

Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC
Undergraduate program
2015–2016

Name of Institution: Texas Christian University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Chancellor Victor J. Boschini, Jr.

Name of Unit: Department of Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: John Tisdale, Department Chair

Date of 2015 - 2016 Accrediting Visit: January 31 – February 3, 2016

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

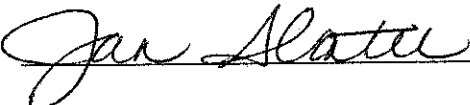
Recommendation by 2015 - 2016 Visiting Team: **Provisional**

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Jan Slater, Dean

Organization/School: College of Media, University of Illinois

Signature  _____

Team Members

Name and Title: Andy Alexander, Visiting Professional

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

Signature  _____

Name and Title: John Cochran, Retired Senior Correspondent

Organization/School: ABC News

Signature  _____

Name and Title:

Organization/School:

Signature _____

Name and Title:

Organization/School:

Signature _____

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Institution: Texas Christian University

Name of Unit: School of Journalism

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 Articles of Incorporation (Article I and II) state that the name of the corporation shall be Texas Christian University.

An excerpt: "The purpose for which this corporation is formed is the support of an educational undertaking to wit: The establishment and maintenance of an institution of learning, of university rank, for education and training of students in the arts, sciences and languages, and in all branches of learning ... in the State of Texas."

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: January 31, 2010

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1967

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

The mission statement has not been updated since the last accreditation.

To educate journalism and strategic communication students to think and act as responsible professionals and ethical citizens in a global community; to help students develop competencies necessary to prepare them for professional employment or advanced studies; and to develop skilled professional communicators who understand their social, legal and ethical responsibilities, and their career opportunities in a technological society.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 16 weeks

Summer sessions of 4, 8 and 10 weeks

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

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

B.A. in Journalism

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

(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

124 semester hours

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

6 semester hours

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: Journalism

Person in Charge: John Tisdale

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 8,894

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	146
Total	146

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.)

Note: Registration for the spring term will occur after the self-study deadline. Figures will be submitted when available.

Spring 2016	Number of students
Media Writing & Editing, section 015	14
Media Writing & Editing, section 016	8
Media Writing & Editing, section 035	15
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 010	13
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 030	12
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 050	8
Reporting, section 015	13
Reporting, section 035	16
Multimedia Reporting, section 070	14
Multimedia Reporting, section 074	11
Newscast, section 055	10
Business Journalism, Section 074	6
Long-Form Journalism, section 055	10

Fall 2015	Number of students
Media Writing & Editing, section 015	14
Media Writing & Editing, section 016	14
Media Writing & Editing, section 035	15
Media Writing & Editing, section 045	14
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 010	11
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 030	12
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 050	5
Reporting, section 015	14
Reporting, section 035	17
Multimedia Reporting, section 020	12
Multimedia Reporting, section 030	15
Newscast, section 070	4
Television Sportscast, section 055	3
Public Affairs Reporting, section 055	2
Visual Journalism, section 055	3

Spring 2015	Number of students
Media Writing & Editing, section 015	14
Media Writing & Editing, section 016	14
Media Writing & Editing, section 035	6
Media Writing & Editing, section 045	13
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 010	6
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 030	14
Radio/TV Newswriting, section 050	11

Reporting, section 015	16
Reporting, section 035	21
Multimedia Reporting, section 030	4
Multimedia Reporting, section 070	6
Newscast, section 070	8
Television Sportscast, section 055	7
Public Affairs Reporting, section 080	14
Sports Journalism, section 035	14
Visual Journalism, section 055	7

16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2015 – 2016 academic year: \$1,626,338.23

This is an increase from 2014-15.

Percentage increase or decrease in three years: An average increase of 2.9 percent each year

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$889,229.04

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.

- Robert Bohler, Instructor
- Jean Marie Brown, Instructor
- Kent Chapline, Instructor
- Aaron Chimbel, Associate Professor of Professional Practice
- Melita Garza, Assistant Professor
- Steve Myers, Lecturer
- Lisa Parisot, Lecturer
- Daxton Stewart, Associate Professor
- Tommy Thomason, Professor
- John Tisdale, 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.)

