

Report of On-Site Evaluation

Name of Institution: University of Wisconsin -- Eau Claire

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Chancellor James Schmidt

Name of Unit: Department of Communication and Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: Mary Hoffman, Ph.D., Department Chair

Date of 2014 - 2015 Accrediting Visit: November 16-19, 2014

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2010

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-Accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-Accreditation

Recommendation by 2014 - 2015 Visiting Team: Provisional Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Jannette L. Dates, Ph.D.

Organization/School: Howard University

Signature Jannette L. Dates

Team Members

Name and Title: Nancy Mitchell, Ph.D.

Organization/School: University of Nebraska- Lincoln

Signature Nancy Mitchell

Name and Title: Marianne Barrett, Ph.D.

Organization/School: Arizona State University

Signature Marianne Barrett

Name and Title:

Organization/School:

Signature _____

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Name of Unit: Department of Communication & Journalism

Year of Visit: 2014

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

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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.

Private

Public

Other (specify)

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

Wisconsin state statutes, Chapter 36, provide the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, as a part of the University of Wisconsin System, authority to provide an education beyond secondary school in the state.

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

Yes

No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: Full visit fall 2008, Re-visit fall 2010

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.

The Department of Communication & Journalism prepares students for successful personal, professional, and civic lives by providing theoretically-grounded academic and experiential learning in communication, journalism, and mass communication. We affirm the key role of these disciplines in creating and maintaining an informed and engaged democratic citizenry and in fostering effective relationships. Approved 8/28/13 as part of Department Strategic Plan.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 15 weeks

Quarters of _____ weeks

Summer sessions of _____ weeks

Intersessions of _____ weeks

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

Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree

Graduate work leading to Master's degree

Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

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

B.A./B.S. in Journalism

B.A./B.S. in Mass Communication (Emphases in Advertising, Public Relations)

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

120 Semester Credit Hours

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

Students may earn a total of 6 credits in internship. 3 in a GEN internship course (these are counted toward the major only in exceptional situations), and 3 in a department internship course. Most students do only one or the other.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
Journalism	Dr. Mike Dorsher
Mass Communication: Advertising	Dr. Won Jang
Mass Communication: Public Relations	Dr. Terry Chmielewski
Most work is done by program faculty as a committee of the whole.	

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

2013-2014 Fact Book lists 10,383 undergraduate students, 519 graduate students. Total FTE 9,857

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):

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate majors
Journalism	87
Advertising	65
Public Relations	118
Total	270

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.

Term	Class Eau	Section	Component	Course Title	Enroll Tot
Spring 2014	CJ 184	001	Lecture	MULTIMEDIA COMM	44*
Spring 2014	CJ 184	002	Lecture	MULTIMEDIA COMM	42*
Spring 2014	CJ 184	310	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Spring 2014	CJ 184	311	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	14

Spring 2014	CJ 184	312	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Spring 2014	CJ 184	320	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Spring 2014	CJ 184	321	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	14
Spring 2014	CJ 184	322	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	13
Spring 2014	CJ 222	001	Lecture	BEGIN JOURNALISM	46*
Spring 2014	CJ 222	310	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	15
Spring 2014	CJ 222	311	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	15
Spring 2014	CJ 222	312	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	16
Spring 2014	CJ 222	313	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	0
Spring 2014	CJ 241	001	Lecture	A/V PROD PROCESS	12
Spring 2014	CJ 241	310	Lab	A/V PROD PROCESS	12
Spring 2014	CJ 321	001	Lecture	INTER JOURNALISM	14
Spring 2014	CJ 321	310	Lab	INTER JOURNALISM	14
Spring 2014	CJ 365	001	Lecture	AD WRITE/DESIGN	15
Spring 2014	CJ 365	310	Lab	AD WRITE/DESIGN	15
Spring 2014	CJ 373	001	Lecture	PUB REL WRITING	9
Spring 2014	CJ 373	002	Lecture	PUB REL WRITING	15
Spring 2014	CJ 373	310	Lab	PUB REL WRITING	9
Spring 2014	CJ 373	320	Lab	PUB REL WRITING	15
Fall 2014	CJ 184	001	Lecture	MULTIMEDIA COMM	46*
Fall 2014	CJ 184	002	Lecture	MULTIMEDIA COMM	45*
Fall 2014	CJ 184	310	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	16
Fall 2014	CJ 184	311	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 184	312	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15

Fall 2014	CJ 184	320	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 184	321	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 184	322	Lab	MULTIMEDIA COMM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 222	001	Lecture	BEGIN JOURNALISM	46*
Fall 2014	CJ 222	310	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 222	311	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	16
Fall 2014	CJ 222	312	Lab	BEGIN JOURNALISM	15
Fall 2014	CJ 241	001	Lecture	A/V PROD PROCESS	13
Fall 2014	CJ 241	310	Lab	A/V PROD PROCESS	13
Fall 2014	CJ 284	001	Lecture	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	15
Fall 2014	CJ 284	310	Lab	INTRO PHOTOGRAPHY	15
Fall 2014	CJ 321	001	Lecture	INTER JOURNALISM	12
Fall 2014	CJ 321	310	Lab	INTER JOURNALISM	12
Fall 2014	CJ 365	001	Lecture	AD WRITE/DESIGN	16
Fall 2014	CJ 365	310	Lab	AD WRITE/DESIGN	16
Fall 2014	CJ 373	001	Lecture	PUB REL WRITING	22*
Fall 2014	CJ 373	310	Lab	PUB REL WRITING	9
Fall 2014	CJ 373	311	Lab	PUB REL WRITING	13
Fall 2014	CJ 426	001	Lecture	ADVANCED TV NEWS	3
Fall 2014	CJ 426	310	Lab	ADVANCED TV NEWS	3

- Indicates courses that are taught in lecture/lab format. Students meet for two hours a week with the faculty member in a larger lecture section, and 2 hours each week in lab sections that usually have fewer than 16 students.

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

\$1,276,607

Percentage increase or decrease in three years:

2014-2015 = increase 13.25% (from 13-14)

2013-2014 = increase 1.28% (from 12-13)

2012-2013 = decrease 8.24% (from 11-12)

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

Full Time Faculty Salaries 14-15 \$993,664

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.

