

**Report of On-Site Evaluation  
ACEJMC  
Undergraduate program 2014– 2015**

Name of Institution: **Arkansas State University**

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Tim Hudson, Chancellor**

Name of Unit: **College of Media and Communication**

Name and Title of Administrator: **Brad Rawlins, Dean**

Date of 2014 - 2015 Accrediting Visit: **Jan. 20-23, 2015**

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **Jan. 25-28, 2009**

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: **Reaccreditation**

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: **Reaccreditation**

Recommendation by 2014 - 2015 Visiting Team: **Reaccreditation**

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: **Peter Bhatia**

Organization/School: **Gaylord Visiting Professor of Journalism Ethics, Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University**

Signature 

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**Team Members**

Name and Title: **Mike Fancher**

Organization/School: **Interim Executive Director, Center for Journalistic Innovation and Civic Engagement, University of Oregon, Portland**

Signature 

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Name and Title: **Barbara Hines**

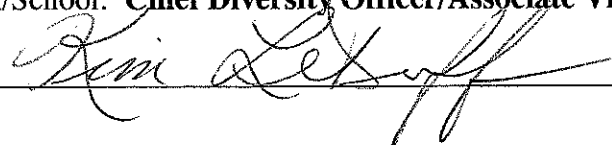
Organization/School: **Professor Emeritus, Howard University School of Communications**

Signature 

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Name and Title: **Kim LeDuff**

Organization/School: **Chief Diversity Officer/Associate Vice Provost, University of West Florida**

Signature 

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## PART I: General Information

**Name of Institution:** Arkansas State University

**Name of Unit:** College of Media and Communication

**Year of Visit:** 2015

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

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

*If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:*

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

Public

**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.**

Arkansas State University “was founded in Jonesboro in 1909 by the Arkansas Legislature as a regional agricultural training school. It began offering a two-year college program in 1918, then became "First District Agricultural and Mechanical College" in 1925. A four-year degree program was begun in 1930, and A & M College became "Arkansas State College" in 1933. The Arkansas Legislature elevated the college to university status and changed the name to Arkansas State University in 1967”

—2013-2014 Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 18.

**4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?**

Yes

**If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit:** January 25-28, 2009

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

1978

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

**Arkansas State University  
College of Media & Communication  
Mission Statement**

**Mission**

The College of Media & Communication provides students with an education that enables them to gather, organize, synthesize and communicate information professionally in a democratic, multicultural society.

Our students learn to think critically and communicate effectively, providing them with the intellectual flexibility to perform the jobs of today and to assume leadership in meeting the challenges of tomorrow.

Specifically, we focus our learning on the following outcomes:

**THINK**

We promote problem solving by enhancing students' ability to:

1. think critically, creatively and independently;
2. think analytically by conducting research and evaluating information using appropriate methods, including applying basic numerical and statistical concepts;
3. understand and respect others in a diverse and global society, which includes diversity of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and national origin.
4. understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of messages, images and information;

**COMMUNICATE**

We promote strong communication skills by demanding students:

5. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
6. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
7. apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world;
8. communicate effectively using words and images for multiple platforms, ranging from interpersonal communication to digital media.

**BE PROFESSIONAL**

We promote professional conduct and integrity by requiring that students:

9. understand the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press and how they are applied nationally and internationally;
10. understand the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

Graduate students will acquire the knowledge and skills to prepare themselves for communications leadership in the profession or the academy. They will be able:

1. To apply theories of communications to problems of today;
2. To apply principles of research to problems and issues in communications;

3. To evaluate critically the role of media and their performance in a global, multicultural environment.

Faculty members will assist students in achieving these goals through effective teaching, mentoring and advising – activities that require them to maintain a high level of academic and intellectual vitality by:

1. Participating regularly in activities contributing to the body of scholarly and professional knowledge in communications.
2. Maintaining an active program in academic and professional development.
3. Assisting public, professional and academic groups in solving communications problems.
4. Promoting the development and enhancement of communications programs in high schools and community colleges.
5. Engaging in continuing systematic review and self-critique of teaching, scholarship and service.

\*This statement represents a refinement of the college's continuing mission. The statement was revised in 1993, revised again during 1998 and 2000 and updated in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2014.

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

Semesters of 15 weeks  
Summer sessions of 5 weeks  
Intersessions of 2 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

## **9. List the specific degrees being reviewed by ACEJMC. \*Indicate online degrees.**

Bachelor of Science in one of the following degree programs:

- Creative Media Production
- Multimedia Journalism
- Strategic Communication

## **10. Give the number of credit hours required by the university for graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.**

120 credit hours for Bachelor's of Science

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

3 semester hours

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

<b>Name of Sequence or Specialty</b>	<b>Person in Charge</b>
Audio Video Production (Creative Media Production)	Osa' Amienyi
Narrative Media (Creative Media Production)	Osa' Amienyi
Sports Production (Creative Media Production)	Osa' Amienyi
Graphic Communication (Creative Media Production)	Osa' Amienyi
Broadcast Journalism (Multimedia Journalism)	Osa' Amienyi
News Editorial (Multimedia Journalism)	Osa' Amienyi
Photojournalism (Multimedia Journalism)	Osa' Amienyi
Sports Reporting (Multimedia Journalism)	Osa' Amienyi
Advertising (Strategic Communication)	Marceline Hayes
Public Relations (Strategic Communication)	Marceline Hayes

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

13,135 (Fall 2014)

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

Numbers as reported in Table 1 (at the end of 2013-2014 AY).

<b>Name of Sequence or Specialty</b>	<b>Undergraduate majors</b>
Audio Video Production (Creative Media Production)	46
Narrative Media (Creative Media Production)	13
Sports Production (Creative Media Production)	7
Graphic Communication (Creative Media Production)	34
Broadcast Journalism (Multimedia Journalism)	49
News Editorial (Multimedia Journalism)	14
Photojournalism (Multimedia Journalism)	14
Sports Reporting (Multimedia Journalism)	6
Advertising (Strategic Communication)	15
Public Relations (Strategic Communication)	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>

**15. 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. Include a separate list for online courses.**

Enrollment Numbers for Fall 2014

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>9/3</b>
AD	3033	001	ADVERTISING ELEMENTS AND EXE	10
AD	4003	001	ACCOUNT PLANNING & MGMT	7
AD	4033	001	AD CASES AND CAMPAIGNS	5
CMAC	2003	001	MEDIA WRITING	12
CMAC	2003	002	MEDIA WRITING	15
CMAC	2003	003	MEDIA WRITING	16

CMAC	2003	004	MEDIA WRITING	17
CMP	2313	001	MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION	18
CMP	2313	002	MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION	18
CMP/MMJ	3373	001	INTRO TO INTERNET COMM	18
CMP	3403	001	SCREENWRITING NARR MOTION PICS	10
CMP	3503	001	FILM CINEMATOGRAPHY LIGHT EDIT	4
CMP	4303	001	ADV FILMMAKING TECH	8
CMP	4353	001	CORPORATE MEDIA PRODUCTION	12
CMP	4363	001	MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING	9
CMP	4383	001	ADVANCED TELEVISION PRODUCTION	4
CMP	4483	001	BROADCAST GRAPHICS	9
GCOM	1813	002	INTRO TO DIGITAL PUBLISHING	15
GCOM	3603	001	GRAPHIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS	12
GCOM	3673	001	DESKTOP PUB AND PUBLIC DESIGN	15
GCOM	3673	002	DESKTOP PUB AND PUBLIC DESIGN	15
MMJ	2013	001	MULTIMEDIA REPORTING	7
MMJ	3043	001	PHOTOGRAPHY	9
MMJ	3063	001	NEWS EDITING	4
MMJ	3403	001	ELECTRONIC NEWS GATHERING	7
MMJ	4343	001	NEWS PROD AND PERFORMANCE	5
MMJ	4573	001	SPORTSCASTING	11
PR	3013	001	PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS TECHNIQ	6
PRAD	3143	001	STRATEGIC WRITING	10