Spring 2015

- Kathleen Alusick
- Christen Carter*
- Robert Hart
- Tawnell Hobbs

Fall 2015

- Kathleen Alusick
- Christen Carter*
- Robert Hart
- Tawnell Hobbs

Spring 2016

- Christen Carter*

* Also serves as Director of Digital Media and is full-time

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.

Academic Year	72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications		
	Total graduates	Number	Percent
2014 - 2015	42	42	100%
2013 - 2014	150	150	100%

In 2013-14, Strategic Communication and Journalism were part of the same school (The School of Journalism and Strategic Communication). The Strategic Communication faculty, with the approval of the dean and provost, voted to separate from Journalism, effective June 2014. Figures for the 2013-14 year are for the combined school; figures for the following year are for the School of Journalism only.

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.

The mission of the department of journalism is to help students develop the skills they need to fearlessly tell effective and ethically-responsible stories beginning with their first job and help them develop the mindset they need for their careers.

The journalism department at TCU began in 1927, driven by a strong student media entity, the *Daily Skiff* (founded in 1902). The department added advertising and public relations in 1976. Structurally, the department was first situated in the College of Arts and Sciences, then in a new College of Fine Arts and Communications in 1988 and in 1999 the College of Communication. In 2005, the department became a school and TCU named it for CBS senior correspondent Bob Schieffer, a 1959 TCU journalism graduate. At the time of the last accreditation visit in 2010, the Bob Schieffer School of Journalism and Strategic Communication had its first director and was thriving with more than sufficient resources and strong institutional support. In the years following, severe tensions between the faculty and the director, and between the director and administration caused turmoil and unrest. By 2013, the director was out, an interim director was appointed, a search was launched for a new director, and faculty were weary.

In 2014, the strategic communication faculty voted to separate from journalism and the university attached the Schieffer name to the College of Communication. Therefore, the Bob Schieffer College of Communication became home to the School of Journalism and the School of Strategic Communication, as well as the departments of Film, Television and Digital Media, and Communications Studies. A new dean was appointed July 1, 2015 and it was her decision to reclassify the two schools in the college as departments. That change took effect January 2016 just prior to the arrival of the site team.

This shift has been a difficult transition for journalism faculty. Many of their governance documents were designed around the Schieffer School of Journalism and Strategic Communication. Now they must create their own set of bylaws, strategic and assessment plans, and rethink courses and curriculum as the journalism faculty no longer teach core courses to strategic communication majors. There is a strategic plan that was completed in 2013. However, it is for a School of Journalism and Strategic Communication, and needs to be adapted for the journalism department. The department currently has 159 majors and 75 minors. This is a decline over the past five years from a high of 190 majors (17 percent). The current chair is stepping down and a search is underway in order to have a new chair in place by fall 2016. Basically, the last six years have been a turbulent time for the unit. The new dean and a new chair should provide some welcome stability and improvement overall.

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

Faculty governance policies are set at the university level. The department uses committees to determine policy. College committees such as the Advisery Committee (which determines promotion

and tenure) does not have journalism representation because it requires a tenured faculty member, and there are not enough tenured faculty members to serve on both the department and the college committee.

In general, the faculty feel they are included in decision-making within the department. However, the news that strategic communication would be split from journalism was unexpected and not discussed within the journalism faculty. The same is true regarding the decision to revert the school to a department.

(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 current department chair has experience in running the unit. He is highly regarded by the provost and the new dean. He served as associate director under the previous school director who retired in 2013-14. Following a year as interim, the current chair received a permanent appointment without faculty input, which seems to be the norm within the unit.

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

There has only been one previous search for a director, conducted in 2008-09. The faculty did have input on this hire and had representation on the search committee. The current search for a department chair has strong faculty representation and input. All other appointments were made by the previous dean without faculty input. Journalism faculty did participate and had input during the search for the new dean.

