student course evaluation responses.

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

Unit faculty members are well respected on campus. They are known for their degree of involvement on campus committees and especially off-campus outreach initiatives. Students follow the involvement of faculty, serving as interns and otherwise bringing their well known gregarious nature, communication knowledge, and production to skills to the university community.

Summary

The department has been able to attract and retain an experienced, dedicated cadre of full- and part-time faculty who possess an appropriate blend of education and professional skills. Faculty offer an impressive amount of service time to the university and the community.

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.

The economic crisis that began in 2008 dramatically changed the modest support the university offered for research in terms of grant money for course release time. An Office of Research once offered grant money for research and creative activities, but the university all but eliminated the office for financial reasons. At the time of the site visit, no research grants were available to faculty.

This situation does not mean that faculty members are inactive with regard to research and creative activity. While productivity is far less than that at a Research I institution, it befits a 4-4 teaching load. During the past six years, the 10 faculty members have received nine external grants, published one textbook, one book chapter, 10 newspaper or Internet articles, one article in a refereed journal, and four articles in non-refereed publications. In addition, faculty presented 21 refereed conference papers, gave five invited academic papers, participated in 12 juried and 66 non-juried creative events, and gave 14 seminars and eight professional talks.

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

Given the high faculty teaching loads, the university does not specify scholarly targets for hiring, promoting or tenuring faculty. However, research and professional activity are part of annual faculty evaluations as well as the process of being promoted to associate and full professor.

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

The department takes a broad view of scholarly and professional work. Faculty outreach to the community via seminars and talks as well as involvement professionally are expected and valued. Should the university receive additional government funding, there is a possibility that the Office of Research will again become active in offering research grants that allow course-release time. Given the time constraints under which faculty in the university work, the department employs faculty who find the time to undertake projects that reflect their professional and academic interests.

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

During the past six years, faculty members have been active in presenting research and creative work in Puerto Rico, but also have attended conferences and had films and video productions shown in the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Hungary, Russia, Portugal, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

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

Faculty members appear to be congenial and respectful toward each other, supporting and celebrating the differences they each bring to the department. The director creates an atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration and intellectual curiosity.

Summary

Scholarly and creative productivity is appropriate for a teaching institution where faculty teach four courses a semester with little course release. When financial resources permit, the department may benefit again from internal research grants and course releases.

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.

The university-wide academic advising process begins with a week of counseling activities for all newly admitted students. During the week, the unit's advisers provide each entering communication student with background on requirements, admission and other program procedures. The process is guided by the university registrar, the department's director, and academic counseling coordinators. Faculty members rotate through the academic counseling assignment, and receive a one-course release when on counseling duty.

The department compiles academic advising guides outlining requirements of the general education program and of communication core and elective courses, with an emphasis on curricular sequence. Students are provided with a guide (also available online) and a curricular course map that shows courses needed to progress toward a degree. The department's website summarizes graduation requirements, academic counseling policies and other procedures and rules. Students are required to keep an advisement and preregistration appointment with their academic advisers each semester. Advisers have access to selected segments of a student's central electronic files, which are maintained by the university. Advising coordinators also organize group counseling and guidance activities. The senior-level Practicum course includes a number of activities aimed at facilitating graduating senior transition to the job market, including seminars on preparing professional portfolios, interactive portfolios, demo tapes, resume writing and job search strategies.

The university's Orientation and Counseling Office employs seven professional counselors, a psychologist and a placement officer. The office maintains a Career Center that provides career and study opportunities in Puerto Rico and abroad and offers workshops on, among other topics, resume writing and job search strategies. The office also coordinates special events such as job fairs and graduate program fairs. The Counseling Office keeps a file on each university student. The university has adopted an "early alarm system" to identify students facing academic difficulties and offers them mentoring, tutoring and other targeted academic support. It also seeks to measure student satisfaction with counseling services, conducting periodic surveys to measure expectations of entering students and satisfaction of second- and third-year students, followed by a survey of recent alumni.

