

# Report of On-Site Evaluation

## ACEJMC

### Undergraduate program

2012– 2013

Name of Institution: Washington and Lee University  
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Kenneth P. Ruscio, president

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism and Mass Communications  
Name and Title of Administrator: Pam Luecke, head

Date of 2012 - 2013 Accrediting Visit: Oct. 28-31, 2012

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit Feb. 11-14, 2007

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Accreditation

Recommendation by 2012 - 2013 Visiting Team: Re-accreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

#### **Team Chair**

Name and Title: Jerry Ceppos  
Organization/School: Manship School of Mass Communication, LSU

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

#### **Team Members**

Name and Title: Dorothy Bland  
Organization/School: Florida A&M University

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

Name and Title: John Cochran  
Organization/School: \_\_\_\_\_

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

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: **Washington and Lee University**  
Name of Unit: **Department of Journalism and Mass Communications**  
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.

**“ In 1749, Scots-Irish pioneers who had migrated deep into the Valley of Virginia founded a small classical school called Augusta Academy, some 20 miles north of what is now Lexington. In 1776, the trustees, fired by patriotism, changed the name of the school to Liberty Hall. Four years later the school was moved to the vicinity of Lexington, where in 1782 it was chartered as Liberty Hall Academy by the Virginia legislature and empowered to grant degrees. A limestone building, erected in 1793 on the crest of a ridge overlooking Lexington, burned in 1803, though its ruins are preserved today as a symbol of the institution's honored past.” (Washington and Lee Catalog, Page 5)**

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? **1948**

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

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 12 weeks  
Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
Summer sessions of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
Intersessions of 4 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

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

**113 semester hours**

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

**Students in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications may earn no more than three semester-hours for internship experience.**

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

Person in Charge

**Journalism**

**Brian Richardson**

**Business Journalism**

**Pam Luecke**

**Mass Communications**

**Claudette Artwick, Dayo Abah**

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

**1838 (fall 2012)**

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

**Journalism**

**25**

**Business-journalism**

**5**

**Communications**

**29**

**Pre-majors\***

**--**

**Total majors**

**59**

**Total minors**

**10**

*\* W&L students do not declare a major until the end of winter term their sophomore year and may declare or change majors until midway through their senior year. The above numbers are declared juniors and seniors (Classes of 2013 and 2014).*

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. Attach separate pages if necessary.

		Winter 2012	Spring 2012	Fall 2012
J 201	Introduction to Reporting	14		16
J201	Introduction to Reporting – Section 2	15		
J 202	Introduction to Digital Journalism	2		9
J253	Reporting for Print and Online	10		2
J 263	Reporting for Broadcast and Online	4		1
J 351	Editing for Print and Online	10		
J 362	Producing for Broadcast and Online	3		3
J 356	In-Depth Reporting		16	
J280	Covering Courts and the Law	2		12
J372	Reporting on the Economy	16		
J371	Reporting on Business			16

15. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2012 – 2013 academic year:

**\$118,285, excluding salaries and spending from endowed accounts.**

Percentage increase or decrease in three years: **+5%**

Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

**As a private institution, Washington and Lee does not make public its faculty or staff salaries. The dean of the College will be happy to address any salary questions from the team when they meet in person.**

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.)

<b>Dayo O.L. Abah</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>
<b>Claudette G. Artwick</b>	<b>Associate Professor (on sabbatical, fall 2012)</b>
<b>Douglas O. Cumming</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>
<b>Robert J. de Maria</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Toni Locy</b>	<b>Term Professor (unranked)</b>
<b>Pamela K. Luecke</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Brian E. Richardson</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Edward J. Wasserman</b>	<b>Professor</b>

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. (If your school has its accreditation visit in 2013, please provide an updated list at the time of the visit.)

**No adjunct faculty are teaching in Fall 2012 and none taught in Spring 2012. One part-time faculty member taught in Winter 2012: Dow Smith. Phylissa Mitchell is a visiting professor in 2012-13.**

**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	26	22	85%	26	100%
2010-2011 academic year	22	17	77%	21	95%

*Note: Because the university has lowered its graduation requirements to 113 credits, the department requests a waiver of the 80-credit rule. We provide below the data on graduates who have met a level that represents a similar percentage to that required of programs at universities where 120 credits are required for graduation. See the end of this section for the department head's waiver request and the response from the executive director of ACEJMC.*

Year	Total Graduates	72 or more semester hours outside the major		74 or more semester hours outside the major	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2011-2012 academic year	26	26	100%	25	96%
2010-2011 academic year	22	22	100%	21	95%

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 unit's strategic plan includes a mission statement and nine detailed goals, all of which are fleshed out with detailed plans. The overarching goals of the plan are keeping pace with industry changes, enriching student learning and faculty development and strengthening relationships with constituencies outside the department. Of particular interest are the number of mentions of ethical principles, a core value that clearly guides the unit and the university. The existence of a Knight Chair in Journalism Ethics, a university-wide honor code, a new university ethics center funded by a \$4 million grant from Roger Mudd (a W&L grad but not in journalism) and developed with help from the journalism department and a long-running Ethics Institute reinforce the role of ethical behavior in the department and the university.