## Enrollment Numbers for Spring 2015

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>1/14</b>
AD	4003	001	ACCOUNT PLANNING AND MGMT	15
AD	4033	001	ADVERT CASE STUDIES AND CMPNS	9
CMAC	2003	001	MEDIA WRITING	15
CMAC	2003	002	MEDIA WRITING	17
CMAC	2003	003	MEDIA WRITING	11
CMAC	2003	004	MEDIA WRITING	18
CMP	2313	001	MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION	6
CMP	2313	002	MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION	18
CMP	3313	001	AUDIO VIDEO PRODUCTION	7
CMP	3343	001	ADVANCED AUDIO PRODUCTION	3
CMP/MMJ	3373	001	INTRO TO INTERNET COMM	17
CMP	3503	001	FILM CINEMATOGRAPHY LIGHT EDIT	6
CMP	3573	001	SPORTS PRODUCTION	5
CMP	3673	001	SEMINAR IN DIGITAL MED & DEST	9
CMP	4363	001	MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING	17
CMP	4383	001	ADVANCED TELEVISION PRODUCTION	3
CMP	4563	001	SPORTS PROGRAMMING	7
GCOM	2673	001	DIGITAL PREPRESS WF AND FILE C	13
GCOM	3673	001	DESKTOP PUB AND PUBLIC DESIGN	13
GCOM	3673	002	DESKTOP PUB AND PUBLIC DESIGN	15
MMJ	2013	001	MULTIMEDIA REPORTING	17
MMJ	3043	001	PHOTOGRAPHY	10
MMJ	3053	001	SPORTS REPORTING	5
MMJ	3073	001	NEWS DESIGN	13
MMJ	3093	001	INTERMED PHOTOJOURNALISM	3
MMJ	3203	001	REPORTING FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA	5
MMJ	3403	001	ELECTRONIC NEWS GATHERING	4
MMJ	4053	001	ADVANCED REPORTING	4
MMJ	4343	001	NEWS PROD AND PERFORMANCE	6
PR	3013	001	PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS TECHNIQ	12
PR	4013	001	PR PRACTICUM AND PROF DEV	4
PR	4033	001	PUB REL CASE STUDIES AND CAMP	13
PRAD	3143	001	STRATEGIC WRITING	16
PRAD	4213	001	SOCIAL MEDIA IN STRAT COMM	20

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2014 – 2015 academic year:**

2014-15 budget

- \$2,489,030 is the 2014-2015 operating budget for the academic units in the college.
- The college also received \$124,170 from student infrastructure fees to help purchase computers, cameras, printers, and other equipment.
- The college received \$40,000 from the Academic Capital Fund. This fund is rotated to each college every three years.
- The college requested and received \$63,950 off-budget funds to pay for adjunct faculty.
- The provost’s office provided \$5,534 in faculty development funds.
- Course fees bring an additional \$23,635 to pay for supplies used in labs.
- There are two nonacademic units in the college with annual budgets:
  - Print Services has an annual budget of \$320,986
  - KASU Public Radio has an annual budget of \$404,376

2014-2015 planned expenditures for academic units: \$2,646,319

**Percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

2011-12 Annual Operating Budget: \$2,046,575\*

2014-15 Annual Operating Budget: \$2,489,030

\* The dean position and one chair position were vacant

21% increase

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:**

2014-15 full-time faculty salaries (excluding administrators): \$1,166,972.00

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Emphasis</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Amienyi, Osabuohien	Media	Creative Media Prod	Professor, Chair
Bowman, Mike	Media	Creative Media Prod	Assistant Professor
Brown, Alex	Media	Creative Media Prod	Instructor
Combs, Sandra	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Assistant Professor
Doyle, Michael	Media	Creative Media Prod	Instructor, Manager, KASU
Fears, Lillie	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Professor
Fowler, Gilbert	Communication	Strategic Comm	Professor, Director of Graduate Studies
Hall, Holly	Communication	Strategic Comm	Associate Professor
Hill, Myleea	Communication	Strategic Comm	Associate Professor



Langston, Carol	Communication	Strategic Comm	Temporary Full-Time Instructor
Mishra, Pradeep	Media	Creative Media Prod	Instructor, Director of Print Services
Moskal, Lisa	Communication	Strategic Comm	Instructor
Pan, Po-Lin	Communication	Strategic Comm	Associate Professor
Pillow, Collin	Media	Creative Media Prod	Instructor
Pitts, Mary Jackson	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Professor
Rawlins, Brad	Dean's office	Strategic Comm	Professor, Dean
Roberts, Larz	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Instructor
Tait, Gabriel	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Assistant Professor
Thrasher, Bonnie	Media	Multimedia Journalism	Instructor, Adviser to Herald
Zeng, Lily	Media	Creative Media Prod	Associate Professor

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2014. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2014. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2015, please provide the updated list of faculty at time of visit.)**

**Spring 2014**

Anthony Holmes  
 Sharon Knight  
 Chalise Macklin  
 Polly Marshall  
 Renette McCargo

**Fall 2014**

Emily Lard  
 Polly Marshall  
 Renette McCargo  
 Galen Perkins

**Spring 2015**

Renette McCargo

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

**For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.**

Year	72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications		
	Total Graduates	Number Compliant	Percent
2013-2014 academic year	58	58	100
2012-2013 academic year	60	60	100

## **PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration**

*The policies and practices of the unit ensure that it has an effectively and fairly administered working and learning environment.*

Journalism instruction has been part of the University since the '30s, with its first degree program in 1941. Through various changes, combinations and permutations, the College of Communications dates to 1973 and with revisions to academic programs became the College of Media and Communication in 2012. It is the only college-level program in these disciplines in the state of Arkansas.

More recently, the College has embarked on curricular overhaul to meet the needs of students entering today's digital marketplace and organized into two departments: Media and Communication. The former is home to programs in Multimedia Journalism and Creative Media Production. The latter includes Strategic Communication and Communication Studies. The College seeks reaccreditation of the former three programs, re-envisioned and restructured as they are.

The College runs the University's public radio station (KASU) and is also home to student media: *The Herald* newspaper and website, the student-run TV station (ASU-TV) and an online radio station (Red Wolf Radio). Interestingly, the College is also the long-time home to ASU Printing Services, the University's printing operation.

The College is one of 10 at A-State (as it is branded) and has a remarkable history of long-time administrators. The current Dean, who has been in Jonesboro since 2012, is only the third since the College was created in 1973.