According to the provost, chairs have three-year appointments and can serve a maximum of six years. Annual reviews of a chair are conducted by the dean. For reappointment purposes, faculty are consulted.

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

The university has a grievance policy and process for faculty and staff issues, including specific provisions for mediation and escalation. Student complaints are filed with individual faculty members or the chair. When complaints cannot be resolved with the faculty member, cases are referred to the chair. When the complaint involves the chair, the associate dean of the college hears the complaint.

SUMMARY

This has been a time of tremendous change and transition for the college and the journalism department. The new leadership in the college as well as the new department chair will be critical in helping the journalism faculty recover and thrive. There are positive signs that there has already been some success and the faculty are positive about having a new direction.

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.

In addition to a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, the department offers optional certificates in broadcast journalism, business journalism and sports journalism. Students must have 124 semester hours to graduate. The journalism major requires 33 course hours, as well as a minor or second major and a fourth semester in a foreign language. In addition, students must pass the TCU core requirements. The unit is in compliance with 100 percent of graduating students meeting the hours requirement in the two preceding years.

The required 33 hours must include at least 16 hours of skills courses, at least 12 hours of conceptual courses and five hours of electives. Among skills courses, students first take Media Writing and Editing, then Radio/TV Newswriting, followed by Reporting and then Multimedia Reporting. After taking Reporting and Multimedia Reporting, students also take capstone courses such as Business Journalism, Public Affairs Reporting, Newscast or Sportscast. The class size of skills courses does not exceed 15 students. Interviews with faculty indicated adherence to this 15-1 ratio.

Required conceptual courses include Introduction to Journalism, Diversity and the Media, and Law and Ethics of Mass Communication. In addition, students are required to take a “Seminar” course (examples: Media in Washington, Issues in the News, Issues in Coverage of Business and the Economy).

Before enrolling in Reporting, students must receive a “C” or better in Introduction to Journalism, Media Writing and Editing, Radio/TV Newswriting and Diversity and the Media.

There is an extensive list of elective courses – more than 40 listed in the self-study and it was unclear as to how often these courses could be taught with a small faculty and a heavy sequence of requirements. This may be a residual of a larger program (School of Journalism and Strategic Communication) and may need some attention in order to teach electives regularly.

Students who were queried about curriculum said these electives were not offered on a regular basis. The students felt the sequencing of core courses provided them a solid foundation of basic journalism skills and concepts on which to build and deepen their journalism education.

(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.

As noted above, the curriculum includes a required mix of theoretical/conceptual courses and skills courses. Students spoke approvingly of this mix, with several saying they felt it provided a broad grounding in both skills and theory. That said, several faculty expressed concern that required introductory courses were not providing adequate grounding in core skills of reporting and writing, making it more challenging for some students to subsequently handle the demands of advanced classes like Public Affairs Reporting. “If they don’t get grounded in the basics, they hit the wall when they get in the courses that require them to actually function like daily journalists,” said one faculty. “If they don’t have the basics, they can’t keep up later.” Another member of the faculty generally agreed, noting students can’t perform at higher levels if they haven’t mastered the basics. Another suggested that a solution is to make required entry-level courses, like Media Writing and Editing, more demanding. Understanding and acting on these views is important in light of the self-study’s assertion that “our program excels in teaching students how to write and edit, in traditional and now emerging forms of media.”

(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.

On balance, both faculty and students indicated adequate instruction in digital, technological and multimedia competencies. As with the faculty of most journalism programs, the level of digital and multimedia expertise varies. But in discussions with instructors and students, most said they felt that faculty understand the importance of skills so critical to journalism in the Digital Age. That said, several faculty urged the unit’s leadership (the department chair, with reinforcement from the Schieffer College dean) to more forcefully stress the importance of faculty constantly upgrading new media skills.

(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.

As noted above, interviews with faculty confirmed that the size of classes for skills courses did not exceed 15.

(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 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 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.