The plan notes how unusual this unit is: "the nation's only accredited journalism and mass communications program in a highly competitive liberal arts college." Like everything else at Washington and Lee, the journalism program oozes history. A plaque in the lobby of the journalism building, Reid Hall, says that this was the nation's first journalism program, dating back to the presidency of Robert E. Lee just after the Civil War ended.

The administrative structure is of interest: The faculty and the unit head report to the dean of the college, who describes the role of the department head as the person who makes things work. The department head is not a traditional manager (despite her years of managerial experience in the newspaper industry); for example, she does not know how much faculty members earn. However, she is universally admired. Her last evaluation by the faculty said that her colleagues "like, respect and appreciate you and your terrific leadership. And we are deeply grateful." Likewise, the dean and leaders from other departments point out that the chair was elected to the President's Advisory Committee, which oversees tenure and promotion recommendations. They cite that as an example of the respect that exists for the chair and the department.

The department is preparing for a series of retirements and other departures over the next three years, similar to a series of departures and hires 10 years ago.

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

The unit has such policies but faculty governance would prevail even without them because the department head is not viewed as, in the words of one faculty member, a "boss." When asked who comes up with the vision for the department in the absence of a "boss," the dean said, "It's collaborative."

**(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 head appears to be universally respected inside and outside of the department.

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

The dean of the college appoints the department head to a four-year term, renewable for an additional three years after consultation with the faculty. The prior head served from 2003 to 2010.

The current department head was appointed in July 2010; her term is to expire in June 2014.

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

Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to take complaints or concerns to the individual. IF that is impossible, the department head will adjudicate. If the complaint is about the department head, the complainant may go straight to the dean. If the person approaches the department head, the department head will notify the dean.

**Overall evaluation:** COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (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.**

A spot check of several student records from spring 2012 showed that students were taking 80 hours outside the department in liberal arts and sciences. However, the Sept. 28, 2011, letter from Professor Pam Luecke, department head, alerted ACEJMC Executive Director Susanne Shaw that the unit had some students fall short of obtaining the 80 credits outside the major because the university has lowered its graduation requirements from 121 credits to 113, effective with the graduating class of 2010. The provost explained the change was made so that W&L would remain competitive with peer liberal-arts institutions.

With the reduction in total credit hours for graduation being reduced to 113, the number of courses required for graduation is about 36. This was further complicated by the fact that the four-week spring- term immersion courses, most of which are electives, account for four credits rather than the three credit hours awarded for most during the 12-week fall and winter terms.

As a result, W&L requested it be held to a 74/60 standard rather than 80/65. Therefore, students are required to complete at least 74 credit hours outside the major with at least 60 being in liberal arts. The team agrees this is a fair and equitable solution to meet the concept of the ACEJMC standard and the institution's requirement for 113 credit hours for graduation

Note: All students are required to take two years or four semesters of a foreign language. It is important to note that students have access to more than a half-dozen languages, and a significant number select Spanish or French as a second major. The department has an internship relationship with El Nuevo Herald, the Miami Herald's Spanish-language daily.

- (b) The unit provides a good balance between theoretical/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 offers three sequences: journalism, business journalism and mass communication, with 59 declared majors at the time of the site visit. Below is a summary of majors by track during the site visit:

- Journalism =25
- Business journalism = 5
- Mass communication = 29

Students must declare the major during the winter term of their sophomore year but can change or add a major as late as the senior year. Students take both theoretical and conceptual courses as well as skills courses. Students in all three tracks share the following four core courses worth 13 credit hours:

- Jour 101 – Introduction to Mass Communications (3 credit hours)
- Jour 190 – Beyond Google and Wikipedia: Finding and Evaluating Information Sources in the Digital Age (1 credit hour)
- Jour 201 – Introduction to Reporting (3 credit hours)
- Jour 301 – Law and Communications (3 credit hours)

All of the core classes listed in the previous paragraph are offered twice a year during the fall and winter semester.

- \*Jour 344 or Jour 345 – Journalism Ethics or Media Ethics
- \*Journalism and business-journalism students are required to take Jour 344 (Journalism Ethics), and mass-communication students are required to take Jour 345 (Media Ethics). The former focuses on issues arising from the practice of journalism while the latter has a wider scope covering practices including public relations, advertising, documentary film and blogging.

It is important to note that an internship (known as Jour 451, Jour 452 or Jour 453 for at least one and up to three credit hours) is required for journalism and business-journalism students. Although an internship is not required for mass-communication students, an increasing number of mass communications students pursue internships.

Regardless of sequence, all students in the department must take a political science class. Journalism or business-journalism students must take Pol 203 while Mass Communication students may take Pol 100, Pol 105 or Pol 203.