Arkansas State is the flagship of its system with other campuses, all two-year programs, located around the state. While the main campus in Jonesboro remains regionally focused on its northeast Arkansas location (it is about an hour northwest of Memphis), it is an ambitious university with desires to increase its research capacity and productivity. It has raised admission standards and is building a campus in Queretaro, Mexico (north of Mexico City). University enrollment was about 13,000 in fall 2014. The College had 266 students enrolled in the three undergraduate programs under review and 370 students total, including Communication Studies students and graduate students. It is one of the smaller Colleges (but neither the smallest in student nor faculty numbers) at the University.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan 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.**

It has both and has kept both up to date. The mission statement is built around three major outcomes that map ACEJMC's 12 competencies. They are "think, communicate and be professional." "Think" articulates the College's commitment to building students' critical-thinking abilities as well as their ability to conduct research and understand our increasingly diverse and global society. "Communicate"

focuses on the practice of journalism and strategic communication as well as being able across multiple platforms. “Be Professional” includes freedom of speech and press and the history of communications. The College’s strategic plan for the current academic year – it is revised annually -- includes this vision statement:

*We envision a College of Media & Communication where the brightest minds come together in an innovative learning environment and collaborate on ideas that enhance society’s ability to use communication to:*

- *Understand and appreciate a complex and diverse world*
- *Enrich our relationships in our homes, communities and businesses*
- *Improve the quality of our health, environmental, economic, educational and social situations*

*We will achieve this by recruiting the brightest students and faculty, teaching innovation in state-of-the-art learning spaces, and seeking research grants that advance these goals.*

The strategic plan is both comprehensive and aggressive. It includes three major goals and 17 performance objectives. The goals relate to recruiting, retaining and graduating top students, enriching the learning environment and conducting meaningful research. The enrollment goal, for example, seeks a 10 percent increase by spring 2015. The research goal calls for a 50 percent increase in grant applications.

What follows is the entirety of the second goal on learning. It gives a good illustration of the College’s ambition:

### **1. Provide an innovative and diverse learning environment**

- a. Continue to create a curriculum that is innovative, flexible and nimble
  - i. Use assessment feedback to find areas of improvement
  - ii. Use newly developed advisory boards for insights
- b. Renovate existing classrooms and labs into innovative learning spaces that reflect professional environments rather than classrooms
  - i. Secure funding for these spaces
- c. Online courses and programs
  - i. Create an undergraduate online program in communication studies
  - ii. Create a graduate online program, Masters of Media Management
- d. Interdisciplinary programs
  - i. Explore the possibility for interdisciplinary programs with strong research areas such as health, emergency preparedness, sciences, business and agriculture
  - ii. Develop an interdisciplinary advertising degree with business and graphic design
- e. Continue commitment to diversity of faculty and students in program.
  - i. Recruit undergraduate and graduate students from ethnically diverse regions and HBCUs
  - ii. Recruit international students for undergraduate and graduate programs
  - iii. Provide students with opportunities for understanding diversity, domestically and internationally.
    1. Diversity taught in every class
    2. Increase opportunities for students to learn about diversity
      - a. Exchange programs
      - b. Guest speakers
  - iv. Recruit, retain and advance faculty that contribute to the diversity of the College

1. Increase the proportion of tenured and pre-tenure among faculty positions to 70 percent. Currently at 60%
    - a. Replace instructors with tenure-track faculty as they retire, resign, or are no longer retained
  2. Have a faculty population reflective of the ethnic diversity of the region, which is at least 28%. Currently, 40 % percent of faculty are minority or international in ethnic characteristics
  3. Equal representation of male and female among full-time faculty. Currently, 48% are female
- v. Maintain an appropriate mix of strong professional and strong academic backgrounds for college faculty

The strategic plan is a product of the College's Dean and department chairs. The chairs represented their faculty, collecting needs and interests through the year.

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

While the College could be described as a “strong Dean” system given the longevity of Deans and the current Dean’s aggressive push into the digital future, faculty’s role is important when it comes to curriculum. Policies regarding curriculum and graduation requirements come from departmental curriculum committees, whose members include all faculty in the department. The process goes: department committee to department head, to College Curriculum Committee to the Dean and then the University Curriculum Committee. The College Curriculum Committee was a primary player in the recent overhaul of the curriculum taking goals from the Dean and working through the specifics.

Other college committees include Assessment; Promotion, Retention and Tenure; Student Advisory Council (advises Dean on equipment); Technology; Recruiting; and Graduate. Department-level committees include P, R&T; Faculty Recruiting; and Scholarships.

The College faculty met four times in AY 2013-14. Media faculty met five times; Communication faculty six times. The College’s Leadership Council (chaired by the Dean and including the department chairs, advising coordinator, KASU director and Print Shop manager) met 22 times.

**(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 Dean acknowledges he has pushed hard, maybe a little too hard, in his initial change efforts. The College has long been regarded as one of the strongest at Arkansas State and the Dean aims to keep it there. The curricular overhaul and departmental changes took effect in his first year. He says he backed off some his second year to allow the departmental changes to gain traction and he is pleased with what he sees as the growing spirit of collaboration among faculty within the College. Faculty say the transition was at times traumatic because of the speed at which it happened and the transition from decades-long administrators, but there is almost universal support for the Dean, his efforts and the dedication he has brought to the College. Students expressed no reservations about the change and were grateful to faculty for leading them through the curricular changes and working with them on their class schedule whether they finished on the old curriculum or jumped over to the new one. The Dean used the consolidation of three departments into two to create a Career and Advising Center run by a much respected staff member.

The Provost was strongly supportive of the Dean, crediting him for a “major transformation in a short period of time” and crediting him for positioning the College to be more competitive and to reassert itself as the region’s top program. Outside-the-College academic colleagues and community members expressed strong support for the direction of the program under the Dean.

It is notable that the Dean has been tapped to lead an effort to create an interdisciplinary digital degree program that will include Computer Science, Business and other disciplines from around campus.

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

The process for selection of the Dean follows what would be seen as typical academic process. A search committee would be formed by the Dean for a chair position or by the vice chancellor for academic affairs and research for the Dean’s position. Following vetting of candidates and visits by finalists, the committee makes a recommendation to the administrator overseeing the search. Internal searches would also be handled typically, with interviews of candidates with fellow faculty and with the administrators heading the search.

The Dean is reviewed annually by the vice chancellor for academic affairs and research. The review includes evaluations of the Dean by chairs, College faculty and peers. (The Dean most recently received marks that generally were in the mid- to high-4s on a 5-point scale.) The Dean reviews the chairs annually, using teaching evaluations, faculty evaluations and an annual professional activities report. The Dean may interview faculty for this review.

The reviews are delivered in the spring.

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

There have been no formal complaints requiring use of College or University process during the past six years.

When complaints arise, all effort will be made to resolve the situation informally, typically between student and faculty member. Students may file a formal grievance, which requires the department chair to gather information and to suggest a solution. If the student is unsatisfied with that resolution, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean and the Dean’s decision to a College Grievance Committee. The committee makes a recommendation back to the Dean for a final decision.

Faculty complaints follow a similar process. If a grievance is not resolved within the College, it goes to the head of the University’s Academic Hearing Committee, made up of 21 faculty members. (Tenure and promotion grievances go directly to the committee if the faculty member is not satisfied by a discussion with the vice chancellor for academic affairs and research.)

Grievance procedures for staff require discussion with the immediate supervisor. Formal complaints go to the Department of Human Resources. The Chancellor has final decision-making authority on faculty and staff grievances.

**SUMMARY: The College of Media and Communication has retooled to deal with the changing nature of the media business, ably led by its capable and aggressive Dean. Change hasn’t come**

**easily, but it is in place and settling in, with new curriculum and structure, thanks to the hard work of many, including its dedicated faculty and students who in general are pleased with the opportunities they have at Arkansas State. A quote from a student: “I know I will survive in the real world. I am so prepared.”**

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

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

*The unit provides curriculum and instruction, whether on site or online, that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution.**

The College is in 100 percent compliance with the 72-hour rule.

The college requires 120 hours for graduation and offers Bachelor of Science degrees in Creative Media Production, Multimedia Journalism and Strategic Communication. (The Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies is more traditionally aligned with speech communication and moved from Theater Arts to the college in the 2000-2001 academic year. It is not up for accreditation.)