The faculty and the department work with alumni who are searching for employment or looking to move to graduate school, providing them with leads to opportunities and information about post-graduate internships and graduate programs.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

The university requires that each full-time faculty post at least six office hours weekly dedicated to direct contact with students outside of class. In addition, faculty and students report frequent student-faculty communication by phone, e-mail, campus mail and via an online educational course platform

used for course-related information and that makes possible the creation of communication groups. In some classes, professors and students communicate via text messaging and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, and several professors said they give students their cell phone numbers for contacting them. Some students said they will leave notes taped to faculty office doors confident that professors will respond, and students and faculty said it is not uncommon for students to stop faculty around campus to ask general questions.

Surveys of department seniors conducted by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research in 2010, 2011 and 2012 on the availability of faculty to students show student satisfaction with the access they had. In response to the surveys, Departmental seniors' satisfaction rankings are steadily higher than those for the university at large. Department seniors also gave steadily higher marks to the opportunities offered them to interact with faculty in extracurricular activities. Other surveys indicated high student satisfaction with student-faculty relations – a judgment confirmed when the visiting team met with students.

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

Besides the means of communicating policies and activities outlined above, the university maintains an online catalog in its official website, which outlines all official university rules and procedures. An e-mail system, dubbed "*Cartero El Lobo*" (Wolf Mailman, after the campus mascot), is used to disseminate information about events, activities and campus issues. The registrar's office uses the system to notify students about counseling opportunities, enrollment dates, and policy changes.

(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.

Six student organizations provide opportunities for extracurricular activities. These include media, event production and a student production center, all with faculty advisers. They are:

- ACTRE (Student Association of Tele-Radial Communication), a three-decades-old association of communication students, which coordinates Communications activities with an emphasis on radio and television production. ACTRE's signature activity is Communication Week, which consists of conferences, workshops, seminars and other opportunities for students to interact with alumni and other visiting professionals.
- ALAHI, formed by students to foster creative activities such as experimental theatre, often with social themes such as the importance of diversity and of preventing violence against women. Some performances are collaborations with other institutions and with university units such as the Office for the Quality of Life, part of the Department of Counseling and Orientation.
- VERTICE, the Advertising and Public Relations Student Association, through which students produce advertising and public relations events and media productions for university programs or for external clients such as non-profit organizations and outside communities. Recent media campaign clients include Communication Week and the University's soccer team.

- AFAA (Association of Photography Ansel Adams), which reflects student interest in photography through expositions, conferences and workshops both on and off campus. In 2011, AFAA's first collective exposition, "Alternatives Histories," focused on the work of students enrolled in an advertising photo class and an intermediate photo course.
- PAIECA (Independent Associate Production of Communication Students at Arecibo), a student-run media production center that creates film units, short documentaries and other productions. PAIECA projects in recent years have included short films, entertainment television programs and an interactive Web TV magazine.
- UPRA Web Radio, a student-run online production center operating since 2010 at www.uprawebradio.com The station enables radio production students to explore webcasting in real time and live on tape, and serves as a platform showcasing student class projects. Web Radio's main focus is on educational, public affairs and informational programming, but it occasionally features entertainment content. The station's programming schedule is created by students enrolled in the Tele-Radial programming course, though content is interdisciplinary in origin. Most recently, the station took in collaborative productions from seven academic programs, including Communication, Social Science, Humanities, Computer Science, Counseling and Orientation, Business Administration and Biology. Productions have included coverage of a months-long general strike by UPR students, coverage of the Central American Games of the Caribbean Mayaguez, and a variety of public affairs, news and entertainment webcasts.

(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 university's Coordinator of Student Retention, who is assigned to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, is responsible for implementing the university's student retention policy. The university defines retention as first-year students who continue studies in the next academic year carrying a full academic load of at least 12 credits. The retention office seeks to identify strategies and activities to maintain and increase retention rates by close monitoring of newly enrolled students and intensive distribution of information about deadlines, academic progress, tutorials, conferences, evaluations and counseling. The office also maintains the early-warning system. The department tracks retention rates on a yearly basis and has seen it fluctuate from 81 percent in 2007-08 to a low of 69 percent in 2010-11 and a bounce back to 82 percent in 2011-12. According to the self-study, the department's retention rate consistently matches or exceeds the university's and is usually higher than that of most other academic programs on campus. The university also tracks graduation rates and a variety of aggregate data to assist student services.