Full-Time Faculty:

Dr. Terrence Chmielewski, Professor

Dr. Michael Dorsher, Associate Professor

Ms. Jan Larson, Associate Professor (on sabbatical leave)

Mr. Jack Kapfer, Associate Professor

Dr. Won Jang, Associate Professor

Ms. Ellen Mahaffy, Associate Professor

Dr. Evan Perrault, Assistant Professor

Dr. Maureen Schriener, Assistant Professor

Dr. Ganga Vadhavkar, Assistant 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 14

Ms. Linda Pophal

Mr. Jason Voiovich

Fall 14

Ms. Linda Pophal

Mr. Jason Voiovich

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.

72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications

Year	Total Graduates	Number	Percent
2013-2014 academic year	<u> 130 </u>	<u> 130 </u>	<u> 100 </u>
2012-2013 academic year	<u> 133 </u>	<u> 133 </u>	<u> 100 </u>

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.

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.**

In 1953, the then Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire first offered a minor in journalism. Since then, various configurations of JMC and communication programs were offered over the years. ACEJMC gave initial accreditation to the unit's journalism major in 1978. After a 1985 site visit, the unit was denied re-accreditation in 1986. The unit received provisional accreditation for the 1986-1987 year. ACEJMC denied accreditation in May 1987 following a revisit to UWEC by an ACEJMC representative. The unit corrected deficiencies and requested a new review. Another review occurred during 1990-1991, and the unit received full accreditation in May 1991. The unit received full re-accreditation in May 1997, and 2003. Following the 2008 site visit, the unit received provisional accreditation, with full accreditation after a revisit two years later.

The unit does not have a strong strategic plan or mission statement. A 1½ page description of activities and tactics cannot be viewed as a visionary plan for the future, particularly when there is no mention of ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies within the plan. Such an inclusion would help the unit stay focused on what is needed for an accredited program to be successful. Such an inclusion would tie in specific UWEC-Department of Communication and Journalism courses that emphasize awareness, understanding and application of the 12 ACEJMC professional values and competencies in terms of targeted goals for the levels of students' attainment in each specific course.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, faculty members are completing curriculum revisions that will converge the curriculum in advertising and public relations, and change the name of the major from "mass communication" to "integrated strategic communication."

The unit has strong support from the University, signified by the retained resources that were allocated to the department despite cuts in other programs across the campus. The provost and dean describe the school as one of the university's strongest. They have high regard for the department chair's leadership and vision.

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

The unit has policies and procedures for faculty governance. All unit faculty staff and support staff meet at least once each month. Unit committees often begin discussions and form recommendations that are made to the unit's faculty/staff as a whole for a vote. University support of shared governance is evidenced by the large number of committee membership opportunities available to the faculty and the high level of participation in them by faculty members and the department chair.

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 unit administrator is the chair of the Department of Communication & Journalism: Dr. Mary Hoffman. The chair reports to the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences: Dr. David Leaman. The dean reports to the provost and associate vice chancellor: Dr. Patricia Kleine. The provost reports to the chancellor: Dr. James Schmidt.

Although the chair's academic focus is in organizational communication, since she arrived in 2008, the chair has immersed herself in the journalism and mass communication components of the unit and she has helped move the program forward—reorganizing and refreshing it.

Faculty members see her as strong and capable, as do the dean and provost and other campus community media leaders. Some believe she is stretched a bit too thin.

The chair represents the unit well at the university level. Campus colleagues praise her leadership style and collegiality. In 2013-14, Chair Hoffman was recognized by the university as adviser of the year,

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

There is a well-developed University-wide system for selecting and evaluating administrators, involving faculty and administrators both within and outside of the unit. There are files on faculty and staff searches and hiring.

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

In addition to the policies and procedures for faculty governance, faculty members can take up concerns with the department head. The unit has a clearly stated system for handling different types of concerns and issues. It also has systems for handling student concerns involving grade disputes and other student matters.

Overall Evaluation: 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. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet these requirements.**

The unit is in 100 percent compliance with the 72-hour rule for the two academic years preceding the site visit.

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

The Communication and Journalism Department at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire offers a major in Journalism and a major in Mass Communication with an option to emphasize advertising or public relations. It also offers majors and minors in Communication Studies and Organizational Communication. The site visit team reviewed only the areas of journalism, advertising and public relations. At the time of the visit a major curricular revision was underway transitioning the mass communication (Advertising and Public Relations) majors from two separate programs to a single program in Integrated Strategic Communication, although the emphases in Advertising and Public Relations will remain.

The journalism and mass communication programs emphasize theoretically-grounded, applied learning experiences. Several courses involve producing media that are available to public audiences or that require students to work with client organizations. In lower division classes students are exposed to the theory, history and practice of the professions. Core requirements include Media Ethics, Media Law, and Research Methods while Journalism and Public Relations students also are required to take Multimedia Communication and News Reporting and Writing. Students in all three majors—Journalism, Public Relations and Advertising—must complete a three-credit capstone course in which they apply the skills they've learned in their previous classes.

As part of their degree programs, students must also complete a 24-credit minor that can be one of the more than 100 offered by units across the university, or a topical minor which provides the student with the opportunity to fashion one that better meshes with individual interests.

Students find the curriculum straightforward with course sequencing well laid out and easy to follow. All of the required journalism classes were offered in both spring and fall 2014, although some are offered at the same time – presenting a scheduling problem for some students that could prevent them from graduating on time.

The unit aligns the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies with the Student Learning Outcomes it developed in conjunction with the university's guidelines, but as a result not all 12 Values and Competencies are incorporated into all three majors. This is especially true, for example, of the two competencies that require students to be able to demonstrate an understanding of both domestic and global diversity, which are addressed in media law and media ethics, but are missing in the journalism-specific required courses.

Similarly, students' abilities to demonstrate an understanding of the principles and laws of free speech and the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications are missing from public relations-specific required courses.

When the team reviewed course objectives and assignments in syllabi, comparing some of the syllabi with the curriculum grid completed by the unit at the team's request, the team did not see a reflection of awareness, understanding or application of the 12 values and competencies required by ACEJMC. This issue is taken up later in this document in more detail within Standard 9: Assessment.

Advertising:

Students majoring in Mass Communications with an emphasis in Advertising are required to take a series of courses typical of curriculum in many other programs. The major prepares students for professional careers by helping them to understand advertising objectives, messages and strategies, research, goal-setting, and planning within the following required courses: Communication in Contemporary Society, Fundamentals of Advertising, Research Methods, Advertising Media Planning, Advertising Writing, Design, and Portfolio Development, Mass Media Ethics, Mass Media Law, Advertising Account Management, Advertising in Contemporary Society and the Advertising Campaigns capstone course. Students must also take six credits of other CJ electives.

