

# Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Undergraduate program

2015-2016

Name of Institution: Howard University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Wayne A.I. Frederick, President

Name of Unit: School of Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: Dr. Gracie Lawson-Borders, Dean

Date of 2015 - 2016 Accrediting Visit: January 19-22, 2016

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 2015 - 2016 Visiting Team: Re-accreditation

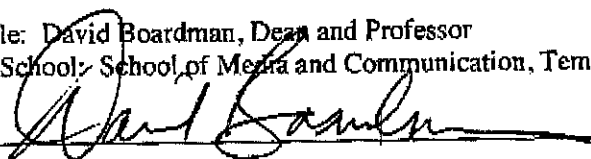
*Prepared and submitted by:*

## Team Chair

Name and Title: David Boardman, Dean and Professor

Organization/School: School of Media and Communication, Temple University

Signature

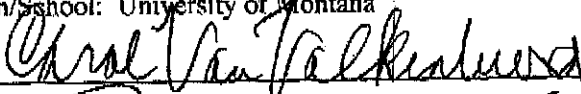


## Team Members

Name and Title: Carol Van Valkenburg, Professor Emeritus

Organization/School: University of Montana

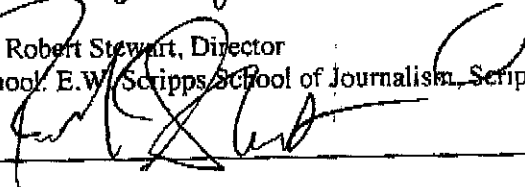
Signature



Name and Title: Robert Stewart, Director

Organization/School: E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University

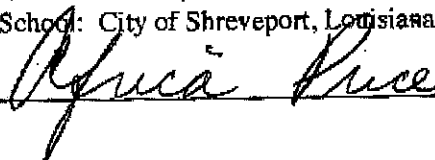
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Name and Title: Africa Price, Director of Public Relations and Communications

Organization/School: City of Shreveport, Louisiana

Signature



## PART I: General information

Name of Institution: Howard University

Name of Unit: School of Communications

Year of Visit: 2016

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

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

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

The Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America approved the original Act of Incorporation by which Howard University was established on March 2, 1867. The act provided for a "University for the education of youth in the liberal arts and sciences, under the name, style and title of The Howard University." It was amended in 1928 to authorize annual appropriations to "aid in the construction, development, improvements and maintenance of the University."

### **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: November 15-18, 2009

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

- Department of Radio, TV and Film: 1986
- Department of Journalism: 1986

The names have been changed to:

Department of Media, Journalism and Film

Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication

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

**School of Communications - Mission Statement**

The mission of the School of Communications is to prepare graduates to exercise global leadership within and across diverse communities, locally, nationally and globally through communication research, professional practice, innovation, job creation, social justice and service via cutting-edge knowledge, skills and technology.

The aforementioned mission is aligned with the mission of Howard University. It is a mission founded and grounded in ethics, academic freedom, the disciplined and rigorous pursuit of knowledge, a commitment to social advocacy and social justice, and a responsibility for leadership in the complex and multifaceted field of communications, as both academicians and professional practitioners.

In keeping with the research thrust of the University, the School of Communications is committed to a pedagogy that emphasizes skills not only as critical consumers of knowledge, but more importantly as creative and careful researchers/practitioners and producers of knowledge.

The School of Communications shall prepare its students to function effectively in and to contribute substantively to an ever-changing world that is communication-intensive and technology-driven. The School of Communications is committed to maintaining its domestic and internationally recognized reputation as a leading center for teaching, research and professional practice in the multidisciplinary and multidimensional field of communications.

The School of Communications provides an excellent research and professional education to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to process symbols for creating, analyzing and disseminating messages. We focus on communication policies affecting underserved and underrepresented populations in this country and abroad. We offer practicum experiences that prepare students to work in industries as well as in clinics for the speech and hearing disabilities.

*(The School of Communications mission statement was revised as part of the SOC Bylaws on Sept. 17, 2013. The Howard University Board of Trustees granted approval on Jan. 23, 2015.)*

**Department of Media, Journalism and Film - Mission Statement**

The Howard University Department of Media, Journalism and Film provides a professional and supportive scholarly environment informed by the African-American experience in which students learn to become exemplary practitioners, leaders and entrepreneurs who serve the profession and society. The department strives to graduate students empowered with the skills and tools necessary to understand and address social, political, economic and cultural injustices, particularly involving African Americans and other people of color.

*(Adopted May 2013)*

**Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication - Mission Statement**

The Strategic, Legal and Management Communication department's mission is to prepare students for professional careers or further academic studies through a curriculum that emphasizes the fields of public relations, advertising, legal communications, media management and organization communications management. Through a faculty distinguished by scholarship, professional achievement, inspired classroom instruction and commitment to the university's mission, the department strives to maintain national and global leadership positions. The Strategic, Legal and Management

Communication department seeks to instill in its graduates the capacity for high-level critical thinking, mastery of professional skills and an appreciation of how effective communication helps to shape society, commerce, politics and government. (*Adopted May 2013*)

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

Semesters of 15 weeks  
Two summer sessions of five weeks each

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

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Ph.D. degree

**9. List the specific undergraduate degrees being reviewed by ACEJMC.**

Students graduate with the following Bachelor of Arts degrees, all of which are under review by ACEJMC. Concentrations are listed in each section.

- Media, Journalism and Film
- Strategic, Legal and Management Communication
- Radio, Television and Film
- Journalism

<b>Department of Media, Journalism and Film</b>	<b>Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication</b>
Journalism	Advertising
Audio Production	Public Relations
Television and Film Production	Media Management
<b>* Department of Radio, Television and Film</b>	<b>* Department of Journalism</b>
Radio Production	Print/Online News
Television Production	Broadcast News
Telecommunications Management	Public Relations
	Advertising

*\* Undergraduate departments before reorganization of the School of Communications in 2013.*

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:**

Undergraduate majors are required to complete 120 semester hours to earn a B.A. degree. Students in the Annenberg Honors Program (AHP) earn an additional six to seven credits for courses required to complete a thesis. Students entering the AHP as freshmen, complete 127 credits, while those entering as sophomores complete a total of 126 credits.