Although there are nearly 50 courses listed in the university catalog under journalism and mass communication, it is important to note they all are not offered every semester and in some cases they are offered only every other year or whenever student enrollment demands it. Generally speaking, regardless of sequence, students take at least 10 courses within the department.

Below is a quick summary of additional requirements for each sequence.

Journalism – Students are required to take the following:

- Jour 202 ( Introduction to Digital Journalism)
- Jour 253 (Reporting for Print Media) or Jour 263 (Reporting for Electronic Media)

Journalism students also must take at least one of the following courses:

- Jour 280 (Covering Courts and the Law)
- Jour 297 (Topics in Public Science)
- Jour 320 (Covering Crime and Justice: A Practicum)
- Jour 371 (Reporting on Business)
- Jour 372 (Reporting on the Economy)
- Students also must take either Jour 351 (Editing for Print and Online Media) or Jour 362 (Producing for Broadcast and Online Media).

If a student chooses to take more, it is a journalism elective.

Business Journalism – Some students and faculty say this sequence is more challenging because students are required to take all that is required in the journalism sequence above, except the

producing and copy editing class. Accounting, economics and four upper-level business or economics classes also are required in this sequence.

Mass Communications – All mass communication students must take Jour 231 (Communication Theory).

Mass communication students also must take one of the following courses:

- Jour 202 (Introduction to Digital Communications)
- Jour 225 (Crisis Communications)
- Jour 232 (Research Methods in Mass Communication)
- Jour 280 (Topics in Public Science)
- Jour 320 (Covering Crime and Justice: A Practicum)
- Jour 351 (Editing for Print and Online Media)
- Jour 357 (Magazine Feature Article Writing)
- Jour 365 (The Broadcast News Magazine)
- Jour 371 (Reporting on Business)

Regardless of sequence, students are required to have a cognate of 12 credit hours at the 200 level or higher from another discipline. If a student has a double major, then the second major becomes the cognate.

There is a wide assortment of about a dozen spring-only immersion classes taught over a four-week period. They are each worth four credit hours and range from (Jour 270) Digital Media and Society, which explores the relationship between technology and social change, to (Jour 241) Media and Poverty: The Poor in Journalism and Film.

A review of syllabi, the competencies grid, class observations plus interviews with faculty and students provide ample evidence that the ACEJMC professional values and competencies are well covered.

Students and faculty alike report that digital communications, research and emerging best practices in social media are increasingly part of the classroom experience across the curriculum.

**(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.)**

The team found solid and engaging classroom instruction in many cases across all sequences, a dedication to undergraduate education and students who overall were extremely pleased with the quality of the education they are receiving. “The professors are why I stay here,” said one student. “They are so knowledgeable and encouraging.” Students and alumni indicated that current instruction was rigorous and demanding.

Faculty indicated they have ongoing discussions and deliberation over how to ensure that the curriculum stays current and relevant. The faculty is reviewing whether to add a persuasive-communication track.

Teaching is a core value. Several of the faculty have been recognized for teaching excellence. For example, Brian Richardson recently was named the Harry E. and Mary Jane W. Redenbaugh Professor for the next three years.

**(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.**

Two strengths of the department are the small class sizes and the interaction that students have with faculty members, who also serve as advisers. Faculty also are often engaged outside the classroom as advisers for student organizations. For example, Doug Cumming serves as the W&L SPJ chapter adviser, and Bob de Maria has served as faculty adviser for WLUR, the campus radio station, and the men's basketball team.

Students shared that faculty members know them by their first names, are accessible via email and some have opened their homes for dinner.

**(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.)**

The department has a strong track record with internship placement and other professional experiences outside the classroom. Students raved about internships ranging from NBC in New York to the Roanoke Times as well as study abroad experience in Italy and Ireland. Interviews with faculty within and outside the unit provided further evidence that students have benefited from collaborations with the Law School and Newseum for field trips and structured learning opportunities in the Washington, D.C., area.

**Overall evaluation: 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 and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan.**

The department updated its diversity plan in March 2011. It deals in comprehensive fashion with virtually all aspects of diversity.

The unit has two standing committees, one of which is Diversity. It monitors progress.

- (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 made such understanding a high priority.

In addition to the four subjects above, faculty in the unit state it important to be sensitive to socio-economic issues and a global perspective. The department aims to do this through advising, course content, visiting professors, outside speakers and its recently re-activated Alumni Advisery Board, four members of which (22 percent) are racial minorities. Students feel that the department makes an effort to broaden their view of people unlike themselves. They remark especially that reporting assignments in the city and county expose them to poverty and rural conditions. The department is careful in its selection of images of women and minorities in its brochures and website.

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

Five, or 55 percent, of nine full-time faculty members are women. Two female faculty members are black. The current department head is a white woman. The department begins each search by trying to have a talented, diverse pool. Faculty members expressed no complaints about the department's actions regarding retention, progress and success.