Journalism:

In response to a finding of non-compliance on Standard 2 and provisional reaccreditation in 2008, the unit significantly revised its journalism curriculum to reflect the converging nature of the broadcast and print industries. The current journalism curriculum encompasses both and includes instruction on entrepreneurial journalism in its advanced reporting and editing course. In addition to the required courses noted above, all journalism students take the same intermediate journalism class, which incorporates, print, online, photo and audio, and choose between one of three advanced classes where they can specialize in visual journalism, broadcast TV news or advanced reporting and editing. Nine credits of communication and journalism electives, which include courses in audio/video production, visual communication, magazine editing and design and photography, complete the major.

A review of course syllabi and class observations indicate the journalism program does a good job of incorporating multimedia in its skills classes in part by requiring students to complete a multimedia project as a graded assignment.

Students interested in broadcast journalism said the curriculum is print-centric with little emphasis on television news in the intermediate journalism class and noted that there are no required classes that focus on broadcast. One student suggested incorporating elements from the elective class, CJ 241 Audio/Video Production Process, into the intermediate journalism class so the journalism class is more integrated, which would help students interested in broadcast. Currently students learn broadcast skills in their elective courses and by choosing CJ 426 Advanced TV Broadcast News as their specialization class.

Public Relations

Faculty members voted to revise the program to transition from a mass communication major to a major in integrated strategic communications. The emphases in advertising and public relations will be retained, as students are also grounded in a larger understanding of the integrated nature of communication. Instruction in advertising and public relations traditionally have focused heavily on theoretically-grounded applied learning experiences, so courses often involve projects that produce media available to public audiences or that require students to work with client organizations; that will be retained. Student-faculty collaborative research will also be retained as an essential part of the program.

The capstone course for public relations majors, PR Management, requires students to apply information-gathering skills and to learn advanced practices in their chosen profession; that will be retained, as well.

At the time of the site visit, there were 118 majors in the program with three full-time faculty members, one tenured and two on the probationary track. Students seem generally pleased with the program, although they sought to have better and more frequent placements of courses so that they would not have to choose between two required courses – and be destined to stay an extra semester to complete their programs.

The PR program does not provide a system to achieve the range of student competencies and values listed by the Council, however.

- (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. (If the unit has more than one sequence, address the quality of instruction by sequence.)**

Advertising:

Faculty members recognize the need to help students develop a wider array of skills to meet the emerging demands of the profession and marketplace. The new Integrated Strategic Communications major, discussed above, has been approved for implementation in the fall 2015.

Only one full-time faculty member teaches in the Advertising program that serves 65 majors (at the time of the visit). This is a concern since ACEJMC requires that full-time faculty members have primary responsibility for teaching. Two part-time faculty teach many of the courses. A search is currently underway to hire a second full-time faculty member who can teach Advertising courses and contribute to teaching social/digital media in the new Integrated Strategic Communications major.

Students who met with the site team indicated that they were satisfied with the education they are receiving. They said that their courses were not overly demanding and involved lots of hands-on team projects. Advising was good. The students we talked with did not experience problems enrolling in required courses. All but one of the students in the group was early in their academic career and hadn't gained internship experience yet, although one had done so. Students said they also were able to apply their skills by participating in the Ad Fed student organization.

Journalism:

Beginning in 2011, journalism students are required to take a multimedia communication course as a pre-requisite to their journalism courses. A graded component of the course is the establishment of a website where students can build and add to their portfolios as they progress through the major.

Additionally, as noted above, a multimedia project is a graded assignment in several classes including beginning, intermediate and advanced journalism.

Through internal grants, journalism faculty members also have provided opportunities for students to gain significant multimedia skills by participating in immersive reporting experiences both in the U.S. and internationally.

According to students, the quality and rigor of instruction tends to vary depending on who teaches the course. The unit does a good job of playing to an instructor's strengths when assigning courses and ensuring consistency by having one instructor teach both the lecture and lab sections.

Students reported that expectations regarding assignments seem to be clearer in broadcast courses than in some others. This is in part because there is a single faculty member who teaches broadcast.

Class observations revealed instructors are engaged with students and a review of course syllabi indicate appropriate rigor, especially with respect to attendance and meeting deadlines.

Public Relations:

Instruction in public relations is current, for the most part. Some students noted that some faculty members are not up to date on new media and social media and cannot lead students to better understand what is expected of them in this regard when they enter the field. Some concerns were raised about the lack of a required multimedia course in the advertising program.

Teaching effectiveness is the primary consideration in periodic reviews of faculty and in promotion and tenure decisions. Evaluation is based on peer classroom visits, materials

submitted, written student evaluations and teaching awards. During the review period, journalism and mass communication faculty took advantage of numerous opportunities to participate in teaching workshops and have been recognized as a diversity mentor, feminist teacher, teaching and domestic immersion fellow and Fulbright scholar.

(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.*

Journalism, advertising and public relations skills classes have a lecture/lab format. Typical enrollment in the lecture section is approximately 45 students while the largest lab section has 16 students.

(e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter credit hours).

Students may take up to two semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.

Students may take up to three semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at a professional media outlet owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.

Although not required, many journalism, advertising and public relations students take advantage of the opportunity to complete one or more internships. **Students may take up to three credits of internships through the department; these are coordinated and supervised by an instructional staff member. Students may take an additional three credits in GEN internship courses.**

To be eligible for an internship, a student must have successfully completed qualifying classes relevant to the internship. Opportunities for internships are made available to students through their advisers and through on-line systems. Students seem focused on taking advantage of those opportunities.

The internship program is well regarded by professionals in the field and across the campus. The internship experience for students seems to be well accepted in the professional community. One employer commented: "CJ students consistently have shown strong writing and interpersonal skills. They communicate well with others in the organization and show a strong desire to learn. All of them show great improvement in writing skills and organizational skills throughout the internship. They learn to ask questions and take responsibility for the end product. Our department benefits greatly from our partnership with the Department of Communication and Journalism. The interns are a valuable resource for us, and contribute greatly to our daily work

flow.” Other employers contacted by the site team made similar comments and confirmed that students are appreciated and prepared for the opportunities.

The unit’s internship policies are well thought-out and articulated; the process is clear and easy for students to follow. Assignments and student evaluation instruments are consistent across internships.

Several faculty members also received grants from the university to take students on for-credit immersive reporting trips to cover civil rights, LGBTQA events and emerging democracies.