Internships are not mandatory, but they are strongly encouraged. Among students who met with the team, a high percentage reported having at least one internship, and several said they will have had multiple internships before graduating.

Students must arrange their own internships. But they are aided by faculty and staff, who regularly share information about internship possibilities directly with students or through postings on bulletin boards or on Frog Jobs, the university's job listing site. The committee spotted internship information on bulletin boards throughout the department. Students reported that faculty and staff have been helpful in steering them to industry contacts who might help them land internships. Students benefit from TCU's location in the nation's fifth largest media market, which ensures more internship opportunities than in smaller markets.

All internships must be approved by the department's internship coordinator. At the same time, companies offering internships must provide agreements requiring them to review the performance of interns and validate the intern's worklog. Companies typically assign a supervisor who evaluates the intern's performance at mid-semester. These evaluations are to be shared with the student and the Internship Coordinator reviews them for purposes of awarding a grade and monitoring intern performance.

Also at mid-semester, interns must submit an essay describing their experiences to date. According to the self-study, "This is a reflective piece in which students explain what's going right, and more importantly, if anything is doing poorly. The internship coordinator reads the papers for a grade and to determine if there's a situation that requires intervention or at the very least coaching." At the conclusion of the semester, students submit another essay reflecting on the ten most important things they learned from their internship. They also submit a portfolio of their work (typically in digital format). The internship coordinator reviews and evaluates these submissions.

Students can receive academic credit for internships: one credit hour for every 75 hours worked (to a maximum of six credit hours).

SUMMARY

The curriculum for the department is in compliance. There are areas which warrant attention, including the need to evaluate whether core classes are providing students with skill levels adequate for their further development in more demanding courses. And there is the constant need for faculty to acquire, expand and/or refine skills and knowledge necessary in the Digital Age.

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 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.

The journalism department does not have its own diversity plan. In August 2013, such a plan was prepared by a Schieffer School "Diversity ad-hoc committee" and was submitted for approval to what was then combined journalism and strategic communication faculty. But the director of what is now the journalism department (previously the journalism school) said the plan was never approved. No action was taken following the decision in June 2014 to split Strategic Communication and Journalism into separate schools (and now, more recently, departments). While the journalism program has been operating without a written, approved plan, there is some evidence that the journalism department is using the 2013 plan.

The recommendations in the proposed 2013 diversity plan were extensive and aspirational. They established goals and objectives ranging from proposals for diversity training to increased efforts to recruit minority students, faculty and staff. One of those recommendations called for creating a "standing Schieffer Diversity Committee to be an advocate for diversity." But the self-study acknowledges that this was not done. "Although we believe our student and faculty minority representation exceeds the accrediting body's standard, we need a diversity committee to remain diligent in seeking a more diverse faculty and student body."

The percentage of minorities in the unit exceeds that of the university as a whole. For the 2014-15 academic year, for example, Black/African-American enrollment was 11.3 percent of the unit's total (and for the university as a whole, Black/African-American enrollment was only 4.8 percent). For the same academic year, Hispanic/Latino enrollment was 8.4 percent of the unit's total (and for the university as a whole, Hispanic/Latino enrollment was only 10.6 in a state where the Hispanic/Latino population was 38.6 percent in the latest census). There is little evidence that the department has solid recruiting objectives and strategies in place to improve upon student diversity. However, the faculty and campus take pride in the diversity currently represented in the department.

Similarly, the self-study notes that of the ten full-time journalism faculty, two (20 percent) are minorities. Thus, it says, the unit "continues to outpace the university as a whole with diversity in both faculty/staff and student populations."

During the accreditation cycle being examined, the unit hired only the second African-American full-time faculty and the first Hispanic full-time female faculty member in the history of the journalism program. Thus, the hiring of these two faculty represents progress.

It was noted that minorities have occupied top posts in student media in recent years. And minorities have been well represented as outside speakers and panelists at Schieffer.

There is no TCU chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (although one is being considered). Likewise, there is no chapter for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists or the Asian American Journalists Association.