**(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.**

All students in the college complete Oral Communication, and Mass Communication in Modern Society, to meet general education requirements and two college core courses, Introduction to Visual Communication and Professional Seminar. The three B.S. degrees also have a core of courses that map to ACEJMC's professional values and competencies:

- Media Grammar & Style
- Media Writing
- Communications Law & Ethics
- Communications Research

### CREATIVE MEDIA PRODUCTION

The Creative Media Production prepares students for careers in all aspects of media production. The major shares the same core courses with the other majors. Students in this major then have a choice of four concentration areas:

- Audio/Video Production
- Graphic Communication
- Narrative Media
- Sports Production.

Within this major students take courses such as: multimedia production, audio/visual production, multimedia storytelling, screenwriting for narrative motion pictures, corporate media production, sports production, and film cinematography, lighting and editing. In addition, students are allowed to customize the degree with 6-9 elective credit hours that can be taken within the College, but outside the major. Students are also required to select an 18-24 hour minor outside of the College.

There is a good balance of theoretical and conceptual exploration in the courses in this sequence. Syllabi indicate a number of projects that require students to apply critical thinking as well as technical production skills. In addition there is a strong emphasis on writing and verbal communication



skills across the curriculum. In addition, many of the course syllabi reference the values and competencies as outlined by ACEJMC and explain how they apply within the context of the course and in professional practice.

Students are taught in up-to-date lab environments and learn to use the latest equipment and technology. The College makes an effort to plan and budget in a manner that allows it to remain up-to-date in regards to technology. In addition students are able to get realistic experience working with ASU-TV, *The Herald*, Red Wolf Radio, KASU radio and in Printing Services. While production students appear to participate in external internships less often than other majors, they are very active in opportunities available on campus.

## MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM

The multimedia journalism program prepares students to be working journalists and news practitioners to generate, research, write, and produce newsworthy content across the spectrum of news media. Through hands-on instruction, practical workplace experience and conceptual coursework, students learn how to create and distribute content for print, radio, television, digital, interactive, social and mobile media.

Multimedia journalism is designed to develop news judgment and storytelling skills applicable to a variety of professions and media outlets and talent for performance and teamwork. Students can emphasize studies in one of these areas: Broadcast Journalism, News Editorial, Photojournalism, and Sports Reporting. In addition, students are allowed to customize the degree with 6-9 elective credit hours that can be taken within the College. Students are also required to select an 18-24 hour minor outside of the College.

There is a good balance of theoretical and conceptual exploration in the courses in this sequence. Syllabi indicate students must learn and apply basic theories, procedures and techniques of multimedia journalism. Principles of ethics are taught throughout the sequence.

The shift to a new curriculum has not been without issues for students and faculty. Several multimedia faculty members and the Dean said the reorganization is a work in progress. A primary aim is to avoid redundancies in the teaching of skills across the curriculum. Faculty members expressed confidence in their ability to work cooperatively to make necessary refinements, provided expectations and timelines are clear. The faculty said they have helped each other by learning from each other and undertaking outside training and instruction where necessary. Students said faculty and administrators have supported them as they have worked through changes in curriculum and graduation requirements.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The core of the Strategic Communication program emphasizes strategic planning, effective communication, and knowledge of a variety of media, channels and message strategies. Students gain knowledge of advertising and public relations strategies and techniques and then choose to specialize in either Advertising or Public Relations, with 6-9 credits of their choice of courses in the College to customize their degree. They also have a minor of 18-21 credits taken outside of the College.

### *Advertising*

Students in the advertising emphasis take 16 credits of major requirements ranging from Account Planning & Management to Communication Research, from Strategic Writing to Strategic Visual

Communication. For the emphasis, they take 15 credits focusing on advertising and integrated communication. Included in those courses are: Media Advertising and Sales, and Advertising Case Studies & Campaigns designed to challenge students to think, communicate and be professional.

### ***Public Relations***

Students in the public relations emphasis also take 16 credits of major requirements ranging from Account Planning & Management to Communication Research, from Strategic Writing to Strategic Visual Communication. For the emphasis, they take 15 credits that focus on public relations and integrated communication. Included in those courses are Public Relations Practicum & Professional Development, and Public Relations Case Studies & Campaigns, classes that give students real world experience.

From the introductory courses that provide the historical context for the profession to the advanced courses where professional norms and ethical choices are analyzed, the Strategic Communication courses have been crafted to provide the most up-to-date theoretical and practical information to prepare the students for future success. A majority of students (70 percent public relations, 60 percent advertising) reported they had completed internships. There are chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America and the American Advertising Federation that give students opportunities for professional development, scholarships and employment. Students have traveled to Little Rock and Memphis to meet with industry professionals for mentoring and professional development activities.

During the phase-in of the new curriculum, Strategic Communication students voiced appreciation for the extra assistance faculty and staff had provided to insure they were enrolling and enrolled in the correct courses to keep them on track for graduation. They expressed concern that a course in desktop or digital publishing was no longer required, but plan on using it as one of their electives.

**(c) Instruction, whether onsite or online, is demanding and current; and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.**

### CREATIVE MEDIA PRODUCTION

Instruction is primarily face-to-face. There are no online degrees in the College and only five courses have been offered online at this point (none in this major).

Based on syllabi review, course observations, and interviews with both faculty and students, the College continues to assess the new curriculum and is willing to make changes as necessary. For example, students and faculty noted that they don't see the need to continue to separate Sports Production and Sports Journalism. Many of the same skills and competencies are required for both sequences. As a result those concentrations will likely be combined.

Courses seem to be appropriately rigorous. Students are required to produce a considerable amount of professional quality content. Many of the courses require students to interact with real-world clients. In meeting with constituents across campus and from the surrounding community, it is evident that the contributions by the Dean, faculty, students and staff are truly valued.

Both students and faculty named senior level students and recent graduates who were employed in the field. Practitioners from the community indicated that graduates of this program are indeed ready for entry-level employment and have been quite successful long-term.

Faculty is also encouraged to enter competitions and encourage students to do the same. This allows both faculty and students to determine how the quality of instruction and production stack up when compared with the work of students and faculty from other institutions regionally and nationally. A significant number of these awards are on display in the hallways of the building.

## MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM

The hands-on emphasis of instruction within the multimedia program and the equipment on which students learn meet the professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Employers who met with the site visit team praised the ability of students to do the job when they arrive at internships or full employment. One employer indicated his organization routinely offers full-time employment to former interns when they graduate. Students, likewise, expressed full confidence in their skills and knowledge.

The self-study report listed recent teaching awards and grants for which faculty members have been nominated or have won in recent years. It also listed scholarship and presentations on teaching that several faculty members have undertaken in recent years. In an innovative and cost-effective effort to emphasize the value of teaching and learning, the College in 2014 engaged the Poynter Institute to conduct in-person and Skype workshops on campus for College faculty. The self-study report indicated the following sessions were taught:

- Multimedia in the Classroom
- Rubrics for Multimedia Skills
- Tips for Teaching Critical Thinking
- Showcasing Your Best Work: Online Portfolios
- Writing in an Age of Twitter & SEO
- Ethics in the Digital Age
- Storytelling Across Platforms
- Using Social Media for Reporting and Branding
- Reporting with Simple Multimedia Tools
- The Future is Mobile

Two areas for potential development are storytelling with data/data visualization and interactive/participatory journalism.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Faculty in Strategic Communication classes are challenging students to think critically, think strategically and are providing innovative course content. Because faculty incorporate their scholarship and professional activities into their classes, students are excited about preparing for careers in the field and graduate educational opportunities. In their classes and on their syllabi, they are using the most recent digital applications to solve course and client challenges. Students discussed developing their on-line professional brand in preparation for internships and jobs. While most of the courses are in-class offerings, there are some offered fully online or are web-assisted: Principles of Advertising, Principles of Public Relations, Promotional Writing, and Social Media in Strategic Communication. For advanced courses, the students have an Executive Briefing Room for meetings with and presentations to clients.