Overall evaluation: 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 Department of Communication and Journalism first adopted a diversity plan in 2008. Its most recent plan was developed in 2012 and was approved by the department in September 2014. The 2008 plan focused on the unit's participation in university-led initiatives for student and faculty recruitment. The 2014 plan is more department-focused and sets four main goals: teaching students about diversity, increasing enrollment in CJ majors among students from underrepresented groups, increasing the diversity of the CJ faculty and instructional staff, and using faculty and student knowledge of communication and journalism to help create a climate of greater inclusivity in the Eau Claire community.

The unit's plan to foster diversity within the student body, increasing diversity in enrollments and within the faculty, and fostering community engagement takes place in the context of the University's commitment to enhance diversity across the campus. The university includes "Diversity and Inclusivity" among its values and is considering an enrollment management task force recommendation to set the goal of enrolling a first-year class that is composed of 20 percent students from underrepresented groups within the next 10 years. This action would increase the number of University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire students from under-represented groups from 8 percent in 2014 to 20 percent by 2024. To achieve this goal, the self study notes the university plans to "intensify recruitment efforts and commit resources to a vigorous recruitment plan."

The team reviewed actions that, in previous years, if successful, might have demonstrated the unit's will and pathways toward success in strengthening diversity and inclusiveness efforts that include the following: a) a measureable, effective recruitment effort to bring in more faculty members, staff, and students from under-represented groups b) inclusion of people of color among the unit's guest speakers, c) inclusion of people of color among adjunct faculty members, d) broad inclusion of minority history and issues within the curriculum, and e) inclusion of diverse professionals among the Devroy Lecturers. None of these actions was undertaken prior to 2014. In addition, by all indications, the University's and unit's 2008 diversity plans that were predominantly focused on recruitment and retention of faculty members and students from under-represented domestic groups were not effective or successful.

For the new 2014 goals set by the unit and the University to be successful, the team

believes there needs to be measureable benchmarks that have date-certain targets with sufficient funds attached. The area population in Wisconsin is almost 7 percent Black and more than 6 percent Hispanic, yet only 1 percent of the CJ student body is Black and just 2 percent are Hispanic; there are no Black faculty members and just one Hispanic faculty member. Six years ago, the number of faculty members from under-represented groups was higher than it is at present, and the number of students remains about the same: quite low. In 2014, there are 9 full-time faculty members, 5 males and 4 females; there is one part-time female faculty member and one part-time male faculty member.

While the plan for increasing diversity seems worthy, the will and the pathway for the unit to be successful are not clear to the team, particularly since evidence of conscientious efforts and measureable results over the past six years by the department—as it moved toward diversity goals it had established—was missing in the self study and in discussions on-site.

The unit's 2014 Diversity Plan refers to items to be completed in the future (2015 and 2016) that cannot be assessed at this point. It does not include targets set in the past that have been met by the unit by a date-certain or within the current timeframe: by 2014. Since the diversity plan was adopted just weeks before the site team visit, it could not be used by the team to assess measureable efforts to meet goals over the previous six years.

- 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.**

Students benefit from University-sponsored study abroad programs. The self study identified a number of courses that are global educational opportunities for CJ students, offering a strong—and desirable—international experience for some of them. Students also benefit from the domestic civil rights trail pilgrimage offered by the university. The department's Hispanic faculty member wrote a proposal and obtained a grant to sponsor student travel to civil rights sites, where (under her supervision) they interviewed some of the participants from the 1960s civil rights activities.

Although the self study identified a number of courses that included segments of coursework that focused on diversity, most of the identified courses were in communication studies or organizational communication – and were not a part of the group of accredited programs' courses that are the focus of this site visit.

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

The self study describes the department's attempts to recruit faculty members of color, noting strategies they consistently used: ads in higher education publications, posting on listservs, letters to Ph.D. programs. It noted how unsuccessful it was recruiting and retaining faculty from under-represented groups. Those ideas were reinforced during the visit. The team recommended that the department target minority groups for advertising and marketing their faculty positions directly toward the groups they seek to attract. Some examples include the National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Ph.D. candidates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as well as leaders who post search committee ads and information for members of the Minorities in Communications Divisions of the three major communication associations: AEJMC, BEA and NCA.

The team shared with the unit other ideas for the recruitment of faculty members of color and for infusing information and ideas about domestic minority group members' experiences. The team encouraged department leaders to invite speakers of color to the campus to begin discussions with students about issues of concern to minority groups and the nation. A missed opportunity to do so through the annual Devroy lecture series that is held annually by the department was mentioned by the team, as an example.

- 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 team questioned why the unit was just beginning to strongly focus on diversity aspects of student recruitment and retention when the problem has been apparent for many years. For example, the site team report from 2009 noted the modest minority representation on the faculty and the small number of students of color. The re-visit team report from November 2010 spoke strongly to the need for the unit to focus its attention on diversity issues.

Finally, it must be noted that the 2008 diversity plan that focused on recruitment and retention of students from under-represented groups either was not well executed or was just unsuccessful in its results, since none of the numbers grew for recruitment and retention of students or faculty members of color in the unit. The evidence suggests that the 2008 directive was not skillfully followed up.

There were numerous missed opportunities for the unit to embrace diversity and inclusion. Beyond the ones cited above, the team questioned why the unit failed to take advantage of the Indian/Native American Center that was - and is - housed in the building with the department. Courting and partnering with this center would - and could - lead to much improved diversity and inclusion outcomes.

- 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 unit has a disability accommodation statement and the University installed equipment and facilities to accommodate persons with physical disabilities.

Overall evaluation: NON-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.

The department abides by the rules and procedures for hiring that were established by the university. These guidelines are explained in the *Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures* handbook. The procedures for annual review of faculty are also stipulated in the handbook. Faculty members are reviewed in areas related to teaching effectiveness, academic advising ability, scholarly activity, and service to the University, the profession and the public. The Department Evaluation Plan clarifies what this means to faculty. Forms for peer teaching observation and student instructor evaluations were included in the self study.

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

Full-time faculty are responsible for teaching, scholarly activity and service in the areas of the unit related to the reaccreditation review. The only part-time instruction at the time of the site team visit is in advertising where advertising professionals complement the work of a full-time faculty member while a search for a second faculty member is underway. Over the past three years, the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty in the department, including those in the Communication area, hovered around 84 percent.