- (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 university enrolls students from the entire United States but half of its student body comes from Virginia and six other East Coast states. These seven states have a Black/African-American population of 17 percent, Hispanic/Latino of 20 percent, and Asian of 5 percent. In the 2012-13 year, the department's students were 3 percent Black/African-American, 3 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent Asian, 1 percent "other" race, and 2 percent mixed-race. International students of any race comprise 2 percent. The total number of domestic minorities choosing majors in the department is 6, or 10.2 percent. The comparable figure for the university is 10.8 percent.

The failure of the department (and the university) to attract a reasonably diverse student population frustrates administrators. They point to what some regard as intractable problems: the Civil War role of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who is buried on campus, and the remote location of Lexington, a small town that is unattractive to many prospective minority applicants in part because it is known for periodic celebrations of the Confederate legacy.

Regarding General Lee, the university has tried to emphasize his work as a post-war educator rather than his battlefield exploits. The university remained neutral during a recent and successful civic campaign to bar the display of the Confederate flag except on private property. Still, the university knows it has an image problem that is hard to erase. Several administrators and faculty members used the same phrase: "It is what it is."

While administrators admit recruitment of Hispanics/Latinos is disappointing, they contend it is not as bad as the numbers indicate. This, they say, is due to the phenomenon of the "incredible disappearing Hispanic student." Some students regarded as Hispanic when they are recruited choose later to self-identify as "white." Administrators could not provide figures to substantiate this claim.

A major problem for the department is that, under University policy, it is not heavily involved in recruiting. That is primarily the responsibility of the Admissions Office, which recruits domestically and abroad. Only one African-American male student currently majors in journalism or mass communications. When the Admissions Office notifies the department that a prospective minority applicant is on campus and that he/she has an interest in journalism, the head or a faculty member tries to arrange a meeting.

The department also holds journalism workshops for high-school students, and on occasion faculty members make speaking visits, including some to cities outside its service area, such as Chicago. Although the department regards those visits as outreach, not recruiting, they are also used to spread the word to prospective students that the university has attractive journalism and mass-communication programs.

Despite the almost unique obstacles the university faces in recruiting minorities, one problem it does not have is scholarship money. Alumni, especially one, have been generous in that area. The university attempts to go toe to toe with schools it regards as its peers, including those in the Ivy League.

Admissions officials lament that they lose about 40 percent of minority applicants to Harvard, Yale and Princeton. They also find they lose to private schools nearby, such as the University of Richmond.

Some competing schools offer not only generous scholarships but also an urban setting more attractive to minorities and others.

The university and the department note minority recruitment has improved over the past decade. But it seems to have hit a plateau. One suggestion from an administrator outside the department is that the Admissions Office hire not only more recruiters but more minority recruiters who might have greater success than whites have had. At present the admissions office has one mixed-race recruiter. But all this is outside the purview of the department.

However, retention of minorities is the department's responsibility, and it appears to have a good record, comparable to retention of whites.

The department and the university note that scholarship money has resulted in successful recruitment of first-generation college students. Administrators say this has been valuable not only to

those students but has also provided a real-world experience to those whose parents can afford the hefty tuition.

Given the numbers, if the department had primary responsibility for minority recruiting, it would be in non-compliance. But under long-standing university policy that responsibility lies elsewhere, and ACEJMC is not in the business of judging admission offices.

**(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 prides itself on civility and reliance on the student-run Honor System. Journalism majors often have focused on projects concerned with multi-culturalism such as sexual identity and African-American women who succeed in broadcast journalism.

Most students say they find no harassment or discrimination. Old-timers in the department say that as recently as a decade ago, the N-word could occasionally be heard on campus. But no longer.

The university appears to be in compliance with disability laws, and students say they know of special efforts to help those with disabilities.

**Overall evaluation: 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 full-time and part-time faculty.**

The university's faculty handbook defines the process and criteria for selecting and evaluating faculty. The university's handbook also describes the university's requirements and procedures for tenure and promotion, which were last revised in March 2011.

Between the time the self-study was completed in September and the site visit in October 2012, it was announced that Toni Locy, who served three years as the Donald W. Reynolds Professor of Legal Reporting and has more than 25 years of professional experience, has accepted an offer to fill the position to teach multimedia reporting, and a second faculty search is under way to teach a multimedia producing. In the interim, Phyllisa Mitchell, who has more than 20 years of experience as a media professional and more than a decade of teaching experience, is serving as a visiting professor this school year. A search for the next Knight chair will begin in the winter or next fall as Dr. Ed Wasserman will depart at the end of the fall term to become the dean of the journalism school at the University of California, Berkeley.

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

Most full-time faculty have a teaching load of 5.5 per school year, meaning a load of three classes during one 12-week semester, two classes the following 12-week semester and one class during the four-week spring term. The four-week term is typically used for more intensive, immersion classes such as Digital Media and Society or Poverty in Media and Journalism.

The small faculty is blessed with two endowed chairs and has earned high marks for research/creative productivity. Professor Pam Luecke, the department head, also holds the prestigious title of Donald W. Reynolds Professor of Business Journalism. Dr. Ed Wasserman is the Knight Chair in Journalism Ethics (and, as mentioned above, will leave at the end of the fall term).