(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.

Many faculty asserted that efforts are made to address diversity in the syllabus and class discussions for every course, but there was inconsistent evidence of this after a review of syllabi. Students interviewed by the team agreed that the diversity class was intense, but they had a desire to have more diversity discussions and assignments across other courses. In the fall of 2014, the one-credit Race, Gender and the Mass Media course was broadened to three credit hours and renamed Diversity and the Media and is required. The review of this course syllabus does provide evidence of immersive study of diversity. Several faculty volunteered that they include Robert C. Maynard’s Fault Lines as part of their course discussions.

(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.

The unit’s faculty and staff are small, limiting opportunities to diversify. The hiring of a Hispanic and African-American (both women) is cited as evidence that successful efforts were made to diversify when openings occurred. The 10-person faculty currently includes seven males and three females.

(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 chair and numerous faculty said increasing minority enrollment is a priority for the journalism department. One target of opportunity is an annual high school journalism workshop, with increased focus trying to increase attendance from geographic areas with high concentrations of African-Americans and Hispanics. Tarrant County, where TCU is located, is projected to have a plurality of Spanish-language speakers by mid-century. As the self-study correctly notes, “the changing demographics of our community and the country compel the (program) to be diligent in ensuring our faculty and staff is as diverse as possible.”

Faculty and administration do recognize they need more efforts in recruitment and more financial assistance to overcome the barrier of the high cost of tuition.

(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 committee detected nothing to indicate a climate of harassment and/or discrimination. However, several mentioned some racial and gender tensions among certain faculty.

SUMMARY

A diversity plan is an important indicator for this standard. While the journalism faculty attest to acting on a previous plan written for the School of Journalism and Strategic Communication, it is obvious that the journalism department would benefit from its own plan, and overall the faculty understand that. The plan that was developed when journalism and strategic communication were together is a solid plan, it just hasn't been acted upon. And a key recommendation within that proposed plan – the creation of a diversity committee – was also not implemented during the period covered by the self-study. However, the department has had success in recruiting women and women of color, and the department's student population is more diverse than the university. In discussions, there was evidence that the program's chair and faculty are committed to diversity. A plan will help them set achievable goals and measure progress.

COMPLIANCE

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

Group	Female	Percent of total faculty	Male	Percent of total faculty
Black/ African-American	1	10	0	0
White	1	10	7	70
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	10	0	0
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more races	0	0	0	0
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	0	0	0	0

Academic year 2014 - 2015**Part-time/adjunct faculty**

Group	Female	Percent of total faculty	Male	Percent of total faculty
Black/African- American	1	25	0	0
White	2	50	1	25
American	0	0	0	0
Indian/Alaskan native				
Asian	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more races	0	0	0	0
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	0	0	0	0

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 site team reviewed written criteria covering search procedures for full-time and part-time faculty, as well as materials covering expectations and evaluations for those employed in these positions. It found them comprehensive and clear. They explain expectations for everything from teaching to scholarship to artistic and creative activity.

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

Full-time faculty teach the majority of courses and also have the primary responsibility for research and creative activity and service. However, there is an imbalance of tenure-track faculty to non-tenure track faculty, which puts a burden on the tenure-track faculty to meet all the academic demands. Because TCU exists in the nation's fifth largest media market, the program is able to draw talented and experienced adjunct professionals to help with teaching.

(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.

There are ten full-time faculty and four part-time (adjunct) faculty. It is worth noting that full-time faculty are weighted in favor of those with "professional" backgrounds versus those with traditional academic records or have a strong professional background with a terminal degree. This imbalance makes it difficult to fill university and college committees, and recruit new scholars to boost the research identity of the program. Beginning next academic year, the program will lose its "professional in residence" slot, thus slightly altering the balance.

The journalism program enjoys a budget sufficient to pay faculty to attend conferences or training sessions. Thus, ample opportunities exist for fully funded professional development. Between \$1,800 and \$2,500 per faculty member has been allotted annually for training and professional development.