The department was commended for its collaborative efforts that were discussed during our visit. Some faculty members have joined forces to create learning opportunities for students, such as the Intercultural Immersive Experience trip to Moldova.

(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.

Of the 18 faculty in the department, nine full-time faculty members have primary assignments in the mass communication and journalism areas being accredited. Their CVs provided reflect a wide range of background and professional experience. Six have earned doctorates, two have master's of art degrees and one has an MFA. The levels of professional experience among faculty vary from minimal experience to 25 years in the areas in which they teach. Their academic ranks range from professor (1), to associate professor (5), to assistant professor (3). Within the group of nine full-time faculty, two are international and one is Hispanic. The teaching load for full-time tenured or tenure track faculty is 12 credit hours.

The expertise of the full-time faculty is complemented by two part-time faculty in advertising, who contribute valuable context with significant professional experience.

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

The unit chair bases evaluations of instructors on student evaluations, classroom observations, information presented by the faculty member and information gathered by the Department Personnel Committee. These procedures are followed for probationary faculty, academic staff and part-time instructors. Evaluation forms where applicable were included in the self study. Each instructor receives a copy of the written performance review, which is also forwarded to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

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

Campus leaders representing Assessment, Career Services, the Honors Program, Advising and Multicultural Affairs expressed their respect for and support of the work of department faculty and the department chair in particular in their meeting with the site visit team. The department is highly regarded in their eyes for their leadership, collegiality and student-centered focus.

Overall evaluation: 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.

In its support and evaluation of research and creative and professional activities, the unit has adopted the university's mission to provide "exemplary student-faculty research and scholarship that enhance teaching and learning." All full-time faculty in journalism, advertising and public relations are expected to devote 20 percent of their time to scholarship, advising and service. To foster that effort, the College of Arts and Sciences, in which the unit is housed, and the university make available to faculty internal grants for travel, collaborative research and support for student research. Several faculty members have successfully applied for each of these types of support, which has resulted in scholarly articles and presentations, juried creative works and numerous papers.

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

Expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity for hiring, promotion and tenure are specified in the unit's Department Evaluation Plan (DEP). In developing its policies, the unit follows the university's lead, often citing the university's Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures. The unit clearly identifies into which of four ranked activity categories each type of publication or presentation falls and gives equal weight to creative activity and peer-reviewed articles.

As a teaching-intensive institution, teaching effectiveness and academic advising are weighted more heavily than scholarship (80/20.) As a result, the unit's, as well as the university's, definition of scholarship and creative activity, is quite broad with student-faculty collaborative scholarly activity especially valued.

(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 unit's evaluation for promotion, tenure and merit recognition reinforce the importance of faculty members engaging in scholarly activity, which "may include research, creative and/or professional activities."

In its rankings of these activities, photography exhibits, videos presented at respected juried competitions and/or other media publications are included in the unit's top-tier category along with scholarly books and peer-reviewed articles in major journals.

(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.

As noted above, teaching effectiveness is weighted at 80 percent while scholarship and creative activity is weighted at 20 percent in terms of tenure and promotion. In addition to teaching four courses per semester, journalism, advertising and public relations faculty members are active scholars who present their work in a variety of venues. During the review period, they published one scholarly book, 14 articles in refereed journals, 24 juried creative works, two textbooks, 50 conference papers and almost a dozen invited presentations, reports and other activities.

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

The venues in which the journalism, advertising and public relations faculty have published or presented their work include *Management Communication Quarterly*, the Midwest Political Science Association national conference, Prairie Public Radio, *Journal of Global Mass Communication*, AEJMC, SF International LGBT Film and Video Festival, and the Interdisciplinary Social Science Conference.

Overall evaluation: 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.

Full-time faculty members serve as academic advisers for students in the unit. Each faculty member has between 40 and 60 advisees. Students with fewer than 60 credits are required to meet with an adviser prior to registration to discuss career aspirations, graduation requirements and to develop a degree plan. At the advising meeting the student is given a code that enables the student to enroll in the next semester's classes.

Students who have completed at least 60 credits are not required to meet with their advisees, but are strongly encouraged to attend one of the group advising sessions, which are held a few weeks before registration opens each semester.

Transfer students meet with the unit chair before being assigned a permanent adviser while those interested in changing their majors meet with the unit intake adviser, a member of the instructional staff.

Advisers send mass and individual email notifications to students outlining advising procedures and how to sign up for an advising appointment. The unit also uses a department website, blog, Facebook page and electronic and paper bulletin boards to communicate with students.

The unit tracks whether students have met with their advisers and is one of five units across the university piloting the use of two student peer advisers.

In fall 2013 the university implemented an online degree planning system designed to help students map out their paths to graduation. After a period of transition, students and their advisers are making good use of the tool, reviewing it in advising meetings. Students say the tool is very helpful.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Faculty are required to be available in their offices to students for at least four hours a week. Many are available for longer periods of time, especially during registration periods. Faculty also make good use of the university's online platform Desire2Learn (D2L) to communicate with students. Students said the faculty are accessible, encouraging and help them in a number of ways from finding internships to providing opportunities to collaborate on research.

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

As noted above, the unit uses a variety of ways to keep students informed about requirements, policies and opportunities. The department blog, website, Facebook page, electronic and paper bulletin boards and face-to-face communication all provide students with up-to-date information.

The course catalog and class schedules are readily available on the university's website and individual instructors make use of the university's online instructional platform Desire2Learn.

(d) The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.

The unit has made a commitment, both in the strategic plan and in practice, to provide all students with at least two applied learning experiences. Student media, student professional organizations and other co-curricular activities are key to helping the unit achieve this goal. WUEC 89.7 fm operates in cooperation with Wisconsin Public Radio and the department provides an adviser. The department also provides an adviser and clerical support to Spectator, a student-managed outlet which publishes a bi-weekly print version and daily online updates. A student-run television station for the campus cable system, PRSSA, SPJ, Kappa Tau Alpha, and Ad Fed provide additional opportunities for students to develop their professional abilities and interests.

(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 regularly publishes retention and graduation information on its website

Prominent on the unit's home page is a link to its graduation and retention rates for the last 10 years (fall 2002 through fall 2012.) The unit's four-year graduation rate for students entering the university from 2002 through 2009 is more than 30 percent higher than that of the university overall. It ranges from just under 65 percent to about 72 percent and was 67 percent for the cohort entering in 2007.

The unit does a good job of retaining students from their first to second year, although it did not provide an explanation for why retention declined by almost 18 percent from 89.3 percent in 2010 to 73.5 percent in 2012. The unit indicated that data are not available on students who change majors and leave the department, but remain at the university.