In 2012 alone, three faculty members have published or have books in the works. For example, Dr. Brian Richardson published online a second edition of his textbook "The Process of Writing News." Professor Toni Locy completed her textbook manuscript titled "Covering America's Courts: A Clash of Rights" to publisher Peter Lang. Professor Claudette Artwick is on leave this semester to work on the second edition of her textbook "Reporting and Producing for Digital Media." Faculty also have been very successful in securing university-sponsored Lenfest grants for summer research projects.

The department has a global reputation for public service and a strong system of student advisement. For example, the Knight Chair in Journalism Ethics has organized the twice-yearly Media Ethics Institutes at W&L since 2003 as well as founded the onpoverty.org website as a resource for journalists.

**(c) Credentials of the university’s faculty represent a good balance of scholarly and professional experience as well as gender and racial diversity. It appears the faculty is taking advantage of faculty development opportunities and building relationships with professional and scholarly organizations.**

Of the nine full-time faculty members on site during the October 2012 visit, five have Ph.D.s, three have master’s degrees and one full-time visiting professor has a J.D. degree. There are five women and four men. The two African-American women, including a Nigeria native, represent 22.22 percent of the faculty.

Faculty members have experience over a range of specialties that include broadcasting news, newspapers, magazines and law. The full-time faculty has more than 150 years of professional experience and more than 135 years of teaching experience.

The department’s culture is one in which faculty members have consistently utilized professional development opportunities to expand their knowledge networks, enhance their teaching skills and research portfolios around the globe for more than a quarter of a century. With university support, faculty members have traveled as far away as South Africa to present conference papers. For example, Dr. Adedayo Ladigbolu Abah presented her paper titled “Whose Internet is it anyway? Anonymity and Personal Privacy Rights in Online Media” at the International Association for Media and Communication Research in Durban, South Africa in July 2012.

Faculty members are involved as leaders, presenters and members in more than 20 professional and academic organizations. These organizations include the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, Online News Association, International Communication Association, Society of Professional Journalists, Investigative Reporters & Editors and the Virginia Coalition for Open Government, to name a few.

**(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using a variety of measures. Student input is part of the evaluation process for each faculty member.**

All courses are evaluated every semester. Per the Faculty Handbook, the university-wide faculty evaluation process focuses on teaching effectiveness, intellectual activity and achievement as well as academic citizenship. Each faculty member completes a Faculty Activities Report on an annual basis. Students also are engaged in the faculty evaluation process using a form of 10 questions that range from asking students to rate whether the professor provided “helpful feedback on assignments” to how well the course was organized.

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

Feedback from other units indicate the journalism faculty are “generous with their time and resources.” Others praise the fact that when speakers ranging from David Carr of The New York Times to Roger Mudd come to campus, the entire campus and community often are invited. Others also praised faculty for their willingness to assist with recruitment and outreach efforts ranging from law school partnerships to the Minority Journalism Workshop. “We are lucky to have Pam Luecke,” said one colleague.

**Overall evaluation: 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.**

Interestingly, the provost specifically told us that teaching is more important than scholarship in promotion and tenure decisions. Despite that, the faculty has produced two scholarly books, one textbook (with one in progress), four book chapters, nine articles in refereed journals, 12 refereed conference papers and so forth in the period studied.

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

The Faculty Handbook clearly spells out expectations, including “general interests that contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the community,” papers presented to professional associations and “consulting work that contributes to intellectual growth.” Those specific references support the contention in the self-study that “both scholarly and creative activities are valued.” More on that below.

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

From the self-study: “Expectations of journalism and mass communications faculty members are identical to those for faculty elsewhere in the University. As it is in music or art, creative activity in journalism and communications is valued as highly as traditional scholarship. The administration understands that the backgrounds and activities of the faculty...are different those in, say, the philosophy department. Administrators support faculty members’ participation in professional activities and output in professional venues—as well as in traditional scholarly ones.”

**(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.**

The self-study has dozens of examples of presentations, publications and other ways of communicating research. The self-study notes that “Washington and Lee has abundant resources to support scholarship, research and creative and professional activity.”

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

The collegiality of the faculty appears to carry through to discussions of the future of journalism, an ethical breach in the news, the demise of grammar or other matters of import. Professors have collaborated on projects and papers and often even talk at lunch in the Rowe Lounge about such issues.

**Overall evaluation: 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.**

Initially, entering students may be assigned advisers from other departments. But when they choose to major in journalism or mass communication, they are assigned an adviser from the department. Students are generally satisfied with the guidance they receive, but there are exceptions. Some students, for example, feel that in their early years they failed to take certain courses that resulted in having to take an extra load in their senior year. The department says that because students are not required to select their majors until the end of their sophomore year, some take more elective courses than advisable. Advising has become more complex recently because the University lowered graduation requirements from 121 to 113 credits. For a detailed look at that change, see above the report on Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.