**(d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.**

All skills classes meet the requirement.

**(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.**

Internships are not required but are commonplace. More than half of students report having internships in senior exit surveys over the past six years. Students can get up to three credits for internships through an internship class and by completing certain requirements such as meeting a minimum hours-worked threshold, keeping a journal of the experience, submitting a portfolio of work and essay, and completion of an evaluation by the intern's supervisor. A faculty member oversees the intern class and evaluations. The Career and Advising Center tracks and finds potential internships. Professionals from the community who met with the site team expressed great satisfaction with the quality of work produced by the College's interns. One radio executive noted he had hired his three most recent interns to regular positions and then hired three new interns. Faculty members are known to seek out students when they hear of internship opportunities as well as sharing with the Career Center.

**SUMMARY: The College's new structure and curriculum are designed to give its students the latest and best instruction to enable them to be successful in the rapidly changing media world. While the transition did not occur without some complexity, faculty has adjusted and students say they are very pleased with what they learning and how they are learning.**

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

## PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

*The unit has an inclusive program that values domestic and global diversity, and serves and reflects society.*

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 University has a diversity strategic plan and so does the College of Media and Communication. The College's plan was originally written in 1988 and has been consistently updated. The 2014 revision was included in the self-study.

Based on conversations with both faculty and students, it is evident that the plan is being implemented and that the College is consistently working toward improving diversity through the curriculum, faculty composition, and student population. The College reports its findings related to diversity efforts to the Office of Academic Affairs and Research annually.

There is awareness of the importance of diversity at all levels. Members of the community noted how both faculty and students in the College assisted in their efforts to reach and report on diverse communities in the region.

The College was recognized as a "Friend of Diversity" in spring 2014 by the University's Diversity Office. They also received a nod as a 2014 nominee for the Diversity Excellence Award on campus.

**(b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit's curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

There is one elective course (Race, Gender and the Media) in the undergraduate curriculum that is completely dedicated to issues of diversity and inclusion in the media. As part of this course students organize an annual program related to diversity issues in media which is open to the campus community and the public.

As part of their annual evaluation process faculty are required to explain how they incorporate diversity into the curriculum. Excerpts from these reports were included in the self-study. There is some concern that the faculty primarily focus on racial and ethnic diversity in the curriculum and don't put as much emphasis on other issues of diversity (for example, ability, geographic, etc.). The majority of the faculty have gone through "Safe Zone" training conducted by Women & Gender Studies to enhance their awareness and sensitivity of LGBTQ issues. They have "Safe Zone" stickers displayed in their offices.

When asked, students easily defined diversity and explained the importance of their diversity training to their professional goals and experience. There is a sizeable international population on campus which allows students to have useful interaction and discussion about global media. In meetings with

students at least one reported studying abroad. Students noted the benefits of thinking of media from a global perspective.

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

The faculty and staff make-up in the College is the most diverse of any college at Arkansas State. Of the 20 faculty teaching in the accredited programs, 15 are female, minority or of international origin. Of the college's 26 full-time faculty, 19 are female, minority or international. As part of its diversity plan, the College has made an effort to diversify the applicant pool and to consider applicants from underrepresented populations. It notes that in any search at least one minority candidate will be invited to interview.

Leadership and senior faculty are very supportive and encourage minority candidates to seek a terminal degree. There is also state support available for those who choose to seek advanced degrees.

**(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 College has exceeded its goal of 20 percent of the student population being minority. In 2013-2014, 27 percent of students in the College were from racial or ethnic minority groups. This is higher than the percentage of racial or ethnic minorities enrolled at the University or living in the state or the region.

The College has also employed a number of strategies to recruit and enroll students from underrepresented populations. These include: working with admissions to target specific students at recruiting events; assisting female and minority students with finding financial aid and awarding scholarships; developing mentoring relationships with high schools and community colleges that have communication programs; the establishment of a campus chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists.

**(e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, in keeping with the acceptable cultural practices of the population it serves, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.**

The University's website clearly addresses policies on affirmative action, sexual misconduct and grievance procedures. These are also outlined in faculty and student handbooks.

One major concern is the lack of consistency in including a disability statement in the course syllabi within the College. There was also conflicting information in various versions of the statement when included in the syllabi. According to the University's website, there are three disability statement options and at least one should be included in the syllabus of any course so that students may seek proper accommodations as needed.

**SUMMARY: The College has made significant efforts over the years in the area of diversity and in many instances have exceeded its goals. The percentage of racial and ethnic diversity among the faculty and student body is greater than that of the any other College, the University population,**

**the state or the region. The climate within the College is also welcoming and accepting. In talking to both the students and faculty, the environment in the College is described as being “like a family.” They feel included, supported, and well prepared for the profession. Faculty also reported a supportive and collegial environment.**

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

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

*The unit hires, supports and evaluates a capable faculty with a balance of academic and professional credentials appropriate for the unit's mission.*

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.**

Criteria for selecting all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff can be found in the *ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures* (Section II Personnel Policies, pages 38-40). The process begins with the establishment of a search committee, which develops the job description and oversees the selection process. Throughout the process, members of the search committee review the candidates' application packets, developing a list of candidates to recommend to the office of Academic Affairs and Research and Academic Diversity Initiatives. Approved candidates are interviewed through videoconferencing; finalists are invited to campus for interviews with faculty, students and administrative leadership.

The state of Arkansas requires annual performance reviews based on a review of student evaluations and syllabi and annual productivity reports. Each faculty member completes an Annual Report of Professional Activity covering the period January 1 through December 31. It is submitted to the department chair, who uses a merit rating form to award points for productivity. That form, in addition to the student evaluations and a review of syllabi, is part of the evaluation process. The *ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures* includes a guide for evaluating the performance of faculty. Each faculty member receives a letter from the chair detailing strengths and areas of improvement.

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

For the previous three academic years (2011-2014), full-time faculty taught 86.5 percent of the classes. All full-time faculty members have evidence of scholarly, creative/professional activities and achievement, and provide service to campus committees and the Jonesboro community.

**(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.**

Up until this year, most scholarly faculty have received at least one course reduction per year, and the most productive have had a course reduction each semester. This in essence has created a 3/3 teaching load. Teaching loads in the current academic year have risen to 4/4 due to limitations dictated by University financial circumstances. In any case, this faculty has embraced scholarly and professional pursuits. The curriculum, featuring new content and emerging technology, has required them to demonstrate their ability using digital technology across the platforms in media and communication. Many have spent summers in workshops or internships to keep their skills current. They have published and presented their work at local, national and international conferences. Their dedication is evident in their achievements and their students' admiration.

The emphasis at A-State is on quality teaching. With an expectation of teaching four courses each semester and the increasing emphasis on scholarship, this is a faculty of achievers. The Dean has



developed a process (to be approved) where faculty members can apply for a reduced course load; however, budget challenges may not provide him with the flexibility to meet every request. Non-tenure track faculty members generally focus more on professional and creative activities, while tenured and tenure-track faculty are encouraged to focus on scholarly activities.

The faculty have a good balance of professional and scholarly backgrounds, and bring a great deal of experience to the classroom. Faculty average 10 years of professional experience and 16 years of teaching experience.