The unit has recently taken steps to expedite time to graduation by adding a section of the journalism capstone in the fall semester and has experimented with doing the same for a second advanced journalism class.

The unit is working on ways to provide additional support for struggling students and is participating in the university's recently implemented second-year advising initiative.

Overall evaluation: 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.

Like many other state institutions, UWEC faces challenging budget issues. Funding is derived from three primary sources: funds assigned by the institution in its annual budget, funds applied for by the unit and allocated by the institution on an annual or semi-annual basis, and those earned through instruction during non-semester terms or through the Strategic Assessment Matrix (SAM) Process, which rewards units that accomplish goals related to institutional goals. The unit's self study notes that it has sufficient resources, facilities and equipment to sustain its mission.

The self study included a strategic plan and yearly strategic priorities intended to guide decision making. Specific tactics align with the goals. For example, the department has been able to regularly purchase equipment such as audio recorders, DSLR cameras, studio lighting and peripherals.

(b) The resources that the institution provides are adequate to achieve the unit's mission. The resources are fair in relation to those provided other units.

The chair expressed appreciation for the financial commitment by the Provost's office to the department despite a recent announcement of a pending budget cut of \$1.7 million. At a time when other units had to close searches, the department was allowed to continue its search for a faculty member. Our meeting with the provost and dean of the college confirmed the commitment to the unit.

The unit does not engage in fundraising efforts to supplement its budget, although it works to support the UWEC Foundation to raise scholarships by writing thank you notes and occasionally meeting with donors. Some faculty members have written grant applications to secure funding for research projects.

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

The department is housed in Hibbard Hall, with classroom spaces located near the faculty offices. The Communication and Journalism Center opened in spring 2009, offering updated student media spaces, faculty offices, a TV studio, radio station, photo studio and two computer labs dedicated to broadcast journalism and visual communication. The department has priority access to three of the many classrooms in Hibbard Hall. Neither faculty nor students complained about any issues related to facilities during the visit.

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

The unit would like new classroom furniture that could be configured to suit active learning pedagogies. All faculty have private offices and computers. Lab modernization grants as well as changes to budgeting have allowed the department to purchase sufficient equipment to meet student needs.

The unit expressed concern about the ongoing need for the administration and repair of equipment and would like to employ a technician to supervise student lab employees and make minor repairs to equipment. The provost acknowledged that this issue is faced by other units as well and a broader solution may be necessary.

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

Faculty said that library resources are adequate and that the subject librarian assigned to the department is “fantastic.” Researchers are able to access material from the University of Wisconsin library system, if needed. The only complaint was that the local newspaper, Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, could only be accessed one person at a time via online library services, which is sometimes difficult for students.

Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

The unit and its faculty advance journalism and mass communication professions and fulfills obligations to its community, alumni and the greater public.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

As stated in its Faculty and Academic Staff Handbook, UWEC requires that faculty and academic staff provide service to the University, the profession and the public, which is one of four criteria applied in the periodic review and evaluation for reappointment. The college budgets \$850 per person each year for travel to professional conferences and meetings, and to assist public service activities. Tenure track faculty members are encouraged to use these funds for research-related travel.

(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.

Alumni

The unit communicates with its alumni through a department blog and Facebook page. Alumni living in the area are invited each year to attend the Devroy Forum, which features nationally prominent speakers each spring. Several have presented at this event. Alumni are invited to participate in the Chippewa Valley School Journalism Association each fall. Alumni occasionally participate in courses as guest speakers. Graduates are asked to participate in an annual Alumni Survey to provide their insights about the program.

Professionals

The unit hosted journalists from the state for an America Press Institute workshop on The New Newsroom in March 2009. The CJ Advisory Board comprised of professionals and alumni meets once or twice each year. This meeting coincides with career-related events, such as the annual Devroy Forum speaker series.

Professional associations

Faculty participate in a variety of professional organizations, such as Wisconsin Newspaper Association, Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, Public Relations Society of America, Society of Professional Journalists. Given the limited number of faculty, this participation is adequate.

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

The annual Devroy Forum offers an opportunity for students to learn from nationally recognized leaders in the profession. Other opportunities include a more local focus, such as the UWEC chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, which hosts guest speakers on topics of

interest in journalism such as the First Amendment, citizen journalism, ethics and insights from professionals who are often also alumni.

(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.

Instructors across the unit participate in professional and public service activities, contributing their professional expertise in areas such as public health communication and event planning. Several faculty have been active reviewers for academic journals such as *Media Ethics*, *Online Journalists*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *Online Journal of Communication* and *Media Technologies*. Some faculty members have contributed as session chairs at conferences. Others are active in AEJMC in leadership roles (AEJMC Newspaper Division Executive Board, chair AEJMC VisCom Creative Projects).

(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.

As an institution, UWEC emphasizes the importance of civic engagement. UWEC requires all of its students to complete 30 hours of service learning, and to do so under the guidance of a faculty member. This emphasis is reflected in the unit's strategic plan, which includes a goal to "Provide every CJ major with two theoretically grounded, in-depth, applied learning experiences. Provide 60 percent of students with three experiences." Examples of applied learning are high impact practices like the domestic intercultural immersion Civil Rights Pilgrimage trip and class, student research opportunities, and internships.

Student projects from many courses taught by the unit help develop students' expertise while contributing to the surrounding communities. Examples of recent community clients for public relations and advertising courses include: Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Feed My People Food Bank, United Way, Eau Claire County Humane Association. In addition to class-based projects, unit faculty supervise student service learning projects to benefit community organizations.

Curricular and co-curricular media outlets (Spectator, the student-run weekly newspaper; WUEC-FM, a student-run affiliate of Wisconsin Public Radio; "Inside Eau Claire" online news site and twice weekly TV news program, "Update News") also provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn journalism.

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

Faculty members led by unit director Mary Hoffman have organized and held annual day-long conferences for high school journalists with the Chippewa Valley School Journalism Association since 2010.

Overall Evaluation: 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 department’s self study describes an assessment process that has evolved in conjunction with curricular revisions over the years. The department adopted an assessment plan in 2003 and revised it in 2007-08. The 2007-08 Assessment Plan included direct, explicit references to ACEJMC’s 12 core competencies and values and a strategy for meeting the goals it established.