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

Students were highly pleased with the accessibility of advisers. Some students said they were frankly stunned at the time faculty members devoted to them outside classes. Of course, this is aided by the low student-faculty ratio. No departmental course has more than 25 students. Often there are 10 or fewer students in professional skills courses.

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

Again, students generally give the department high marks. Some students feel advisers could have provided better counsel regarding requirements that affect decisions to take or not take courses within and outside the department. Those students, nevertheless, join others in their praise of the department.

The department website provides extensive information about activities and requirements. When students choose their majors, their email addresses are added to a listserv. The department regularly sends emails regarding speakers, job openings and internships. Regarding activities, students say they are kept up to date, and administrators and faculty members outside the department say it does the best job on campus of publicizing events such as visits from noted speakers.

**(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 department sponsors a student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists whose activities, the department candidly notes, vary depending on the imagination and energy expended by its student leaders. Campus-wide student media include a weekly newspaper, a quarterly magazine, a yearbook, a low-power noncommercial radio station and annual literary and other reviews. These are all independent of faculty or administration supervision. Journalism majors may engage, not for credit, in

these or other activities including the campus newspaper. Faculty members on occasion offer advice which students are free to accept or reject.

Students enrolled in up to four professional skills courses work together to produce the Rockbridge Report website and weekly newscast on the local cable-access channel. Students are encouraged to focus their reporting, not on campus affairs but on the news throughout Rockbridge County. The newscast provides a valuable service as it is the only news program originated in the county. That means local officials take it seriously because taxpayers and voters see it. Students regard this experience as extremely valuable in learning how to deal with sources and in extending coverage to low-income people who rarely have any platform to discuss their problems.

Journalism students occasionally work as stringers for local and regional newspapers as far away as Baltimore. Students in the In-Depth Reporting course produce multimedia series about issues of local importance. The stories are put on the unit's website. A professor who teaches a digital-reporting course enabled the work of her students on home foreclosures to be published in the Lexington News-Gazette.

**(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 unit gathers and analyzes extensive information in trying to improve student services and student success. That information is reflected throughout this on-site evaluation report. For example, over the past six years almost all of the department's majors have graduated in four years. The department head carefully checks graduation applications and degree audits before passing them on to the Registrar's office. The system worked until 2011 when five of 22 graduates did not take 80 credits outside the department. In 2012 four of 26 graduates did not meet the 80-credit rule. This resulted in the department's request, noted elsewhere in this on-site evaluation, to ACEJMC for a waiver.

The department head also tries to evaluate the work of advisers through senior exit surveys and interviews.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long range, strategic plan.**

In the fall the department submits to the Dean of the College capital requests for substantial projects and in early winter submits its operating budget. Two-thirds of the operating budget is targeted for the purchase and maintenance of equipment, software and supplies. These items are in direct support of two key strategic goals: keeping pace with industry changes and advancing student learning and faculty development. Most capital requests also are meant to keep teaching and production spaces up-to-date. On these the unit often works closely with the department of Information Technology Services. Some upgrades come under ITS' campus-wide responsibilities. Others come under the department's purview. Some are shared. Some result in confusion. This can lead to a polite turf fight as happened recently when the department's capital request to further upgrade classrooms was turned down because, the university said, classrooms are not the unit's responsibility. The request may eventually be approved, but on the university's terms and at its pace, even though the classrooms are primarily used by the department.

The department has two other long-range goals with big price tags beyond the scope of the operating budget. One is keeping the legal-reporting position established in 2008 by a grant that will expire in June 2013. So far, the department has not succeeded in finding new grants or gifts for this position. Another strategic goal is upgrading the five classrooms and two labs at the unit's home, Reid Hall. Faculty outside the department uses some classrooms. So, the university claims responsibility for them. As noted above, that resulted in the department getting its hands slapped for trying to accomplish upgrades unilaterally. The unit's technology manager hopes to work this out soon.

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

The department has no complaints and feels it receives its fair share of resources. It does not get every request approved but thinks all requests are seriously considered.

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

Stepping inside the main entrance of Reid Hall, one is immediately struck by its handsome, modern appearance which is burnished by an attractive rendering of the First Amendment on an opposite wall. The hall was gutted, rebuilt and refurbished a decade ago and still has a new feel to it. It houses nine faculty and four staff offices, a visitor's office, four smart classrooms and one white board classroom, two computer/teaching labs, a library, odd nooks and crannies where students study, socialize or sleep, and a video production space including an attractive television studio. Occasionally, classes are taught in other university buildings, but Reid Hall is the department's home even though it shares some classrooms with other departments.

Wireless access is available throughout, as is wired connection to the Internet. The department took part in a university "pilot" in 2011 by swapping traditional desks and chairs in one classroom for one-

piece desks and chairs on casters which were meant to enable professors to alternate easily between lecture format, break-out groups and symposium seating. Four departments tested the classroom. Reviews were mixed.

Faculty members in the unit said they have adequate space. They see themselves as fortunate to have a modern, roomy facility, especially when other departments must contend with much older buildings which have been preserved for historic reasons in an institution where tradition has high place.