**11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience.**

1 semester credit hour

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

The undergraduate programs at Howard are referred to as concentrations. The term “sequence” is used to refer to specialization areas within a concentration. The concentrations that are currently being offered are listed below:

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Person in Charge</u>
Dept. of Media, Journalism and Film	Prof. Yanick Rice Lamb
Concentration: Audio Production	Dr. Judi Moore Latta
Concentration: Journalism (Print, Online, Broadcast)	Prof. Ingrid Sturgis
Concentration: Television and Film Production	Prof. Jami Rambran
Dept. of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication	Dr. Chukwuka Onwumechili
▪ Concentration: Strategic Communication	Prof. Sheryl Johnson-Ross
○ Sequence: Advertising	Prof. Sheryl Johnson-Ross
○ Sequence: Public Relations	Prof. Sheryl Johnson-Ross
Concentration: Management Communication	Dr. Yong-Jin Park
Sequence: Media Management	Dr. Yong-Jin Park

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

For AY 2014-15, there were 7,295 full-time undergraduate students enrolled. Combined with the 3,377 graduate/professional students, the total full-time enrollment for AY 2014-15 was 10,672 (as of June 4, 2015).

The School of Communications had 811 undergraduate students in the programs under ACEJMC review during Spring 2015, including 764 full-time students and 47 part-time students.

**Enrollment -- Spring 2015**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Full-Time Students</b>	<b>Part-Time Students</b>
JOUR *	238	16
MJFC	220	6
RTVF *	154	16
SLMC	152	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>47</b>

\* Some students are listed under the old programs: JOUR and RTVF.

**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):**

**Undergraduate Students by Sequence — Spring 2015**

DEPT.	MAJOR										
	ADV	JOUR	PURL	PRJR	TELC	MMCM	BRJR	FMPR	AUPR	TVPR	TV/FM
RTVF					28			54	39	49	
JOUR	28		117	34			75				
SLMC	23		117			21					
MJFC		124							14		88
811 TOTAL	51	124	234	34	28	21	75	54	53	49	88

**Major Abbreviation Key:**

ADV = Advertising; JOUR = Journalism; PURL = Public Relations; PRJR = Print Journalism; TELC = Telecommunications; MMCM = Media Management Communication; BRJR = Broadcast Journalism; FMPR = Film Production; AUPR = Audio Production, TVPR = TV Production; TV/FM = Television and Film

**Department Abbreviation Key:**

RTVF = Radio, Television and Film

JOUR = Journalism

SLMC = Strategic, Legal and Management Communication

MJFC = Media, Journalism and Film Communication\*

\* Enrollment Management at Howard University requires four-letter abbreviations for scheduling purposes. Therefore, the word "Communication" has been added to the Department of Media, Journalism and Film to create the scheduling code.

**15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, 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 skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio.**

(\*The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

**Enrollment Spring 2015 – Fall 2015**

(\* Effective Spring 2013, the Writing for the Media and Reporting and Writing courses phased into Multimedia Storytelling, Fundamentals of Journalism and Public Affairs Reporting offered in MJFC.)

**JOURNALISM**

Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring 2015	Enrolled Fall 2015
JOUR	201	01	Writing for Media	5	n/a*
	201	02	Writing for Media		n/a
	201	03	Writing for Media		n/a
	201	04	Writing for Media		n/a
	201	07	Writing for Media		n/a
	201	08	Writing for Media		n/a
	201	10	Writing for Media		n/a
	202	01	Reporting and Writing	8	n/a
	202	02	Reporting and Writing	5	n/a



	201	05	Multimedia Storytelling	12	14
	231	01	Intro. Media Production		16
	360	01	DS: Producing EP Budget	11	n/a
	413	01	DS: Advanced Scriptwriting	9	n/a
<b>RADIO, TELEVISION AND FILM</b>					
Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring 2015	Enrolled Fall 2015
RTVF	231	01	Intro to Media Production	16	n/a
	231	02	Intro to Media Production		n/a
	231	03	Intro to Media Production	15	n/a
	231	04	Intro to Media Production	11	n/a
Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring 2015	Enrolled Fall 2015
RTVF	231	05	Intro to Media Production		n/a
	231	08	Intro to Media Production		n/a
Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring 2015	Enrolled Fall 2015
	232	01	Basic TV and Film		3
	232	02	Basic TV and Film	17	n/a
	232	04	Basic TV and Film		11
	322	01	Radio Production	9	n/a
	322	02	Radio Production		n/a
	322	03	Radio Production		n/a
	322	04	Radio Production		n/a
	324	01	Broadcast Performance	16	n/a
	324	02	Broadcast Performance	16	n/a
	326	01	Videography and Lab	9	n/a
	326	02	Videography and Lab		8
	331	01	TV Directing and Lab	15	9
	334	01	Scriptwriting I	0	n/a
	334	02	Scriptwriting I	17	10
	334	03	Scriptwriting I	17	1
	334	04	Scriptwriting I		7
	334	06	Scriptwriting I		7
	342	01	Cinematography I	11	9
	342	02	Cinematography I	13	14
	352	01	Telecomm, Advertising & Sales		n/a
	410	01	Directed Study		n/a
	410	02	DS: Adv. Cinematography		2
	410	03	Directed Study		2
	411	01	DS: Nonlinear Video Editing		n/a
	412	01	DS: Multi-track Music Production		n/a
	414	01	DS: Audio for TV/Film		n/a
	420	01	DS: Sounds for TV/Film	16	n/a
	421	01	DS: Nonlinear Video Editing	12	14
	422	01	DS: Multi-track Music Production	6	n/a
	423	01	Advance Radio Production		n/a
	426	01	DS: Nar Production	2	n/a
	431	01	Advance TV Production	22	10
	432	01	TV Practicum	13	18
	433	01	Radio Practicum	11	5
	434	01	Film Practicum	13	13
	435	01	Management Practicum	11	4
Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring	Enrolled



				2015	Fall 2015
RTVF	441	01	Documentary Filmmaking	5	n/a
	443	01	Film Directing	11	10
	443	02	Film Directing		7
	451	01	Broadcast Management	10	n/a
	498	01	DS: Byson Days	16	n/a

STRATEGIC, LEGAL AND MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION					
Dept.	Course #	Section	Course Title	Enrolled Spring 2015	Enrolled Fall 2015
SLMC	321	01	Advertising Sales	10	40
	322	01	Advertising Copywriting	8	2
	322	02	Advertising Copywriting	n/a	9
	322	03	Advertising Copywriting	n/a	7

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2015-2016 academic year:  
Percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

A total of \$182,400 has been planned for the two departments Media, Journalism and Film (MJFC) and Strategic, Legal and Management Communication (SLMC) due to budget constraints of the University. Lab fees are also included in the amount of \$95,000 for equipment's and supplies. Lab Fees are charged annually to students for technology improvements and enhancements in the School of Communications.

The percentage of expenditures has decreased by at least 50% due to budget constraints of the University.