In 2010, the department approved a new assessment plan that used different program learning outcomes to guide gathering of direct and indirect data. In 2012-2013, the University Assessment Committee began providing formal direction of department assessment plans and required all programs to develop new student learning outcomes during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years; however, it gave explicit flexibility to accredited programs. The department participated in this process and then used the new outcomes and reporting requirements to revise the unit assessment plan for approval in fall 2014. The plan requires the participation of all faculty members in the assessment process. The self study states that each year, department faculty and the unit’s advisory board have opportunities to review assessment findings and make suggestions for how those findings should inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, but it is unclear how the process is effectively carried out. The summary of assessment findings provided examples of the areas for improvement as well as actions taken in response to them. However, the system used by the unit seems to be misdirected activities called assessment that do not demonstrate that students have mastered aspects of ACEJMC’s 12 core competencies and values while they are enrolled in this program.

In its most recent assessment plan the department did not clearly include or make explicit mention of the 12 core values and competencies defined by ACEJMC. In the team’s review of the recent plan, it noted that there was a misunderstanding of ACEJMC’s requirements and an unclear focus on how to execute a plan for obtaining what is needed to assess and then strengthen the curriculum. The unit appears to satisfy the university’s assessment requirements, but not those of ACEJMC.

The team observed that the unit seems to define assessment to mean to generally review how well a program is doing, whereas ACEJMC notes that the purpose of the assessment of student learning is to assure and demonstrate that each graduating class has mastered the professional competencies and values defined by ACEJMC and their programs. Usually a unit’s curriculum map is offered to demonstrate how the curriculum is preparing students to master the required 12 core values and competencies. After the team requested such information, it was able to review a curriculum grid. However, in reviewing the objectives and assignments in syllabi, often they did not match the specifications on the grid.

In the self study the unit noted that there is “a need for a deeper approach to assessment” on its part. The team agrees; we believe that to demonstrate mastery by their students, the unit needs to offer more than the embedded questions and a few selected student projects—and do more than “generally assess” how well introductory and other courses function. ACEJMC requires multiple direct and indirect measures—each unit assess the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort of students in the unit’s program—in order for the unit to make the case that their curriculum and programmatic strategies are responsible for a given cohort’s mastery of the 12 core competencies and values. A pre-and post-program skills review and/or use of a capstone course with professionally-reviewed portfolios help to focus on a given student cohort’s strengths and weaknesses. The unit can use the data collected from students’ responses to loop back, revamping and strengthening the program as needed.

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

As noted, the department adopted an Assessment Plan in 2003 and slightly revised it in 2007-08. The 2007-08 plan included long-range planning that provided direction for the future and identified needs and resources to meet the unit’s mission and goals. The plan included specific references to the 12 ACEJMC core values and competencies and listed learning outcomes that paralleled those of the Accrediting Council. It also listed the direct and indirect assessment methods that would be used to measure the success of the program in preparing students for mastery of subject matter. It is unclear why this solid assessment plan was dropped and a new one put in its place. The unit’s new assessment plan was adopted in September 2014. As a result, the unit **has not had** sufficient time to assess student mastery of the 12 core values and competencies of ACEJMC, which were required beginning in 2005 for all accredited programs.

The unit primarily used embedded questions as its direct measure of student achievement within the program. It did not make clear what changes were made in the instructional program that resulted from the review of the embedded questions, however. The team reminded the unit that generalizations and assertions are not sufficient; the unit needs to report specific examples of what was assessed, addressed, changed because of an uncovered need to change—and subsequently measured for the effectiveness of the change.

Further, ACEJMC requires that each program assure that its curriculum and instruction address all nine of ACEJMC’s standards and all 12 core competencies and values for all students. There was not sufficient evidence that these requirements are being addressed by the unit.

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

The unit’s direct measures are to use embedded test items for assessment purposes and to code randomly selected student projects. Embedded test items can work as long as the goal is to

assess common elements across all sections of a course to obtain a clear understanding of how well a cohort of students is learning a particular aspect of the program. However, the unit did not give information about the validity and reliability of the test items used, what was uncovered from the embedded questions, and how that information was used in specific ways to improve instruction. The unit made general statements about embedded questions' usefulness, but gave no clear explanation of how the unit used the findings—if the unit used the findings according to ACEJMC's guidelines.

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

Through emails, newsletters and the alumni survey, the department contacts alumni regularly. The department first contacts alumni by surveying them three years after graduation. The department used information collected from alumni over the years, for example, to add more visual elements to the advertising program, more social media components across the unit and to have more advisers on site during special periods. Alumni also are among the professionals who are part of the advisory board that has a role in reviewing assessment planning.

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

Most members of the advisory board are in mass communication professions and are included in the assessment process. It is unclear what type of input and guidance the Advisory Board offers for the assessment process.

Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS:

- 1) An admirable amount of service work in the community
- 2) Upgraded facilities for instruction
- 3) A solid reputation across the campus
- 4) Strong leadership by the department head
- 5) An engaged student-centered faculty and staff
- 6) A supportive upper administration

WEAKNESSES:

A) A strategic plan: The unit does not have a strong strategic plan. A 1½ page description of activities and tactics cannot be viewed as a visionary plan for the future, particularly when there is no mention of ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies within the plan. Such an inclusion would help the unit stay focused on what is needed for an accredited program to be successful.

B) A measureable diversity plan: The current diversity plan was just completed in the fall of 2014 and, thus, is not useful by ACEJMC for assessing how effective it has been. The 2008 plan was unsuccessful in meeting any of its goals. The 2014 plan seems unrealistic and may need to be revised.

C) A strong assessment plan: The current assessment plan fails to include elements of assessment necessary for a successful engagement by the unit with ACEJMC. Within ACEJMC the purpose of assessment of student learning is to assure that each graduating class has mastered the professional values and competencies defined by ACEJMC and the unit's program plan. By means of its assessment measures, the unit can verify that student mastery is the result of students' work in its programs.

D) Social and digital media are not as fully integrated into the curriculum as they should be.

E) Ways to address the challenging budget issues facing the unit and the university.