Summary

UPR-Arecibo takes student advising seriously, and faculty are accessible and committed to the role. The department offers multiple opportunities to be involved in student media and organizations, from Web Radio to a media production center to a public relations and advertising agency.

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.

Each year, the university assigns a budget allocation to the department, based on multiple-year plans. The departmental budget includes payroll for full-time and part-time faculty, clerical and some technical staff. It also includes lines for equipment, supplies and travel. A number of items are budgeted university-wide, including most technical personnel, equipment and building maintenance personnel, and library and information services. The unit administrators and faculty characterize allocation of services funded at the university level as fair and at times favorable to the department.

Academic and administrative priorities are funded via a seven-step annual process that begins with departments identifying anticipated operational expenses, special initiatives and activities in their strategic plans. The process aims to analyze, contrast and balance the needs of various academic programs, leading to annual budget assignments to departments. Since 2009-10, when the department's budget was \$1.3 million, its allocations have declined by 14%. In 2012-13, the budget settled at \$955,356 – a slight increase from the prior year.

The decreases were felt university-wide, and resulted largely from the impact in Puerto Rico of the global economic downturn. The department absorbed the loss by enacting a variety of savings and cuts, including a reduction of nearly 50% of the \$40,000 part-time teaching line. Puerto Rican state funding has gone from 70% of the university's external resources in 2009-10 to 87% in 2011-12. In the same period, U.S. federal funds were halved, from \$1.2 million to \$557,538. More recently, in a slightly improved economic environment and with the ACEJMC accreditation process nearing, the department was authorized to spend \$400,000 in supplementary funds. The bulk of the funds are being spent to upgrade and expand television, radio and photography studios and to digitize or otherwise upgrade and modernize facilities and equipment. Some of the refurbishing of expanded space already has been contracted. The department expects all work to be finished on time for the fall semester in August 2013.

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

University allocations to the department have consistently reflected or slightly exceeded the enrollment and faculty size ranking of the unit among university academic programs. Department administrators and faculty agree that the allocation of services funded centrally by the university – including library and computerized research facilities, equipment and facility rentals – have been fair, if not more than fair.

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

The department occupies most of the first and third floors of the administration building, a sprawling structure that houses a variety of programs, including Business Administration. The first level houses the unit's two television studios and, nearby, a multimedia studio. Also on the first floor, the department houses two radio and recording studios, both of which are undergoing a transformation

that calls for digitization and expansion of production and work space for television, radio and photography classes. This remodeling has helped convert facilities once stuffed into crowded rooms into more suitable work spaces. The department shares an area of 2,698 square feet with the Business Administration Department. The unit's area includes offices for the department director and secretary, seven small offices shared by two faculty each, one meeting room and one office for academic counseling. Faculty members say they are pleased with the recent acquisitions and remodeling, but said they know that a rapidly changing technological world means a continuing need to upgrade hardware and update to maintain the department's growing image as a respected television and radio program.

The department has three classrooms on the first level of the administration building and one on the first level of the Nursing Department building nearby. Most classrooms in the building are equipped with overhead projectors and sound equipment.

(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.

Only five professors and the director have computers assigned to their offices, in some instances only because they are on rotating assignment as academic advisers. Other professors must travel elsewhere in the building or to other university facilities to use university computer facilities, or bring their own laptops. Faculty members say that the use of these facilities, plus remote access options, provides them with ample access to research data and production facilities. As for classroom instruction, some acknowledged that at times competition for classroom space with others in the department and with other units can be challenging, but that advance planning and a collaborative approach makes it manageable. Some characterized occasional air conditioning failure as mere nuisances easily overcome.

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

The department has easy access to the university library, with a circulation book collection of more than 70,000 titles, including some 500 communications books acquired since 2001. The department has no reading room of its own.

The library has a reserve collection to hold information resources for faculty or students. Reserve materials are used only in study rooms. The library digitizes teaching materials submitted by faculty, and students can access digitized materials via the Internet, with attention being paid to avoiding potential copyright issues. The library houses special Arcibo historical and special collections, a variety of reference resources, reference services to faculty and students, and a growing multimedia film collection. The library employs technicians available to assist users with troubleshooting.