**(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, whether on site or online, using multiple measures that include student input.**

Students complete a faculty evaluation form for each class. They are reviewed by the department chair and discussed during the annual merit review process. They are also factored in during the promotion and tenure process. The University values the quality of teaching as a primary measure of faculty effectiveness. Faculty members regularly discuss innovations in teaching and creative activities and make suggestions for new approaches in instruction.

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

Both campus and community leaders praised the talent, leadership and dedication of the faculty in the College. This is a faculty that embraces university service; it is evident by their participation on committees ranging from the Faculty Senate to the Academic Advising Council on Excellence, to the Academic Grievance Committee, from the General Education Committee, to the Learning Outcome Assessment Council and Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee. Both their work and the achievements of their graduates are widely respected.

**SUMMARY: In the past six years, faculty members have played a key role in reshaping the curriculum and organization of the College. With retirements during that period, four full-time and one temporary full-time faculty were hired. At the same time, five faculty members were awarded tenure and four faculty members were promoted to associate professor. The hires and promotions have provided excellent depth to the faculty in teaching, scholarship and creative/professional activities. With organizational changes in the College, faculty members have crafted a new promotion and tenure document to look to the future. They are challenged by the prospect of having to teach regularly a 12-credit semester teaching load, which could limit their opportunities to be considered a leading JMC program.**

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

## **PART II — Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity**

*With unit support, faculty members contribute to the advancement of scholarly and professional knowledge and engage in scholarship (research, creative and professional activity) that contributes to their development.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

### **(a) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity.**

There is an expectation for faculty achievement both in written form and in the professional environment. The College's promotion, retention and tenure document sets the research and professional activities criteria for promotion and tenure. An accomplished faculty provide a positive environment in the classroom and through individual student advising. There is an opportunity to apply for tangible support (travel funds, reduced course loads, instructional support) through both the College and the Provost's office. Graduate assistants (11) help provide support for faculty; the Institute for Research and Development provides stipends to encourage faculty to develop grants expertise. There is also a "compensated faculty leave" (sabbatical) option available after six years service without a leave, and "leave without pay." Since the last accreditation visit, one faculty member had an academic leave to conduct research on terrorism coverage in Middle Eastern online media that resulted in a book chapter, presentations at scholarly and professional meetings, and instructional enhancement. Most of the scholarly productive faculty have received course reductions to assist with research and creative works.

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

Each job description details the specific requirements and expectations for faculty. Those expectations are discussed in interviews and on campus; they are detailed in the *ASU Faculty Handbook* explaining faculty members should "Continue to promote the transformation of ASU into a research intensive institution." The College's promotion and tenure document explains the annual review process and the promotion timeline. The terminal degree is required for employment; however the document provides for some flexibility in hiring based on employment and performance experience. This may be used for both tenure track and non-tenure track appointments. There is one tenure-track faculty member who was hired under this criteria.

### **(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 College's promotion, retention and tenure document details the requirements for promotion to associate professor and awarding tenure. All applicants must show outstanding teaching. Additionally, there must be "continuing promise of scholarly, creative or professional productivity" and the document defines continuing promise.

Within the last six years, five faculty members have been tenured and/or promoted. While the language in the College's document is general and embraces flexibility, there is concern about the interpretation and definition of terms used. A new policy that provides more clarity has been adopted by the faculty and is currently under review at the University level.

**(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.**

Since the last site visit, the College faculty members (20) have increased their research, creative and/or professional activity significantly. In numbers: they have received 22 internal and external grants, produced 17 book chapters, published one textbook, written 48 articles in refereed journals, presented 135 refereed conference papers, presented 21 academic papers, published two book reviews, had seven articles in non-refereed publications, completed 31 juried creative works, completed more than 358 non-juried creative works and completed more than 100 other scholarly or creative activities. Their work has received local, national and international acclaim in the academic and professional arenas. It has supported both the College's and University's missions.

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

The new configuration for the College has given faculty the opportunity to stretch their own research interests and work collegially across departments. It is evident in their scholarship and creative activity performance. Enthusiastic students have taken their cue from faculty and confirm the opportunities for teamwork and the search for new ideas.

**SUMMARY: While tenure-track faculty members focus more on research and non tenure-track members focus more on professional activities, all are stellar teachers. They have increasingly embraced the scholarship of teaching and have benefited from the University and the College's interest in promoting scholarship. With the mandate in the Faculty Handbook for faculty to "Continue to promote the transformation of ASU into a research intensive institution," they are increasingly challenged to balance their research/creative activities agenda with teaching and service. With the combined talent of the faculty and strong leadership of the Dean, this is a program that is making bold moves forward.**

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

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

*The unit provides students with the support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.*

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.**

Results of exit surveys on advising from 2009-2014 indicate students feel they have been well advised, that their adviser has provided good assistance in projecting degree completion, that advisers have been readily available for consultation, and remain up to date on the student's academic requirements. Responses of "strongly agree" or "agree" to these questions are consistently near 90 percent.

The College created a Career and Advising Center in 2013 and updated its Advising Plan in 2014.

The center coordinates all advising services and seeks new ways to improve the advising program. Students have access to a full-time professional academic adviser. The advising center helps students register for classes, manage graduation checklists, and helps students meet graduation requirements. The career side of the center provides resources and assistance to help students find internships, jobs and professional mentors.

The Advising Plan delineates responsibilities of students, advisers and the advising center during the advising period, as well as best practices for advisers. All faculty members and the chairs assist with advising and job placement. The advising center maintains advisees' files, which are kept locked in a private office. Advisers also have advising files in their offices and have access to University electronic resources for advising sessions, although some faculty members still are resolving how the activities of the center complement their personal advising roles.

The University's new online credit audit system, CAPP, which was introduced in the fall, has created some confusion for students and faculty. It is believed the system will be an improvement once the system is fully implemented and bugs have been resolved. The advising center works with the central administration and other departments when problems are encountered.

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

By all accounts, advising and being accessible are points of pride among faculty at the College. Faculty advisers mentor students with their academic experience and career preparation.

Students readily shared stories of faculty members reaching out to them to offer guidance and support. Although curriculum changes have caused some confusion for students, students indicated that faculty and the advising center have been helpful and supportive in sorting out graduation requirements.

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

Students learn about the College's activities, requirements and policies through the online ASU Bulletin, group emails to students in specific classes, e-mails to majors via distribution lists, the College website, postings on bulletin boards, announcements in classes and in student professional groups and Blackboard (an online teaching tool used in some classes). *The Herald*, ASU-TV, Red Wolf online radio and KASU-FM also provide periodic information. Some faculty members also use social media such as Facebook to

communicate with students, but greater use of social media could be an effective communication tool, as well as an experiment in emerging communications methods.

The College has installed an electronic information sign in the hallway on the second floor that provides both University and College announcements. The University offers a mobile app to inform students about many aspects of campus life.

**(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.**

Students are wildly enthusiastic about the opportunities for hands-on learning. Student media (ASU-TV, KASU-FM, Red Wolf Radio and *The Herald* newspaper) have offices adjacent to the department areas and have faculty who serve as advisers. They are student-managed and operated and do not carry academic credit. They are not “lab media” per se, but students in classes are encouraged to contribute assignments that may be published or shown on cable.

The College encourages working relationships between student organizations on campus and their companion professional organizations in Little Rock and Memphis. Departments provide financial support for advisers, who are expected to promote networking between students and off-campus groups.