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

- A) STANDARD 3
- B) STANDARD 9

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

- A) A curriculum that: (1) reflects ACEJMC's 12 core competencies and values and (2) systematically focuses on awareness, understanding and application of the values and competencies at various points within the program
- B) A well developed and executed strategic plan
- C) A well developed and executed diversity plan
- D) Use of guest lecturers and a systematic inclusion of local domestic minorities to increase exposure of students to diverse perspectives
- E) A well developed and executed assessment plan

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

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusion –The team recommended that the unit revise its diversity plan and systematically focus on execution strategies to achieve the desired results. The team offered a number of recommendations that may be useful in this regard.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes --The team recommended that the unit revise the system it uses for identifying courses that fit with ACEJMC's 12 core competencies and values, using a matrix that would make it easier to see which courses are focused on which aspects of the core competencies and values. It did so, but now the unit needs to be certain courses identified as focusing on *awareness* (for example) include among the objectives and/or assignments within the syllabi of those courses activities that increase awareness.

The same needs to be done with *understanding* and *application*. However, placing these described elements on a curriculum grid is only a first step. Follow up is needed to be certain that the identifications of the *12 core competencies and values* along with *awareness*, *understanding* and *application* are matched on syllabi for each of the courses.

Additionally, the unit needs to take steps to analyze the results of its assessment program and make adjustments to its curriculum based on those results, closing the loop.

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.**

The unit was in non-compliance on Standard 2 and Standard 9 in 2008. The same issues were the focus of the 2014 team's attention: Assessment of Learning Outcomes. The unit is not out of compliance with Standard 2 during the current review.

However, given the interdependence of the two standards, the unit should take steps to ensure assessment is an integral part of the curriculum.

When the unit was re-visited in November 2010, it was found in compliance on the two standards (2 and 9). However, the direct measures chosen by the unit at that time—in 2010 (embedded questions and random selections of student papers) were not sufficiently robust to obtain the desired results over time. Thus, the unit is in non-compliance on Standard 9 again in 2014. As was the case in 2008, the issues are that: 1) there is not an effective assessment plan in place implemented to achieve useful results in a timely manner and 2) the data are not collected in a manner that can be used to help improve instruction.

- 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 weak in its design. There were many items that had little to do with the journalism and mass communication programs that **were** being reviewed for re-accreditation and the writing was not clear. This caused the team to have to seek materials that should have been right at hand. It would have been helpful if repeated references to non JMC programs had been eliminated from the self study. There were numerous redundancies in the report—and important items were missing.



University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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January 22, 2015

Dear Accrediting Committee Members:

The Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire appreciates the work of the site visit team in evaluating our self-study, visiting our campus, and preparing their report. We also appreciate the work of the Accrediting Committee in evaluating communication and journalism programs for accreditation.

Based on the information provided by the 2010 site team, the indicators and evidence outlined in the Accrediting Standards, and the guidelines provided in "A Guide to Assessment of Learning Outcomes for ACEJMC Accreditation," the unit's assessment plan and practices should be found in compliance with ACEJMC standards. The 2014 site visit report focuses on concerns with the assessment plan and with incorporation of ACEJMC values and competencies.

Assessment Plan:

At the conclusion of the 2010 revisit, the revisit team found the unit in compliance on assessment, and concluded in part:

The increase in direct measures and the focusing of indirect measures on areas that can be documented result in a strengthened plan and are good indicators that the department is taking assessment seriously. Each curricular area has developed its own learning outcomes in support of the department's four learning goals. Assessment methods have been attached to each learning outcome (multiple methods, in most cases), and the unit has a timetable for conducting assessments, with one learning goal being assessed each semester.

The 2014 site team report concluded, "The unit's new assessment plan was adopted in September 2014. As a result, the unit **has not had** sufficient time to assess student mastery of the 12 core values and competencies of ACEJMC..."

This assessment plan has been in effect since 2009-2010. The only change in the assessment plan was due to the University Assessment Office requiring all departments to revise student learning outcomes for each academic program during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years. The unit amended the 2010 plan by including the new student learning outcomes and corresponding curriculum maps, leaving the goals, measures, oversight, and uses of information elements approved by the 2010 team intact. Minor changes were made to the timeline and a document linking ACEJMC outcomes with new program outcomes was added. The unit included reports of assessment data and results for each year since 2009-2010 in the supporting materials available to the team during the visit.

The plan, approved in 2009-2010 and modified in 2013-2014 to include revised learning outcomes, uses three of the five direct measures from the list included in the assessment guide provided by ACEJMC—work from capstone courses, internship evaluations, and course embedded assessment. It also includes multiple indirect measures, including surveys of alumni and graduates.

Excellence. Our measure, our motto, our goal.

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ACEJMC Values and Competencies:

The 2010 revisit team noted a weakness related to the explicit listing of ACEJMC values and competencies, writing, "The revised plan still does not speak directly to the ACEJMC professional values and competencies."

In response to that weakness, while preparing new program learning outcomes during 2012-2014, faculty in the accredited programs mapped their new outcomes to the ACEJMC values and competencies. Documentation of these links is included in the assessment plan provided in the self-study (p. 40-42). The map linking courses with outcomes is found in the program-specific section of the plan (p. 20-39). Information showing the link between program outcomes and ACEJMC values and competencies was provided in the self-study and supporting materials. The assessment plan mindfully establishes and documents the connections between ACEJMC values and competencies and program learning outcomes, though not in the curriculum map format expected by the site visit team.

The site visit report heavily emphasized the need to establish where *awareness*, *understanding*, and *application* are achieved for each value or competency. Although this language appears in the guide provided by ACEJMC, the guide only mentions the terms and does not indicate that their use is a requirement of accreditation, as stressed by the 2014 site visit team.

Future Actions on Assessment:

- Faculty are revising learning outcomes to more explicitly use the language of the ACEJMC values and competencies in order to make the links as clear as possible. In doing so, they are paying careful attention to outcomes related to diversity.
- Unit faculty will work to ensure all syllabi clearly indicate links between course content and program learning outcomes/ACEJMC values and competencies.
- The unit will explore adding a professional reviewer to our capstone project based on the advice of the 2014 site team report that this is preferred approach.
- The unit will explore requiring a pre- and post-test as the 2014 site team report indicated that was the preferred approach.
- The unit will indicate in which courses *awareness*, *understanding*, and *application* of values and competencies are expected to be achieved.
- The unit will prepare a curriculum map following the format requested by the site visit team for inclusion in the assessment plan.
- The unit will seek guidance beyond the materials provided in the standards and assessment guide to clarify our understanding, as the report suggests there was "a misunderstanding of ACEJMC's requirements and an unclear focus on how to execute a plan for obtaining what is needed to assess and the strengthen the curriculum."

Thank you for working to maintain high quality education in journalism and mass communication. I am happy to answer any questions should they arise.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mary Hoffman
Professor and Chair
Department of Communication and Journalism