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

The amount spent on full-time faculty salaries during 2014-15AY was \$3,778,688. There was a 6% market-adjustment pool for 2014-15AY.

**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.**

**NOTE:** This list includes only current faculty who teach in accredited concentrations as of Fall 2015.

Name and rank of all full-time faculty

Austin, Michael	Assistant Professor
Beckford, Mark	Assistant Professor
Berhe, Ambessa	Assistant Professor
Brown, Milbert	Assistant Professor
Carswell, Shirley	Lecturer
Chaudhary, Anju	Professor
Chung, Jae Eun	Assistant Professor
Clemons, Dionne	Lecturer
Holloway, John	Assistant Professor
Jenkins, Joanna	Assistant Professor
Johnson-Ross, Sheryl	Associate Professor
Lamb, Yanick Rice	Associate Professor

Langmia, Kehbuma	Associate Professor
Latta, Judi Moore	Professor
Lawson-Borders, Gracie	Professor
Malek, Abbas	Professor
Minor, Angela	Assistant Professor
Morton, Cynthia	Associate Professor
Williams, Sonja	Professor
Onwumechili, Chukwuka	Professor
Park, Yong Jin	Associate Professor
Ramberan, Jami	Assistant Professor
Ribeau, Sidney I.	Professor
Sang, Yoonmo	Assistant Professor
Saunders, Vicci	Associate Professor
Somani, Indira	Assistant Professor
Sturgis, Ingrid	Associate Professor
Thomas, Jennifer	Assistant Professor
Tyree, Tia	Associate Professor
Williams, Daniel	Associate Professor

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2015. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2015. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2016, please provide the updated list of faculty at time of visit.)**

Ahmed, Quazi	Fulwood, Sam
Alexander, Keith	Harris, Ronald
Berhe, Ambessa	Howell, Arnesa
Brown, Milbert	Kendrick, Frederic
Bowers, Lesley	May, Cheriss
Caldwell, Traci	Muckle, Craig
Carswell, Shirley	Ponder, Neosho
Clemons, Dionne	Sherry, Vincent
Dugo, Habtamu	Smalls, Morgan
Edney, Hazel	

**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.*

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>2014-2015</b>	245	245	100%
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	223	223	100%

*Please note that this includes all SOC undergraduates.*

## 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.***

Howard University was established in 1867 by an act of Congress, specifically charged with educating a predominantly black student population. Today, it is one of the nation's premier Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The School of Communications, the third-largest among 12 schools and colleges at Howard, was created in 1971. Its stated mission is "to prepare graduates to exercise global leadership within and across diverse communities, locally, nationally and globally through communication research, professional practice, innovation, job creation, social justice and service via cutting-edge knowledge, skills and technology."

Additionally, each of the departments within SOC has a mission statement:

The Department of Media, Journalism and Film "provides a professional and supportive scholarly environment informed by the African-American experience in which students learn to become exemplary practitioners, leaders and entrepreneurs who serve the profession and society. The department strives to graduate students empowered with the skills and tools necessary to understand and address social, political, economic and cultural injustices, particularly involving African Americans and other people of color."

The Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication "seeks to instill in its graduates the capacity for high-level critical thinking, mastery of professional skills and an appreciation of how effective communication helps to shape society, commerce, politics and government."

The School also has a strategic plan, which was written in 2012-13 as part of a university-wide presidential initiative. Because of a phased retirement initiative over the past five years, many of the faculty members who were instrumental in writing the SOC strategic plan are gone, but the plan is clearly a guiding force.

There currently are eight faculty members on tenure track, hired recently to replace the wave of retirements. The dean recognizes that one of her challenges for the School is to make sure that these new faculty members are aware of the goals of the strategic plan, written well before their arrival, and at the same time, take advantage of the input of the newly hired assistant professors.

University-wide, across-the-board budget cuts in recent years have put tremendous pressure on equipment funds and student advising within the School. At the same time, the dean has been able to retain faculty lines to replace retired faculty, which is an important indicator of university administration support for the School.

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

The School has a well-formed set of “bylaws” outlining faculty governance, which is reflected in the self-study and supporting appendices. Faculty meeting minutes and conversations with individual faculty members indicate that the faculty is actively involved in governance of the School. There’s also School representation on the University Faculty Senate.

Faculty committees representing a broad spectrum – from curriculum to research, student services, etc. – meet each month, to inform monthly department-level meetings, which in turn produce proposals for consideration at the School-wide level, which then must be filtered through an Executive Committee (EC). The EC is made up of representatives from the various departments. The EC then creates the agenda for monthly School-wide faculty meetings. Without EC-level support, proposals cannot be voted on at the School level. On paper, this would appear to be a potential throttle on faculty input; however, conversations with faculty and administrators indicated that the EC operated more as a facilitating body that “streamlined” the process.

A major overhaul of the curriculum and structure of the School was completed in 2012-13, just prior to the arrival of the current dean. The university-wide initiative aimed to update all of Howard University’s academic programs, and, based on conversations with School faculty members who were here at the time, incorporated and reflected faculty input. The dean requires faculty to attend monthly School-wide faculty meetings; poor attendance is noted by the dean in a faculty member’s annual performance evaluations.

***(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.***

According to faculty members as well as academic and administrative leaders from across the campus, the dean is an effective representative of the School within the university. Faculty also appreciate her leadership style, and indicate that she is available to meet with them on a one-on-one basis, as needed.

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

The School used a conventional, national-level search to hire its current dean at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 academic year. The School’s bylaws stipulate a process for evaluating the dean (every other year) as well as other key leaders in the program – including departmental chairs. The results of the evaluation of the dean are shared with the dean and the EC, while the results of the department chair evaluations are shared with the dean, the chairs, and the faculty.

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

A University-wide Faculty Handbook outlines procedures for faculty to file grievances, while the School’s own policies provide a means for students to file complaints. Each department within the School, as well as the School itself, maintains files with student complaints, including how they were resolved. Faculty complaints (and how they were resolved) are maintained in the individual faculty member’s personnel files.

**Summary:**

The site-visit team found that faculty in the School play a significant role in shaping the program, primarily through committees, monthly departmental and School-level meetings. The dean is seen by the faculty as smart and hard-working, and they appreciate her leadership in the face of huge economic challenges.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## 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.***

All communications students must complete 120 semester hours for a baccalaureate degree, though students in the Annenberg Honors Program earn an additional six to seven credits for courses required to complete a thesis. Students in the school must earn from 43 to 48 credits in their chosen concentration. The school is careful to emphasize on its advising and graduation checklists that students must complete at least 72 hours outside of the major.