Student organizations are:

- Advertising Federation
- Association for Women in Communications
- National Broadcasting Society
- National Association of Black Journalists
- National Press Photographers Association
- Public Relations Student Society of America
- Society of Professional Journalists
- Undergraduate Student Research Association

Honorary organizations are:

- Lambda Pi Eta, the National Communication Association's official honor society;
- Kappa Tau Alpha, a college honor society that recognizes academic excellence and promotes scholarship in journalism and mass communication;
- Pi Kappa Delta, public speaking and debate honor society;
- Gamma Epsilon Tau, an honor society for graphic artists.

**(e) The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its web site.**

The College reports retention and graduation rates and data in a public accountability report on its website at: <http://www.astate.edu/college/communications/files/Public-Accountability-Report-2014.pdf>

The report includes enrollment, retention rates, degrees conferred and graduation rates, all by degree program.

**SUMMARY: The College meets all of the aspects of the Students Services standard. By all accounts, the College and its faculty make a high priority of providing students with support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study. This is especially praiseworthy given the teaching and scholarly workload that faculty members carry. Two areas deserving attention going forward are successful implementation of the CAPP system and maintaining a complementary relationship between the mission of the Advising Center and the responsibility of faculty members in advising students.**

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

## **PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment**

*The unit plans for, seeks and receives adequate resources to fulfill and sustain its mission.*

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.**

The College has an annual budget which outlines administrative salaries, teaching salaries (full-time and part-time), teaching assistants, staff salaries, equipment and equipment maintenance, supplies, library resources, databases, travel and research.

The College also has a long-range strategic plan that includes plans for the renovation of instructional spaces and it estimates the financial needs in order to complete the plans. There is also a plan for increased fund raising.

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

The College reports that the resources provided by the University “compare favorably” to the resources provided to comparable units on campus. The impact of state-mandated budget reductions in 2008-2009 affected all units on campus, including this College. One-time “new money” was provided to repurpose existing spaces when the College reorganized.

Most of the College’s instructional equipment and lab updates are paid for with infrastructure funds, generated by student fees. Each year approximately \$1 million is distributed across campus. In 2014-15 the College received \$124,170.

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

The College of Media and Communication shares a building with Education. All classrooms, offices, lab spaces, etc. are housed in half of the spacious three-story building. The space also houses KASU-FM, Red Wolf Radio, ASU-TV, *The Herald* and Print Services.

The space is adequate for a unit of this size. All labs and offices have up-to-date computers and equipment. In 2011, all television studios and television production equipment was converted from analog to digital. The long-range strategic plan includes a plan to renovate the current multimedia lab and create a loft that will serve as a social media monitoring center and a digital media lab. Approximately \$500,000 will need to be raised in order to complete the project.

They are also working with ESPN3 to begin streaming major college sports online. In order to do this they will need a production truck which also will cost around \$500,000. They are working with the Athletics Department on this venture.

The College supports faculty development in the form of travel expenses to conferences, trainings, and workshops. Many faculty have been given one course release to accommodate work on research or professional projects. Due to a lack of funding the Provost has required that all faculty have a 4/4

load. The Dean is working with the Provost on a plan to offer release time to at least five faculty members who are working on projects annually. In light of current teaching loads, the faculty remain quite productive in research and professional projects.

**(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.**

Both students and faculty report having access to equipment, lab and classroom spaces as needed. There was some concern among faculty in Strategic Communication who do not have designated audio/video equipment. At busy times of the semester, cameras and equipment are not always readily available to those outside of journalism and production majors.

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

The Dean B. Ellis Library on the campus of Arkansas State provides faculty, students and staff with both physical and online collections. Materials not available in the library can also be requested through interlibrary loan. In the 2013-14 academic year, \$1,814 was allocated for library resources for the College.

There is also a reading room in the building in which the College is housed that has a minimal collection of reference materials and current newspapers and magazines. Students are able to use one of four computer labs to conduct research as well.

**SUMMARY: The College of Media and Communication is housed in an impressive facility that is spacious and meets the current needs of the unit. The College and the University are supportive of both faculty and student needs. Strategic planning has allowed leadership to think about the future needs of the program and they have an ambitious plan to increase fundraising efforts to meet those needs. The College recognizes the importance of keeping facilities and technology current and up-to-date in order to attract and retain the best students and faculty, and to graduate highly competitive media and communication practitioners.**

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



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

*The unit and its faculty advance journalism and mass communications professions, fulfilling obligations to its community, alumni and the greater public.*

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni and is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching, whether on site or online, current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The self-study indicated that relations with alumni are strong but could be improved through more formal communication. The College communicates regularly with alumni through email, letters, an electronic newsletter, the college website, college and department social media and alumni events. The website invites alumni to provide updated information about themselves and their careers. An annual Alumni Seminar and an annual Honors Banquet feature outstanding alumni as speakers. Alumni are frequently brought into classrooms through various speaker and professional-in-residence series. Alumni surveys are conducted every three years. The College started a development board in spring 2014 to help fundraising and development. Alumni have funded several scholarships, projects and a speaker series.

The College's Media & Communication Mentor Program creates mentor relationships between students and professionals and trains both for the engagement. Students, community members and local media attendees all spoke highly of these mentorships when meeting with the site team.

The College hosts meetings of Professional Advisory Boards for each department during which students interact with board members. The self-study listed more than 40 current board members. Board members evaluate student résumés, make interviewing suggestions and provide job leads.

**(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 College appoints specific faculty members to serve as liaisons between the unit and professional organizations in Arkansas and Memphis, such as PRSA, ADFED, etc. The liaisons also serve as advisers to corresponding student groups on campus. Departments pay membership fees and costs of travel and meals for faculty members serving in these roles. Training is readily available for faculty development.

**(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.**

The College expects its faculty to provide leadership on campus and in scholarly and professional organizations. The self-study report included an extensive list of external leadership positions in the past six years. Almost all faculty members have undertaken extensive professional and public service activities.

Faculty members serve in key leadership positions for professional and academic organizations, including, for example, the Arkansas chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, Western Social Sciences Association, the Southern

States Communication Association, the National Association of Black Journalists, the Public Relations Society of America and the College Media Association.

**(d) The unit contributes to its communities through unit-based service projects and events, service learning of its students and civic engagement of its faculty.**

The College provides university outreach through its public radio station (KASU-FM), its student-managed cable television station (ASU-TV), the campus newspaper (*The Herald*), and its student-run online radio station (Red Wolf Radio). Faculty and professionals-in-residence share their expertise with the community in public meetings and as part of the programming for ASU-TV, channel 18 on Jonesboro cable. For example, the College's annual diversity panel begins as a public event and then is replayed as a video event through ASU-TV. The College collaborates with public schools on doing live cable coverage of the annual Craighead County Spelling Bee competition and with KAIT-TV on an annual United Cerebral Palsy Telethon.

The College sponsors or co-sponsors public presentations several times a year, often in collaboration with a University Lecture-Concert Series or other academic units. The College also has co-sponsored speakers with the Multicultural Center and the Honors College. The self-study report included an extensive list of presentations in recent years, with diverse perspectives clearly represented.

A variety of other unit-based broadcast projects contribute to the community. For example:

- “You, Me and the Community” is a 30-minute public affairs program created to showcase non-profit organizations and what they do for the community.
- “Cultura Express” is a public affairs television program examining everyday life from two cultural perspectives.
- Students participate with professional news outlets in various civic affairs program, such as a 2014 gubernatorial debate.

Communications services, such as video and audio production, survey research, publication design, and advertising and public relations campaigns are offered to profit and nonprofit organizations. Most of the upper-level courses require work with clients. These activities may involve service learning for students without a cost to the client, but at times non-profit organizations and small businesses will pay small fees for the service.