**(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.**

It would be difficult to find fault with any of the equipment. Computers, PCs and Macs are available; iPads may be loaned for long periods. The TV studio, editing suite and control room would be the envy of most small-market commercial stations. Students gain editing experience with both Avid and Final Cut X (ten). The TV complex has a centralized video storage array. Video camera kits, audio recorders and still cameras are high quality. Maintenance is not a serious problem. Students are more than satisfied with their access to technical equipment. So are faculty members, although they want and believe they will soon have more “Skype-friendly” classrooms by installing permanently remote-controlled cameras and noise-cancelling microphones. At present a professor must request equipment to conduct a Skype interview.

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

In addition to wireless and wired access in Reid Hall, the university and the department provide remote access for students and faculty on mobile devices through a virtual desktop service. Reid Hall has reading areas including a small library and is located next door to the university library.

**Overall evaluation:** 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.**

For a small department, the unit is engaged to a surprising degree.

In terms of alums, students even cite “the W&L network” as an amazing source of advice, internships and permanent jobs. Alums famous and not so famous work on the reorganized Alumni Advisery Board, speak on campus, attend Homecomings and Reunion weekends and otherwise participate in the life of the school. Among the widely known alums to speak or serve on the advisery board are Roger Mudd (a W&L grad in history), Mike Allen of Politico, Alex S. Jones of the Shorenstein Center and many others. The department also communicates by e-mail with more than 900 alums, 77 percent of its graduates. Alums also receive a periodic newsletter and are featured on the Web site.

The first-floor walls of Reid Hall are festooned with attractive posters advertising dozens of appearances by professionals, alums and otherwise. Among many non-alum speakers in recent years have been Dan Rather, Jayson Blair, Matt Winkler of Bloomberg, Gretchen Morgenson of the New York Times, Christine Brennan of USA Today, Ron Brownstein of the Los Angeles Times, Gerald Seib of the Wall Street Journal and many others.

In addition, a Reynolds Distinguished Visiting Professor comes to Lexington almost every year to teach for one term.

**(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 has the longest-standing journalism ethics program in the country, dating back to the 1970s, when annual Ethics Institutes began. They now are convened twice a year. Over the years, several hundred professionals and virtually all journalism students have attended an institute. The current holder of the Knight Ethics Chair frequently comments on professional standards in his regular Miami Herald column and in presentations. Holders of the Reynolds chair in business journalism and the Reynolds chair in legal reporting (for which funding has stopped, but the chair has been hired as a regular faculty member and will continue to reach legal reporting) offer similar leadership.

**(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.**

Both the university and the department support faculty participation in academic and professional associations. Every faculty member is eligible for a fully paid “dean’s trip” each academic year, and the dean’s office covers costs of attendance at a second conference if the faculty member is an officer of the

association or a presenter. In addition, the department has travel funds that faculty may request for professional meetings and for visits to newspapers and broadcast 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.**

Student journalism focuses on the community, not on the campus. (Some journalism students work on the campus weekly but others expressed disdain for the paper when the site team asked about it.) The Rockbridge Report is a weekly converged Web and cable-TV newscast praised by students even though they complain about how much time it takes. Depending on enrollment, the Rockbridge Report (named for the county in which Lexington is located) is often the largest news-gathering operation in a 50-mile radius. Students also collaborated with the weekly News-Gazette for a home-foreclosure investigation. The paper's publisher praises the quality of the student work. Professors frequently comment on community issues in local media.

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

In most recent years, the department and the Roanoke Times have co-sponsored a Minority Journalism Workshop for high-school students who are interested in journalism. While the workshop clearly helps the participants, it unfortunately does not contribute directly to the minority-student population at W&L, apparently because of the school's tough entrance requirements. Professors participate in the annual conference of the Virginia Association of Journalism Teachers and Advisers/Journalism Education Association. In 2013, the department will host the association's annual summer workshop, bringing 100 students to campus. Faculty also participate in Rockbridge County High School's Career Day. In 2008, the department hosted the two-week Reynolds High School Journalism Workshop, which brought 34 high-school journalism teachers to campus.

**Overall evaluation:** 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.**

Absolutely. The unit is a model for mapping assessment to ACEJMC professional values and competencies. See Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction.

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

The unit’s assessment plan was first adopted in June 2004. It has been revised five times, most recently in September 2011.

Direct assessment measures include pre-tests and post-tests for all majors. Capstone assessments are required for journalism and business-journalism graduating seniors and portfolio assessments were piloted in spring 2012 for mass-communication graduating seniors.

Direct assessment measures include analyzing internship evaluations to discover how employers rate the readiness and effectiveness of graduating seniors and conducting exit surveys and interviews with graduating seniors as well as alumni survey.