The unit reports that 100 percent of students met the requirement that at least 72 credit hours be earned outside of the School of Communications. (The site team was unable to verify this because student files did not contain official transcripts.)

***(b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.***

In 2013-14 the school completed a reorganization and now has two undergraduate departments, and several concentrations organized by sequence:

Department of Media, Journalism and Film

- Journalism
- Audio production
- TV and film

Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication

- Strategic Communication
  - Advertising
  - Public Relations
- Legal Communication
- Management Communication
  - Media Management
  - Organizational Communication

An Interdisciplinary Studies program was introduced in 2014 that allows undergraduates to design a program of study from among the school's concentrations.

The School does not wish to have its Legal Communication or Organizational Communication sequences reviewed by ACEMJC.

Prior to the reorganization, the departments included Communication and Culture; Journalism; and Radio, Television and Film.

The seven-credit core required in the first two years of all students in the School includes two 3-credit conceptual courses, Digital Media Literacy, and Ethical Issues in Communications, and a 1-credit course, Introduction to Communication Professional Development. Students in all sequences must take Introduction to Mass Communications or Mass Communications Theory, Ethical Issues in Communications and either Multicultural Media History or Intercultural/International Communications. Regardless of concentration, all students have a smorgasbord of choices for professional practice and are required to complete one internship or practicum for course credit, which must be pre-approved. The school's location gives it a distinct advantage in exposing students to politics, policy-makers and the professionals who cover them, as well as the many advertising and public-relations firms that are closely involved in the political process.

The School's combination of theoretical and practical in the curriculum supports ACEMJC's core values and competencies and adherence to those objectives are evaluated each semester through a review of syllabi by sequence coordinators and the dean. Further, the School's reorganization addressed evolving industry standards and helps ensure that students are exposed to current trends in the media. They have the opportunity to become proficient in digital and online media, all the while benefitting from the school's long tradition of grounding students in the fundamentals of good journalism and communication.

***(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.***

The School's recent reorganization was completed with the goal of meeting current industry standards and technological trends. For example, its new curriculum establishes a multimedia foundation for all students before they delve deeper into a specialty area. The School's curriculum is forward-looking, while continuing to steep students in the practices of thinking, writing and clear communication.

Teaching is clearly a strength of the program. Students were effusive in their praise for the faculty, regarding them not only as excellent instructors, but caring mentors who are accessible and responsive at all hours. They said they were attracted to the School by the fact many of the professors remain active in their fields and bring current knowledge from the communications business to the classroom.

The School gathered students from all its sequences in two separate meetings with the site team. In a few cases only one or two students from each sequence was present but students' comments for all sequences were similar.

**Journalism, Audio and Television:** Faculty are demanding, students report, but will go to extremes to help them understand the assignments and will stay after class and into the evenings to give individual help if even a single student needs it. “They’re not here just to teach you,” one student said, “but to make sure you succeed.” Most of the professors continue to practice journalism, which gives students the confidence that what they are learning and putting into practice are the exact skills they’ll need to land jobs. Students felt hamstrung occasionally by lack of camera equipment, the quality of the classroom equipment and University wi-fi. Some televisions don’t work to reliably show films in class and every afternoon the wi-fi slows due to insufficient bandwidth so that Internet access in classes cuts off. That did not seem to bother the students, however. “Even though we might not have all the resources, our greatest asset here is the faculty,” a student said.

**Advertising, Public Relations and Media Management:** The teaching and mentoring of students is “really impactful,” one student said. “If faculty see something in you they really encourage it.” One student said he had never had a “boring” class in the School and other students nodded in agreement. They said they were grateful for the work ethic instilled in them and see how that gives them distinct advantages in internships. They thought most professors are tough, though they said the workload varied by professor. The only criticism came from a few students who, while otherwise offering a generous measure of praise, said a few advertising professors are too slow to return projects and sometimes return the projects with a grade but no critique. That was frustrating, they said, when a new project was assigned before they got sufficient feedback.

The School’s achievements in landing grants for curriculum development are impressive. Since its latest reaccreditation in 2009-10, faculty in the School have secured more than \$6.17 million in grants for curriculum development. Funding amounts ranged from a \$1,000 AEJMC research grant recognizing a study of the best practices for news consumption on tablets to a \$5 million programmatic grant from the American Association of Advertising Agencies. A few faculty members were particularly successful in winning grants for the School, but the array of faculty garnering funding and the impressive size of several awards are especially laudable.

Implementation of the restructuring also marked the return of the Paul Robeson Awards, which honors industry leaders and showcases student work in the Department of Media, Journalism and Film. In addition, NewsVision, which features packages from our Capstone broadcast journalism course, returned to WHUT, Howard’s PBS-TV station, after several years on hiatus.

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

The School appears to consistently maintain a ratio of fewer than 20-1 in skills courses. During the previous two semesters only one course, Introduction to Media Production, had more than the recommended maximum, enrolling one more student than recommended.



*(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.*

A distinguishing characteristic of the School is that its students typically complete multiple internships before graduation. Internships are closely supervised and departmental internship coordinators must approve all work sites in advance. Supervised Internship is a one-credit course that requires course attendance, a minimum number of documented work hours, supervision by a faculty member and approved media professional who provides an on-site assessment, written assignments, completed documents and professional development sessions. Students cannot earn more than three credits for internship, but may complete ungraded field experience to give them additional practical training. The School relies on its location, reputation and strong alumni network to locate internship placements. A career services director in the School is legendary among the students for analyzing their interests and abilities, picking up the phone and quickly finding them internships.

The School also provides many on-campus opportunities for practical experience. The Department of Media, Journalism and Film is affiliated with a University-owned and operated public television station (WHUT-TV) and the Howard University Radio Network, which includes a top-rated commercial urban radio station (WHUR-FM), HD radio channels and satellite radio channels in partnership with Sirius XM. The Department operates several student-run media, including WHBC, an AM radio station that also broadcasts online; Glass House Radio, an Internet talk radio station; HU News Service, a national news service; and 101 Magazine, a print and online magazine. Students are also engaged with Spotlight Network, a student news broadcast, and The Hilltop, the University's newspaper.

The Strategic, Legal and Management department is home to the student-run advertising and public relations agency, CapComm Lab, and the MLK Forensics Program with award-winning mock trial debate and parliamentary debate teams. The home of the NABEF Media Sales Institute funded by the National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation is the Media, Journalism and Film department.