Summary

After several years of recession-fueled budget dislocation, the university and the department appear to be regaining financial stability. Special allocations have helped the department make strides in updating equipment and renovating and expanding some vital radio, television and photography

studios. Some facilities challenges still lay ahead, including limited faculty office facilities, a lack of computers for faculty use, and the question of whether university support will continue as aging hardware demands replacement and software needs to be updated to sustain student competitiveness in a highly competitive job market.

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.

Faculty members maintain membership in a variety of professional organizations and are speakers at professional gatherings on and off campus. In 2009, the department adopted a Policy of Research and Community Service that directs faculty to be involved in activities fostering professional strengthening of the Communications industry and mass media and to provide advice to governmental and other institutions considering telecommunication issues.

The department relies primarily on postings on the university's website and on social media such as Facebook for communicating with alumni. The self-study says that alumni often gather information about events, conferences, social activities and department changes via the university's Facebook page and via two additional Facebook pages kept by the department. The department also turns to three unofficial social engagement sites to provide information to alumni and to drive them to the official university and department pages. The department has sought to involve alumni in several types of activities. Judging from enthusiastic alumni response to sporadic initiatives, it appears that a sustained effort to expand and develop relations with alumni might fare well. But group communications with department alumni have been modest, though useful.

Alumni are members of the department's Community Advisory Board, which provides advice and recommendations on administrative and curricular proposals. The advisory group, which includes representatives from communications media and related professions, meets yearly with the unit director and faculty to discuss curricular questions, teaching assessment results and other topics. Alumni responses to these contacts have been encouraging, the unit reports in the self-study. The advisory committee to the nascent UPRA Web Radio also includes alumni radio professionals.

When the department has reached out to them, alumni have responded. An evening celebration to honor the program's first production class attracted some 200 alumni to the gala event. When alumni were invited to participate in Communication Week, more than a dozen prominent alumni were individual speakers. During the site team's visit, alumni now prominent in Puerto Rican media organizations came to campus at mid-day to lavish praise on the program and its students. Alumni are active with the department in providing links to practicum training opportunities, internships, and other opportunities for students to work off-campus supervised by professionals.

At the time of the site visit, the department had no current postal or e-mail list of alumni, and no ongoing effort to maintain sustained direct communication with alumni who could provide advisory, inspirational or financial support to the program. Discussions about launching an alumni association have not brought tangible results, but the department says the goal remains on its list of plans.

(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 annual Communication Week, fostered by the department and by all accounts well-coordinated by students, has drawn to the campus a range of speakers and panelists. In recent years, individual faculty members have served as judges in script writing festivals, design and installation exhibits, film festivals, television awards committees and cultural, journalistic and media activities.

Public service examples highlighted by the department also show a faculty engaged in a wide swath of community activities, in many instances with a particular emphasis on highlighting and addressing social and health issues such as domestic violence against women and discrimination based on gender, age or sexual orientation.

Faculty members participate as speakers in the Puerto Rico Radio Show and other seminars of the Puerto Rico Radio Broadcasters Association. The association's former president, an executive whose communications firm operates several radio stations, noted that faculty have participated in radio programs "to inform the community about communications and its impact on society." He gives the department faculty high marks for focusing attention on communications issues.

(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 members in the department are active participants, with the unit's support, in a wide range of professional and academic organizations. Virtually every faculty member belongs to the Puerto Rican Association of Communication Programs, and several belong to the International Association of Media and Communication Research, the Latin American Federation of Social Communication and the university's faculty association. Others belong to organizations in their area of teaching and research, including the International Association of Photography, the Directors Guild of America and the Teacher Club of the Contemporary Art Museum. Faculty also frequently participate in conferences and meetings staged by other scholastic or professional organizations.

(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.

Service projects constitute an area of programmatic strength, faculty pride and strong student participation in the department. Besides the activities described above, faculty members are active in civic activities, as committee chairs, researchers, speakers, and media presenters related to ways in which mass communication can serve communities by bringing attention to festering social issues and helping communities explore responses and solutions.

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

The department pursues initiatives that support scholastic communication. It participates in the Association of Academic Programs of Communication of Puerto Rico (APPAC) and the Latin American Federation of Academic Programs of Social Communications, both of which promote inter-university festivals and the discussion of issues related to the teaching of communication. The department's director was president of APPAC for seven years, ending a second consecutive term in 2012. The department also offers production advice and equipment to a local intermediate school with which it has an ongoing association.