Sports production students shoot and produce video content for football, basketball, baseball, volleyball and other sports. The College is working with the Athletic Department to produce future content for ESPN3. Corporate Media Production students take on clients to produce audio, video, digital and online media. The advertising and public relations campaigns courses work with clients to plan and execute communications campaigns.

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

The College conducts an annual Communications Day, the oldest high school competition in the state, now in its 77<sup>th</sup> year. It includes a competition in roughly 20 different categories.

The James Callaway/AT&T faculty fellowship, awarded in 2010, helps promote improvement of high school minority journalists in the Arkansas Delta. Funds from the fellowship have been used primarily to

fund the stipend of a faculty member to mentor underserved youth from the Arkansas Delta in journalism education during the summer months.

Individual faculty members are active in high school and college media associations and conferences. Multimedia Journalism faculty members frequently collaborate with regional high schools to provide consultations and advice. A few recent examples:

One conducted a series of tutorials for high school teachers on how to use the iPad in the classroom. Another served as a guest editor to Nettleton Jr. High for two days to help science students make story pitches and presentations. A third is consulting with Harrisburg High School and working with students on producing an anti-substance abuse video.

**SUMMARY: The College embraces the spirit of this standard and its faculty members actively uphold the all aspects of the standard. This is especially noteworthy given the teaching and scholarly workload faculty members carry. The market value of work faculty and students provide to community and university organizations is substantial. While it is clear this work is deeply appreciated by community and university leaders, its value may not be fully recognized.**

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

## PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

*The unit regularly assesses student learning and applies results to improve curriculum and instruction.*

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 College has adopted a modified version of ACEJMC’s values and competencies for its learning outcomes. It maps via a matrix where the values and competencies appear in the curriculum. The outcomes are stated under the Think, Communicate, Be Professional (known as TCB) learning foundations mentioned earlier in this report. Here is the detail:

### **THINK**

We promote problem solving by enhancing students’ ability to:

- think critically, creatively and independently;
- think analytically by conducting research and evaluating information using appropriate methods, including applying basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- understand and respect others in a diverse and global society, which includes diversity of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and national origin.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of messages, images and information;

### **COMMUNICATE**

We promote strong communication skills by requiring students to:

- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world;
- communicate effectively using words and images for multiple platforms, ranging from interpersonal communication to digital media.

### **BE PROFESSIONAL**

We promote professional conduct and integrity by requiring that students:

- understand the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press and how they are applied nationally and internationally;
- understand the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

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

The assessment process includes use of three direct and two indirect measures.

#### DIRECT:

- Portfolio reviews from capstone courses. Each of the three programs under review have designated courses with final project requirements that are reviewed and evaluated using a rubric by both faculty members and advisory board members. These include student-produced newscasts, videos, stories, photojournalism, desktop publications, films, strategic communication case studies and campaigns.

The number of portfolios reviewed slipped in the last cycle due to confusion over which courses were capstones under the new curriculum, changes to the professional advisory boards and some smaller enrollments. This resulted in some stories from the student newspaper being evaluated as part of the Multimedia Journalism portfolio review. The assessment coordinator in conjunction with the College's assessment team is creating new uniform review systems that will prevent this from happening again and will enable outside reviewers to view the portfolios digitally.

- Results of a Senior Knowledge Inventory. The five-section exam included one unique to the student's area of emphasis and others focused on core skills: law and ethics, media writing, visual communication and oral communication.

Scores from spring 2014 were disappointing in that students overall failed to score above 70 percent. The Assessment Committee is re-examining time of delivery (it was given just before finals and graduation) and whether the questions are properly measuring outcomes.

- Results of internship and practicum supervisor evaluations. In the last cycle, 95 percent of students received "superior" or "very good" ratings.

#### INDIRECT:

- Senior exit surveys: All graduating seniors must complete the survey and submit a resume before they are cleared for graduation. In general, the surveys produce good marks for faculty, equipment availability and general support for the program. They also showed, again generally, that they had learned what is required under ACEJMC's competencies.
- Alumni surveys given annually to graduates from three years past. While not as enthusiastic as contemporary graduates, the surveys generally found strong support for their student experience in the College.

#### **(c) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

There has been substantial use of assessment to update curriculum. Data played a role in the much-discussed curricular overhaul that is central to this report. Exit surveys played a major role in moving visual communication from an elective to a required core course. Advisory board feedback played a role in the combining of print and broadcast journalism into the Multimedia Journalism degree program. Some dissatisfaction with advising noted in senior exit surveys led to the creation of the Advising and Career Center. The online radio station, Red Wolf Radio, was the result of students seeking more opportunities in radio.

**(d) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to provide suggestions for improving curriculum and instruction.**

See professional advisory boards below.

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

Professionals participate in these ways:

- Capstone Project Review – The advisory boards for each of Creative Media Production, Multimedia Journalism and Strategic Communication provide assessments of capstone projects using the same assessment instrument as faculty. Department chairs and faculty also solicit written comments on curriculum and program direction from alumni and media professionals.
- Professional Advisory Boards – Board members meet annually for discussion with administrators, faculty members and students. A member of the advisory board writes a report on their evaluations of student work and the curriculum and shares it with the department chair.
- Evaluations of internships and practicum experiences – Public relations students are required to complete a practicum course that involves work for a community client; they also may do an internship. As noted above, professional supervisors evaluate the performance of students using forms provided by the department's internship or practicum coordinator.

**SUMMARY: There is a strong assessment program in place, led by a dynamic faculty member (he also coaches the College's award-winning debate team) who is dedicated to continuing to build what is already a well-thought-through system. There is more work to be done in making the system more effective, especially in data-gathering, which slipped a bit in the curricular transition.**

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

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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

#### **STRENGTHS:**

- An outstanding Dean who has aggressively implemented change and pushed the College into the world of new media.
- Dedicated and hard-working faculty that, as one person put it, “envelops” the students.
- Students who are grateful for the opportunities to be on the cutting edge of today’s media world and who are engaged in media work across the campus.
- Good student media opportunities, including a paper/website, radio on the web, and TV.
- A spacious building with ample classroom, lab and production opportunities.
- Strong faculty scholarship, especially up against 4-4 teaching loads.

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

- An assessment program that is well-led and well-designed and that “closes the loop” but needs to function more consistently in gleaning information from student work.
- The College does not have adequate support staff for its complex missions and responsibilities.
- Development staffer is shared with three other Colleges, not optimal for a College with aspirations to remodel space to improve teaching and production opportunities.

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

N/A

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

Any ability to address the weaknesses noted above would be a boon to the College.

**4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that must be addressed 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 the 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.**

Weaknesses from the last report and responses cited in the self-study:

- Curriculum updates need to be accelerated to match the rapid changes taking place in the industry.
  - The curriculum has been updated several times to include more digital media, social media and multiplatform news formats. The most significant curriculum changes occurred in 2013-14.
- Lack of resources to make digital conversion for television equipment.
  - Television studio was converted to HD digital in 2011-12.
- Maturing assessment process that does not always show a relationship between data and recommendations.
  - Assessment data is shared with faculty and discussed during department meetings to address areas of need.
- Uncertainty over outcomes of impending leadership transitions within the college.
  - There have been a number of leadership changes over the last six years and only time will allow for stability to overcome the uncertainty.
- Lack of opportunity for audio production and radio news students in Radio-Television.
  - Students have ample opportunities for production with ASU-TV, newly created Red Wolf Radio, sports productions and other services. All of the Creative Media Production students are required to complete professional service hours to get experience.

**7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process. Often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the site visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.**

The self-study was a comprehensive, detailed and coherent document that enabled the site team's work.