**Summary:**

The School has a modern curriculum and a professional, demanding faculty that is admired, and in many cases beloved, by the students. The quality and number of internships available is a hallmark of the School and students eagerly take advantage of them. Students know they don't have the best equipment or facilities but are unfazed by that and proud of their work ethic and myriad achievements.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

### 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 diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit's definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.**

As an HBCU institution, Howard has a rich and powerful tradition of emphasizing the place of minority populations in majority cultures. The University's stated mission is to be "a culturally diverse, comprehensive research intensive and historically Black private university that provides an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with particular emphasis upon educational opportunities for Black students."

Given such, the challenges of spotlighting and exploring diversity in the School of Communication are different than at non-HBCU institutions. The School and its faculty clearly take those challenges seriously. The School has a written diversity plan with the following objectives:

- Recruit students from diverse, multicultural backgrounds, with particular attention to African American males.
- Recruit diverse and female faculty members to reflect the changing demographics of society.
- Offer a curriculum that exposes and sensitizes students to many cultures.
- Develop a cadre of ethnically diverse leaders to enhance the diversity efforts of the communications industry.
- Position the School of Communications as a national repository of knowledge about the communication behaviors of African Americans and other underrepresented populations.

Each of these objectives is followed by specific strategies, and there is ample evidence that the School's actions track well to these. The site team did observe, however, that at times the School community defines "diverse" as meaning "minority" in the larger societal context. That means there is not as much obvious student and faculty "diversity" as one might see on many other campuses. That said, students and faculty are quick to point to the national, ethnic, regional, religious, sexual and class diversity of African-origin groups represented within the school.

**(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.**

The curriculum is strong in this regard. All students are required to take one of two classes specifically focused on diversity in the media industries. Several other such classes are offered as electives, and

issues of race, gender and ethnicity are clearly a thread throughout the entire curriculum. Issues of sexual orientation are less evident, yet students say they come up regularly in their classes and the students we met certainly seemed comfortable in discussing these issues. Students boasted about how their education includes strategies on how to handle challenges when they find themselves as the minority in a work environment.

**(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.**

As one might expect at an HBCU, the majority of the faculty are African-American, at 69 percent of the full-time faculty. International faculty are 16 percent of the total, Asian-Americans are 9 percent and Whites are 6 percent. The staff is almost entirely African-American. Sixty-five percent of the faculty are female.

The School does exercise various means to recruit and retain a diverse faculty.

**(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.**

Howard's long-standing reputation among African-Americans as a beacon of history, heritage and excellence is an extraordinary draw. The student population of the School of Communications comes from 35 states, the District of Columbia and a dozen countries. Most of the students come from 16 states and the District, and that is what Howard considers its primary service area.

The student population is 96 percent Black or African-American, compared to 91 percent for the University as a whole. Among those SOC students are some from Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, India, South Africa, Pakistan and the UK. We heard from many students whose parents or grandparents attended Howard, and expressed that there was rarely if ever any doubt that they would also.

***(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 climate appears to be an extremely healthy one in this regard. We had extensive discussion with a vision-impaired student who is very happy with his experience here. Two faculty members who are neither African-American or African – a South Asian woman and a white man – said they have experienced no discrimination or discomfort.

**Summary:**

The values and principles behind this ACEJMC standard are a powerful foundation of this program.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

**FACULTY POPULATION TABLES, BY DEPARTMENT:****SLMC Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time**

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty. (Report International faculty the same way the univ. reports them.)

**Academic Year: 2015-16 Full-time faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	8	53.3 %	1	6.7%
White	0		0	
American Indian/Alaskan native	0		0	
Asian	1	6.7%	2	13.3%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0		0	
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0		0	
Two or more races	0		0	
Other race	0		0	
International (any race)	0		2	13.3%

Total FT Faculty in ACEJMC Accredited Programs = 14

**Unit Total FT Faculty = 15**

**Academic year: 2015 – 2016 Part-time/Adjunct faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	6.5%	44.8%	3	20.7 %
White	1	6.9%	2	13.8%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0		0	
Asian	1	6.9%	0	
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0		0	
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0		0	
Two or more races	0		0	
Other race	0		0	
International (any race)	0		1	6.9%

**Unit Total PT Faculty = 14.5\*** (One AA female is assigned to teach in both SLMC and MJFC)

**MJFC Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time**

*Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty.*

**Academic Year: 2015-16 Full-time faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	9	27%	4	12%
White	1	3%	1	3%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0		0	
Asian	0		0	
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0		0	
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0		0	
Two or more races	0		0	
Other race	0		0	
International (any race)	3	9%	2	6%
Total FT Faculty in ACEJMC Accredited Programs = 20				
<b>Unit Total FT Faculty = 33</b>				

**MJFC - Academic year: 2015 – 2016 Part-time/Adjunct faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	2.5	16%	6	38.7%
White	1	6.5%	1	6.5%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0			
Asian	0			
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0		1	6.5%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0			
Two or more races	0			
Other race	0			
International (any race)	2	12.9%	2	12.9%
<b>Unit Total PT Faculty = 15.5*</b> (One AA female is assigned to teach in both SLMC and MJFC)				

**COMC**

**Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time and Part-time**

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty. (Report international faculty the same way the university reports them.)

(Note: The Public Relations and Advertising concentrations did not exist in this department prior to the 2013-14 academic year.)

**MJFC - Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time and Part-time**

Show numbers of female, male, minority, white and international faculty members and the percentages they represent of the unit's total faculty. (Report international faculty the same way the university reports them.) SCHOOLS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES should adjust the response and listing below to best represent the racial/ethnic/socio economic groups of the area's population.

**Academic year: 2014 – 2015 Full-time faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	12	60%	2	10%
White	1	5%	1	5%
American Indian/Alaskan native				
Asian	1	5%		
Hispanic/Latino (any race)				
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander				
Two or more races				
Other race				
International (any race)			3	15%

**MJFC - Academic year: 2014 – 2015 Part-time/adjunct faculty**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>% of total faculty</b>
Black/African American	5	31%	7	44%
White			1	6.25%
American Indian/Alaskan native				
Asian				
Hispanic/Latino (any race)				
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander				
Two or more races				
Other race				
International (any race)	1	6.25%	2	12

\* NOTE: International faculty members are also counted under minorities.

#### **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 school does have written criteria for recruitment and selection of new faculty and staff, and for the evaluation of faculty and staff performance. Position announcements are nationally advertised in key publications geared to both academic and industry audiences. A faculty search committee screens the applications and conducts interviews of finalists, who are also interviewed by the chair, department faculty and the dean. Selected finalists then complete and submit formal application forms to the department's promotion and tenure committee for formal recommendation. The recommendation process then goes through the department chair, school-wide promotion and tenure committee and the dean for appointment by the provost and president. Processes for appointment, reappointment, promotion and tenure review are clearly spelled out.