Professors who teach journalism courses are frequent speakers at high school journalism organizations and classrooms in the northern region of Puerto Rico, where the university is located. A department professor is part of an initiative by the Puerto Rico Department of Education, which offers a creative strategy using photography and video to support students in mathematics, Spanish and English courses.

Summary

The department faculty's commitment to public service extends from classroom projects to support for student-run organizations that pursue community-minded special projects, to participation in professional organizations. It's a commitment that inspires students to be active outside of class and that takes faculty not only to the customary professional conferences and peer meetings but also to public gatherings where social concerns are voiced and discussed. From time to time, the department gets glimpses of strong allegiance and goodwill from alumni, but it has yet to harvest the alumni support that a concerted outreach campaign is likely to bring.

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.

The department has a serious and systematic approach to assessing student learning. The approach begins by establishing eight areas of assessment: 1. Media and professions, 2. Visual images and information, 3. Research, 4. Communication technologies, 5. Legal and ethical aspects, 6. Writing, 7. Audio and video production, and 8. Diversity in mass media.

The department then aligns ACEJMC’s values and competencies with these eight overarching areas and with the university’s General Education Policy, leading to 18 specific student learning outcomes. For example, one student learning outcome is to develop the capacity for analysis of events and synthesis to process information in diverse communication media. Other learning outcomes are to master oral and written Spanish and to adequately manage oral and written English.

The department’s assessment program incorporates the wording of 11 of the 12 ACEJMC values and competencies. It does not include the adoption several years ago of separate statements regarding diversity, one dealing with domestic society and the other about global society.

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

The department adopted its current assessment plan in 2008 following a visit by ACEJMC representatives, and the plan contains a sophisticated assortment of direct and indirect measures.

Direct measures include a pre- and post-test, student portfolio evaluation in the Practicum course, and various approaches to course-embedded assessment. Indirect measures are survey-based, such as a survey of Practicum students about their professional work experiences and a survey of graduating seniors.

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

The department uses social networks such as Facebook (which is highly popular in Puerto Rico) to maintain contact with its alumni and organizes occasional alumni activities. A number of alumni return to campus as guest speakers in classes and interact with the department in other ways. About a dozen alumni who are current professionals attended a luncheon with the site team and praised the unit’s academic quality. They said Communication students are known to be hardworking, creative and self-starters, and two 2012 graduates said they were well-prepared to embark on their careers.

The site team contacted dozens of alumni in advance of the campus visit, and those responses also showed strong support and enthusiasm for the department. One alumnus working in the broadcast industry in Miami said the department shows “exceptional and outstanding” attention to its students and that the faculty provides valuable support in the job-search process and during their careers.

The university itself conducts alumni surveys, by major, to assess perceptions and satisfaction levels with UPR-Arecibo. The university's Office of Planning and Institutional Research recently used an electronic survey format that generated a less-than-robust response rate that prevented analysis of a representative sample of Communications graduates.

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

The primary mechanism for the involvement of communication professionals in the assessment process is the senior-year Practicum course, described in detail below. Students work 150 hours in a communication setting under the supervision of a professional, and the professional evaluates both the quality of student work and student characteristics such as punctuality, enthusiasm and time management. A full-time faculty member teaches the course and visits the worksite to gather input from the professional about student skills and abilities.

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

The department collects and analyzes assessment data that it then uses to improve curriculum and instruction.

One direct measure is the pre- and post-test given to entering students and to graduating seniors. Like many such exams, the department considers this an imperfect assessment tool, but a number of questions reflect considerable student learning from program start to completion. For instance, a technical question about sound fading was correctly answered by 25% of entering students and 91% of seniors, and a conceptual question about the application of copyright law was correctly answered by 58% of entering students and 95% of seniors. Some questions are duds that need to be rewritten. A question about media ethics offered so many appealing choices that entering students marked the correct answer more frequently than seniors. Overall results of the exam (with five possible responses suggesting a 20% correct response rate simply by random choice) showed a cumulative 42% correct response rate by entering students and 83% correct response rate by seniors. The current pre- and post-test is 25 questions. Initially, the unit created a much longer version that often took students up to two hours to complete, and the department found that entering students in particular became disengaged.