Employers consistently said the largely summer internship program is one of the strengths of the program and would “absolutely” hire another W&L intern. During the summer 2012, students were placed in a variety of organizations ranging from NBC in New York to the Oregonian in Portland, and 22 of the 37 student interns received some compensation. Data show that the 37 interns from the summer of 2012 were fairly strong in most categories and showed improvement or stayed the same in 16 of 20 categories. Open responses from employers were glowing in many cases. For example, one employer praised a student for “her diligence, productivity and initiative...beyond any reasonable expectation for an intern.”

When employers were asked what areas the department should stress more in its curriculum, several of the comments focused on digital and social media as well as presentation skills. One employer wrote, “I think it is imperative that college programs prepare students for the versatility required in the current news environment, not only in the scope of job required but tools that are part of today’s 24/7 consumption. Changes must come faster these days in the news business, whether it be the need to use a new distribution platform – or to go in a different direction in how news is researched, played and presented. That being said, I also believe it remains important that journalism students learn bedrocks of the Fourth Estate. Some that come to mind: the basics of the court system; use of sources; accuracy and fairness; as well as how to write a story when it presents itself. Because in today’s world of Twitter and Facebook and blogs and everything else, the power is still in getting stories that matter.” Another employer stressed the importance of developing a “visual eye when writing.”

All interns are required to keep a daily journal during their internship experience, generate a paper, evidence (newspaper clips, video news packages, news releases, etc.) of the work generated and a 10-minute oral presentation to faculty and fellow students. The university president typically sits in on one of the post-internship presentations each fall.

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

An online alumni survey is completed one year after students graduate and occasionally after five years. The majority or 10 of the 14 survey respondents a year after graduation said they were working in journalism or communications, and 85.7 percent of those said they would be a journalism and mass communication major if they had to do it over again. Alumni cited the small classes, attention to detail, Rockbridge Report and hands-on skills among the most valuable experiences. Alumni suggestions for improvement included “more emphasis on posting news in real-time and writing second day stories” as well as more integration of broadcasting and print. Several alumni also expressed interest in public relations and concern that mass-communication majors got shortchanged. “I think that there should be a Public Relations and Advertising major,” wrote one alum. “I felt as though the Journalism and Communications School was only focused on journalism, and that as a Mass Communications major I was looked down upon and thought of as “lazy” for not wanting to pursue a Journalism major.”

The department relies on the Internet and social media to connect with alumni regularly. There are more than 1,300 alumni and friends on the email list for the department, and e-letter updates are sent out four times a year.

Website traffic from January through October showed there were 5,510 unique visitors to the department’s web site in the first nine months of 2012, and 15,803 page views in the same window. In 2011, the unit redesigned its website to include an “alumni spotlight” that is updated once or twice a year. It is an enjoyable read and reflects the fact that the alumni pool is a diverse one and they hold a variety of positions across the globe ranging from Dana Bolden, communications director for the Eurasia and Africa Group of The Coca-Cola Corp. to Jessica Hopper, an associate producer for NBC News Rock Center with Brian Williams.

The unit also taps into university-wide reunions and Homecoming events to engage alumni in improving curriculum and instruction.

During student meetings, students shared that the W&L alumni network is a powerful one and has helped land jobs from the Richmond Times-Dispatch to major media outlets in New York.

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

Professionals are integral to the supervised internship evaluations that the unit analyzes as well as evaluation of projects from the in-depth capstone class.

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

The unit has a systematic approach to assessment and appears to have spread the work load among those who collect data and analyze it. Reporting frequency ranges from annually to every other year.

The faculty has used data from assessment activities to change curriculum. For example, the department started requiring students in the Jour 201 class to take a pre-test for math skills after concerns were raised about quantitative skills lagging verbal skills. In summer 2011, the unit also moved from Dreamweaver to Wordpress as a content management system for the Rockbridge Report.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

PART III: Summary by site visit team

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

Strengths:

- Remarkable student-faculty ratio (nine students to one faculty member university-wide); every professor knows every student.
- Engaged, intelligent, high-achieving students.
- Almost all faculty members boast impressive academic as well as professional credentials. And students recognize that.
- A warm, welcoming building with good equipment, including an HD television operation.
- Ample resources for bringing in speakers, sending faculty to conferences, providing financial aid for students.
- Good diversity of faculty.
- Wide variety of interesting courses for such a small program.

Weaknesses:

- The department suffers from an extremely small number of students of color. For example, two black students, one Asian student and three Latinos were enrolled in 2012-13--out of 59 students. (The department also enrolled five international students.) Faculty and other administrators said the reasons appear to be the university's high admission requirements, high cost (although there is ample financial aid), its centralized recruiting effort (which does not focus on specific disciplines), its image of Robert E. Lee as a hero of the school and its remote location.
- The small size of some classes—occasionally as few as three students—raises questions of sustainability.

**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.**

The previous report carried a note that was to be viewed “as more cautionary for future consideration than serious weaknesses.” The note expressed concern about the small size of some classes. That issue remains—and could become a bigger issue if resources ever are so squeezed that the number of faculty members needs to be reduced.

- 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 clean, easy to read and well organized.