The faculty feel strong support from the administration and their colleagues. One notable and unusual manifestation of this support: The senior faculty meet monthly with the junior faculty to advise and coach them on their tenure-and-promotion progress, through the Junior Faculty Mentoring Program established in 2013.

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

The vast majority of classes in the school – between 74 and 80 percent – are taught by full-time faculty. Many of the full-time faculty carry a 3-3 course load, which is heavier than many Research 1 universities with a High Research Activity Carnegie designation. Many of the scholarly, Ph.D.-holding faculty, however, are at a 3-2 load, given a course release because they teach a graduate course and/or have grant funding.

Despite the relatively heavy teaching load, tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to be involved in scholarship, research and/or creative activities throughout their stay at Howard. Additionally, there is a clear charge to provide service to the department, the school and the university, as well as to contribute to the professions.

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

The school's faculty is a strong mix of scholars and professionals, though the mix is dramatically different in the two departments. The Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication is heavily weighted to Ph.D.-holding scholars, while the Department of Media, Journalism and Film is weighted to professionals from industry. Despite this difference, there is little evidence of the sort of academic-vs.-professional rivalry seen in some institutions.

Faculty in both departments, and from varied backgrounds, demonstrate good engagement with the professions and exercise significant effort to stay current and connected.

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

Faculty members are evaluated by their chairs, the administration and students. Notably, the students we met were overwhelmingly effusive with praise for their teachers, whom they describe as being current, caring and accessible.

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

The School of Communications appears to be one of the most respected academic units at Howard University. Deans of other schools and central-office administrators praise the quality of the students and faculty and clearly take great pride in the school's luminary alumni. The best indicator of this respect emerged in a meeting the site team had with the deans of Howard's business and social-work schools. Both deans declared proudly that their offspring were graduates of the School of Communications.

#### **SUMMARY:**

Rarely have the experienced members of this site team heard such universal and passionate praise by students of their faculty. This School's faculty members are clearly a cohesive, hard-working, accessible team dedicated to the success of their students and the advancement of their disciplines.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**



## **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.***

As part of a comprehensive research university, the School's full-time faculty members are expected to produce peer-reviewed research or creative activity. This translates into more creative activity than traditional academic research in the School's departments that are subject to accreditation. The level of creative activity across the faculty is substantial, whereas academic scholarship is done by a few highly productive scholars. One challenge facing the faculty is a 3-3 teaching load. That load can be reduced with grant-based buyouts or specific requests made to the dean. In spite of what seems to be a high teaching load, tenure track faculty members expressed enthusiasm for the support they receive, including regularly scheduled monthly meetings with the dean and other mentors to help guide them through the promotion and tenure process.

Financial support for conference-related travel is limited to \$600 per year, supplemented by University-level funds that must be applied for by individual members of the faculty. Faculty members reported being fairly successful when it came to receiving University funds. Sabbaticals and reduced teaching loads are available to faculty, in accordance with School and University policies. However, these are available primarily to faculty members engaged in traditional academic research.

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

The School has clear guidelines and expectations for tenure-track faculty and faculty seeking promotion. Position descriptions reference the expectation, and the tenure and promotion guidelines include the necessary detail for a candidate to understand the expectations. Tenure-track faculty members verified that these expectations were made clear to them when they were hired.

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

Faculty members reported that their creative activities, as well as academic research, were given appropriate weight when it came to tenure and promotion decisions and contract renewals (for tenure track faculty). As noted previously, the School's several faculty members with strong professional backgrounds continue to produce creative activities, and appreciate that those activities are given due consideration by the School's P&T committee. Department-level peer review committees make recommendations to department chairs and the School's dean on merit raises, based on annual reviews of each faculty member. None of the faculty members we met with reported any concerns about the merit raise process.

***(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.***

Creative activities by the faculty were distributed primarily through University and local media outlets, while a total of 70 academic research papers were presented at academic conferences (2009-2015). The annual \$600 allocation per faculty member would seem to limit the opportunities afforded for conference presentations, although faculty members noted that on occasion they successfully obtained additional School and University support on an ad-hoc basis. The faculty also indicated that the School and University provided excellent support for grant writing, which had produced additional resources when successful.

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

Faculty members reported they were free to express their views, even if they differed from their colleagues'. At no time did any faculty member hint at ever being throttled when expressing their perspective, either through their research or creative activity.

**Summary:**

Despite limited financial resources for traveling to conferences, the School strives to provide a supportive environment for scholarship and creative activity among the faculty. Monthly tenure and promotion "coaching" sessions for tenure-track faculty are greatly appreciated by them, and could serve as a model for other programs around the country.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

Scholarship, Research, Creative Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (32)
		Full Professors (7)	Associate Professors (15)	Assistant Professors (10)	Other Faculty** (0)	
Awards and Honors	145	12	40	90	0	
Grants Received Internal	31	0	17	11	0	
Grants Received External	28	4	8	16	0	
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	9	2	7	0	0	
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	0	0	0	0	0	
Books Edited	17	6	6	5	0	
Book Chapters	15	4	6	5	0	
Monographs	0	0	0	0	0	
Articles in Refereed Journals	67	10	40	17	0	
Refereed Conference Papers	70	4	45	21	0	
Invited Academic Papers	3	2	0	1	0	
Encyclopedia Entries	3	1	1	1	0	
Book Reviews	43	42	2	0	0	
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	20	2	16	2	0	
Juried Creative Works	50	0	13	37	0	
Non-juried Creative Works	61	0	17	14	0	
Other (specified)	2	1	0	1	0	

\*Co-authored work should be counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors.

\*\*Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. Many faculty in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.

## 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.**

Students seemed keenly aware of what is required of them for their specific disciplines. Beginning in 2015, students are advised through counselors at a central University level for their freshman and sophomore years, and by advisers within the School for their junior and senior years. The impetus for this change, according to the University, is to improve on-time graduation. Students are not yet comfortable with the new arrangement but were particularly effusive in their praise of the School-based advisers. Additionally, students say faculty provide significant advice and support to them throughout their academic careers.

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

Many faculty members go above and beyond the required 10 office hours a week to avail themselves to students. There were several testimonials from students of how professors worked beyond their scheduled hours to ensure that students understood a subject matter or extended lab hours so students could complete projects. Impromptu and scheduled faculty/student meetings were observed throughout the visit. The faculty is passionate about being accessible to students to help them experience success. That includes everything from course work, career advisement, adjusting to college life and personal matters.