Another direct measure is the student portfolio in the Practicum course, which requires students to work 150 hours in the designated communications workplace (radio or television station, magazine, production company, public relations agency, and so on). The portfolio contains an analysis of the organization, an interview with the supervisor, a reflective diary, work samples for each Practicum objective as determined by the student, a student self-assessment, and a student presentation of the work experience at the end. In addition, all Practicum students attend at least 15 hours of seminars during the semester on topics such as strategies for the job search, how to apply to graduate schools, the basics of self-entrepreneurship in media, and workshops through professional organizations (e.g., the local chapter of the Association of Journalists in Puerto Rico might do a workshop on ethics). The department needs to standardize its portfolio rubrics in order to see collective trends to guide the analysis of student learning across the full program.

Results from these two direct measures, course-embedded assessments and surveys are reported across the department's eight areas of assessment. To cite one area, the assessment of writing currently relies on two strategies: an evaluation of student essays in Spanish by faculty in the Department of Spanish (which showed sufficient proficiency) and an evaluation of student radio news portfolios by faculty in the Department of Tele-Radial Communication (which showed that almost all students can identify story elements and apply formats correctly, but four in 10 students had weaknesses in language skills, including an average of 2.3 misspellings per radio story). Next, the department plans to make a writing test in English as part of the post-test for seniors.

The department offers 10 examples of using assessment data to improve curriculum and instruction. Here are four examples cited by the department:

- Results from the post-test and the senior survey, reflecting limited student knowledge of fundamental legal aspects, were the impetus for making Ethical and Legal Aspects of Television and Radio Communication a required course instead of an elective.
- Course-embedded assessment in the Broadcast Journalism course showed that students were not proficient in the use of natural sound in radio and television stories. The result is that the topic was given greater priority in the course.
- Alumni surveys and conversations with alumni showed that the high level of unemployment in Puerto Rico limits employment possibilities for Communications students and that an increasing number of alumni have launched their own enterprises. The curricular result is that the faculty modified the learning competencies to include a new skill of entrepreneurship in media, with this as a theme in designated courses and included in the list of workshops for Practicum students.
- Some of the examples are listed as “in progress.” One illustration is that assessment has shown a need to improve undergraduate research strategies, and the department's Curriculum Committee is considering adding a course on research methods.

Finally, the department had intended to have cohort assessment data in the self-study, but could not for a simple reason: It began cohort analysis with the entering freshman class four years ago, and most of those students are taking five years to graduate. (ACEJMC site team conversations with students showed that many work part time, or changed majors, leading to a five-year graduation plan.) The addition of cohort analysis will add greater depth to the department's assessment process.

Summary

Assessment of student learning is conducted using both direct and indirect measures, and the department analyzes results and seeks to improve curriculum and instruction through their application. While the university needs to improve its ability to have an alumni survey with reportable results and the department lists a number of curricular improvements as “in progress” rather than completed, the unit clearly takes assessment seriously and operates a sophisticated assessment program.

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS

- ❖ A dedicated, involved, accessible and animated faculty and staff with a heart for working with students
- ❖ Students with a remarkable enthusiasm for their educational opportunities
- ❖ Effective department director who listens to faculty and has the confidence of those above
- ❖ A shared vision for public service that fosters collaboration and a common sense of purpose exemplified through course projects for the public good
- ❖ An uncommonly flexible attitude among students stretches limited resources such as equipment
- ❖ A Practicum course that serves as an excellent launching pad for seniors into the professions

WEAKNESSES

- ❖ A need to upgrade studios to high-definition and keep upgrading equipment to stay abreast of increasingly higher technology standards
- ❖ A need to provide students greater access to facilities throughout the day
- ❖ All faculty members need a computer in their offices for professional work
- ❖ A 4-4 teaching assignment makes it difficult to focus on scholarly and creative pursuits
- ❖ A need for greater faculty expertise in graphic design and multimedia

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

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

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

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

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.

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 self-study was originally written in Spanish and translated into the English version sent to the site team. Considering this was a translated document, it read remarkably well. A number of supporting documents awaited the site team upon arrival, and most of those were in Spanish, but the faculty were helpful in providing spot translation.