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

The unit keeps students informed of activities, requirements and policies in several ways, including bulletin boards throughout the school, on the School's website and through an electronic newsletter e-mailed to students. However, several students interviewed by the site team indicated that communication from the School could be better.

**(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 School offers numerous organizations that allow students to put to work the skills they've learned in the classroom. Students work at the WHUR and WHBC radio stations, Hilltop newspaper, and with established clients for public-relations projects. The School also offers an incubator business program that allows students to start their own businesses with the support of the program. Several students mentioned they have their own PR firms. Some faculty members continue to work in industry and integrate their real-time work into the curriculum to provide student learning opportunities. This has proven to be a tremendous asset for the students seeking internships and entry-level positions.

**(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.**

The school regularly monitors student enrollment, retention and graduation rates, which resulted in the University-wide change for student advising. The School of Communications specifically monitors individual students, as revealed by the students, keeping up with their grades and reaching out to them when there is a significant drop in GPA. Students commented on how helpful this process has been for them individually to get the needed support and improve their grades. Students who fall below a 2.0 semester GPA are placed in the Retention Program, where staff analyzes the drop and develops a plan of action for improvement.

**Summary:**

The mentoring of students is unquestionably one of the School's greatest assets. The attention and availability of faculty members shows their genuine concern for student success. Students love the nurturing support they get from their professors, who push them to reach their highest potential.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## 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 School does have a detailed annual budget. However, that budget is almost entirely an allocation from the University's central administration, and it was been reduced dramatically over the past decade. In fact, non-salary expenditures have been reduced by more than 50 percent. The strategic plan for the School, and its lofty aspirations, far exceed the resources allotted to it. To some degree, that has resulted in an admirable scrappiness among the administration, faculty, staff and students; they speak proudly of "The Howard Struggle." But at the end of the day, the potential of this faculty and these students is being held back by the lack of resources.

There is some hope for improvement. The new dean inherited a development program that was largely in limbo, with only \$115,000 raised in 2014. However, a \$2 million faculty-chair endowment secured by the previous dean is nearly fruition, and another large gift of \$4 million, secured by the president and at this point targeted for the School of Communications, is in process.

Additionally, Howard is seriously considering selling the rights to the broadcast spectrum for its public-television station, WHUT. This consideration is controversial, particularly among School of Communications alumni and some faculty, including the Howard Media Group (HMG), but University and School officials say the receipts from such a sale could directly benefit the School.

**(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 School of Communications is housed in the historic Freedmen's Hospital, built in 1909 and transferred to Howard in 1967. It is one of the oldest buildings on campus. It is regal on the outside but cavernous, cracking, cold (literally and figuratively) inside. In winter, students must wear heavy coats and gloves in some parts of the building to stay warm. Ceiling tiles are falling. Windows are broken. Maintaining and repairing the building is an enormous drain on the University, and the physical environment is not conducive to teaching and learning.

In 1998, the School's self-study said administrators expected to have a new building by the time of the next site-team visit, in 2004. That didn't happen, and in 2010, the ACEJMC site team wrote: "For more than a decade, the University has stretched the School's resources to cope with the constant stress of a decaying structure. Now, the conditions have reached the point to interfere with the program's momentum."

Six years later, conditions have not improved and are almost certainly worse. Some changes have been made, such as the construction of a small green-screen studio, but they are clearly makeshift and appear amateurish.

Even worse than the aging building is the shortage of equipment and technology. The single most common complaint among students is the lack of availability of equipment to do production projects, followed closely by nonfunctioning and/or erratic technology. One student cited a case in which the building wi-fi crashed during a crucial class period, and the professor had to fire up her personal cell phone's wi-fi hotspot to provide Internet access for students.

Sadly, students and faculty reflected that as bad as their facility is, other academic buildings at Howard are even worse. So it does appear that the unit is treated fairly within the University context. That would suggest that the School needs to take more initiative, and it does seem to be turning its attention to a heretofore moribund development effort.

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

Effective teaching and learning is occurring here **in spite of** the facilities. The infrastructure is a clear impediment to even better performance.

There have been some improvements, including the creation of a computer lab and of some “smart classrooms.” But they fall far short of what the program needs and deserves.

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

It does not. Students complain consistently and vociferously about the lack of access to equipment and about such basic needs such as being able to get onto the University's wi-fi system at busy times of the day.

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

It does.

**Summary:**

For three site-visit cycles, the facilities of this unit have been cited as a major weakness, though the standard was found in compliance. At this point, this team believes that we cannot in good conscience provide another pass. The excellence of this School is clearly in spite of its worn, inadequate facilities and equipment, and testimony to its leadership and faculty. That said, it could clearly be even better if these problems were finally addressed.

**Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE**

## 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:

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

This is a school in which alumni make up a majority of the part-time faculty, as well as part of the full-time faculty. According to the faculty and administrators, alumni are not automatically hired, simply because they are alumni of Howard. Those who have been hired were required to have several years of professional experience or experience at other academic institutions before returning to teach at the School. The site team appreciated that students valued the alumni in the field who teach in the School as adjuncts. Faculty connections with industry have created internships for students as well as opportunities for job shadowing. Students mentioned that many of their mentors in the field are professionals who have connections with HU.

**(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 site visit team found that the School's leadership and faculty demand high standards of professional practice, which is evident through their efforts to promote professional ethics among their peers and with the students. In addition, they endeavor to establish an environment of professionalism. Continuing education is often sought out by faculty and the staff, to the benefit of the School's students. The School regularly has brought leaders and industry leaders on campus to share their perspectives on communication issues of public consequence. The staff and students seem committed to keeping high standards to maintain the reputation and credibility of the School.

**(c) The unit contributes to the improvement of journalism and mass communication as academic disciplines by supporting the faculty's involvement in academic associations and related activities.**

Faculty members spoke highly of the support they get from administration to be involved in academic associations and related activities. There is a natural drive among the faculty to stay connected with academic associations, allowing them to stay current with cutting edge curricular changes in their respective disciplines. Several reported participating in workshops and seminars at other universities on topics such as digital journalism and social media, while others sit on professional and academic boards throughout the country and around the world. The faculty views their presence and involvement beyond the walls of HU as helping to improve the School and the cache of HU.



**(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 School does an effective job of positively impacting the neighboring area, with a community service project that involves students from a cross section of disciplines. The School has managed a grant for nine years that pairs 50 students with preschool children in DC public schools and Head Start classes. The program, called Jumpstart, is an early literacy program that helps prepare 3- to 5-year-olds for school success. The School's students implement an annual educational fair, "Jumpstart for a Day," to encourage family involvement in each child's education, while also promoting adult literacy. Students provide news coverage of the event through media outlets affiliated with the School, such as WHUR and WHUT.

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

The School appears to be open to hosting faculty workshops in which staff can be updated on advances in the industry. Industry leaders frequently are invited to the school as guest lecturers for both faculty and students. Often, these leaders set up projects allowing students and HU to "give back" to the community, for example with symposia organized by students but sponsored by industry organizations. In one instance cited by the faculty, public relations majors worked on a community event with the Washington Post involving student interviews of individuals who never thought they would live to see an African American U.S. President. The interviews were followed by a public discussion called "In my lifetime."

**Summary:** This School has a strong track record and consistent commitment to professionalism and public service. Interviews with faculty, professionals and students show that community involvement is a deeply ingrained part of the School's culture.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## 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 School has adopted learning outcomes that draw from the Howard University General Education Outcomes (HUGE 21) and the ACEJMC professional values and competencies to create 16 learning outcomes expected of all students in the School. They include 11 of the ACEJMC 12 values and competencies, but exclude the one that states all students must demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications. The School addressed that omission by saying it broadly conceives the concept of marginalized groups and, as part of its social justice mission, addresses in its teachings the concerns of any minority group. Students report that gender, race and sexual orientation are discussed across the curriculum and that ethnicity is integral to the School because of its globally diverse student body.

To the 11 ACEJMC values the School added five more:

- Understand and demonstrate the ethical use of digital communication
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship
- Demonstrate an awareness of hearing, language and speech disorders, and other physical abilities and disabilities & their accommodations
- Apply the principles of effective oral /interpersonal communications in a variety of professional contexts
- Demonstrate media literacy with a critical understanding of messages in mediated communication.

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

Initially, based on the self-study, this team was concerned that perhaps the unit did not have what we would consider a true assessment plan. Ultimately, though, we concluded after being on-site that not only is there a recently adopted, high-quality plan, but that its principles had been in practice for much of the period under review.

The School reports it first adopted an assessment plan in 2003. Included in the self-study was an undated plan that included six broad guidelines for conducting assessment activities and a process it calls SCOPE (School of Communications Opportunities for Program Enrichment) to analyze assessment data and use the information to improve curriculum. Our site team considered this more of a guideline for assessment than a true plan, but the 2010 site team judged it to be a “comprehensive” assessment plan and the Committee and Council found the unit compliant on this standard.

We are impressed, however, with a plan adopted in December 2015. It is clear, comprehensive and provides detailed direct and indirect measures the School uses to assess student learning, as well as a timeline it has adopted to engage in the various assessment activities. Most importantly, it is clear that the unit has been using these measures for some time, and that they were at the foundation of major curricular changes.

Direct measures used by the School include an e-portfolio, required writing samples, capstone courses, supervised internships and a math exam administered to incoming students and to seniors. Indirect measures include a senior survey, a University exit survey, an occasional alumni survey, course evaluations and student performance in external competitions.

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

Once on site, we were able to view hundreds of pages of descriptions of assessment activities and data collected from the various measures it uses. While there were few specific comments in the printed materials about how it uses the data to revise individual courses, the School reports that it used its findings to revamp its entire curriculum as part of a recent School reorganization. However, that process was not in evidence in the materials submitted for the self-study or from those made available to the team on site.

Additionally, it must be said that it was a frustrating experience before the site visit to understand how the School was conducting assessment. The Standard 9 narrative was vague, rambling and at times incomprehensible. The appendices were unhelpful in providing any insight into assessment activities. In the few instances in which the School did address how it used information collected for the self-study, it made statements such as: “First Amendment Knowledge was assessed and only one question, regarding the right to bear arms, was incorrectly answered by a majority of the students responding. As such, these survey responses indicate that there is a trend for our students to learn and understand what rights are provided via the First Amendment of our Constitution.”

It also stated: “One hundred percent of the students in 2012 identified that Freedom of Speech is part of the U.S. Constitution. 83.3% identified that the right to due process was covered in the First Amendment compared with only 60.6% of the graduating class of 2009.”

In the future the School should make a more robust effort to specifically address how assessment has led it to make curriculum improvements.

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

The School surveys its alumni every four years through its Office of Career Development. It compiles the data and reports general findings (87 percent are satisfied with their education) but does not cite how it has used those findings to improve the curriculum. However, it is also clear that the School has an exceptionally strong, informal relationship with its alumni and anecdotal evidence is persuasive that individual professors react to feedback by adjusting courses to meet the current demands of the

profession. As a whole, the School recently did a critical analysis of its curriculum as it transitioned to a new organizational structure and there's no doubt that alumni experiences helped inform that process.

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

The School has an extensive and popular internship program and as part of the internship experience does have supervisors evaluate students' performance in several areas, some of which include the 12 values and competencies. It also uses alumni and an extensive network of professionals to evaluate e-portfolios that all students initiate as freshmen and update throughout their academic careers.

**Summary:**

Offering a judgment on this standard was particularly challenging for the team, both because of insufficient information in the self-study and because earlier site teams rendered a decision different than this one might have on practices in place at that time. Once we were on the ground, we came away confident that for this review period the School has taken assessment seriously and employs appropriate direct and indirect measures.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

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

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

##### **Strengths:**

- An engaged faculty that cares deeply about the students and maintains active connections to the media industries
- A newly adopted curriculum that addresses changes in the communications industries yet maintains the traditional values of clear thinking, good writing and ethical practices
- An administration responsive to faculty needs and concerns
- A motivated, engaged student body
- Numerous student media outlets for students
- Access to many media outlets throughout the Washington, D.C., region
- A proud alumni base ready to engage

##### **Weaknesses:**

- An aging, decrepit facility with insufficient classroom presentation technology
- A diminishing budget inadequately supported by fundraising
- Heavy teaching loads for tenure-track faculty members who are trying to remain productive as scholars and producers of creative activity
- Insufficient field production equipment for broadcast television courses
- Insufficient support for faculty travel to present research at academic conferences

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

Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

Shortage of equipment, particularly for production classes

Inconsistent wi-fi access

Weak fund-raising program

A building with myriad structural, functional, technological and design problems that gets in the way of effective learning

#### **4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that should 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.**

The previous three site-team reports have pointed to facilities and resources as a significant problem, though those teams found Standard 7 in compliance. This team judged the School to be out of compliance on this standard, and strongly urges the School and the University to address the crucial issue with gravity and urgency.

- 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.**

This self-study was extremely uneven in its quality, with some sections strong and others quite problematic. The result was that the site team had to work far harder than is normally the case to obtain some basic and essential data.