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

The department chair, as well as faculty, said evaluation of instruction occurs regularly. Students provide university-wide standardized feedback on the quality of course instruction. Course assessment is handled through TCU's centrally administered Office of Institutional Research. Students and faculty are able to access evaluations. These course evaluations cover everything from the clarity of assignments to faculty-student interaction to the quality of instruction and engagement on the subjects being taught. There does not appear to be a systematic review of faculty reviewing faculty teaching.

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

The self-study notes that faculty are expected to “seek and respond to calls for service within the university and the community.” In meeting with academic leaders from elsewhere on the TCU campus, several cited examples of journalism faculty who participated in cross-departmental programs or initiatives. These leaders spoke highly of the journalism faculty, which also enjoys what seemed to be a somewhat elevated status due to campus-wide pride in the Schieffer College.

SUMMARY

The faculty is well-qualified with a mix of professional experience and academic expertise. The site team felt more attention should be paid to maintaining a proper professional/academic balance. Students generally praised the faculty, noting especially its eagerness to provide personalized attention. Leaders throughout the university hold the journalism faculty in high regard.

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.

TCU employs the teacher-scholar model, requiring an active research agenda and an excellent record of teaching. Within the department, all faculty members regardless of rank or classification are encouraged to pursue scholarly or creative endeavors. The unit has generous resources to provide travel funds and the faculty are encouraged to use them. According to the self-study, the majority of faculty have received travel funds. Faculty handle student advising and because there are so few faculty in the unit, there is a need for everyone to do service work. Faculty with a tenure-track appointment teach a 3/2 load as opposed to professionals who are required to teach a 4/4.

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

The department has a document that explains the criteria for faculty appointment, reappointment, promotion, tenure and merit increases concerning scholarship. This detailed outline describes what constitutes research as well as creative endeavor.

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

Evaluation criteria is well documented and the department clearly states its expectation for tenure-track faculty to produce one to two refereed journal articles per year. Annual reviews of faculty are conducted as well as third year reviews for probationary faculty.

(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.

Despite heavy teaching, advising, and service loads, the journalism faculty have had some success in the area of scholarship and creative endeavor. In the last six years, the faculty has published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journalism History*, *Electronic News*, and *Journal of Social Media in Society* and have presented multiple conference papers at the national AEJMC conference. Overall, the faculty has produced 15 book chapters, 13 refereed journal papers, 22 refereed conference papers, 14 book reviews, and 43 non-refereed papers for *PBS*, *Online Journalism Review*, and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* to name just a few.

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

Following the split with strategic communication, and because there are so few tenure-track faculty in the department, the scholarly climate is a bit unsettled. There is evidence, however, that this is improving under the new dean. She has met with tenured and tenure-track faculty to discuss their needs and is trying to put emphasis on scholarship. There are plentiful resources for faculty travel, and tenure-track faculty seem to be presenting and publishing in the expected conferences and journals in the discipline. There is an excellent university policy regarding sabbaticals, but no journalism faculty have taken a sabbatical in the last six years.

SUMMARY

This is a small tenure-track faculty who are dedicated to scholarship and creative endeavor. The “culture” of scholarship has been diminished due to the separation from strategic communication and the retirement last year of a senior scholar. There are multiple projects underway and with the continued support of the department as well as the college, it is expected scholarship productivity will increase.

COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (10)
		Full Professors (2)	Associate Professors (3)	Assistant Professors (1)	Other Faculty** (4)	
Awards and Honors	26	5	7	3	13	28
Grants Received Internal	\$20,249		\$12,451.58	\$7,798		\$20,249.58
Grants Received External	\$514,500	\$388,000	\$36,500	\$20,000	\$70,000	\$514,500
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co- authored	2	2	0	0	0	2
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	4	3	1	0	0	4
Books Edited	1	0	1	0	0	1
Book Chapters	15	5	7	1	2	15
Monographs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles in Refereed Journals	13	0	12	1	0	13
Refereed Conference Papers	22	2	14	6	0	22
Invited Academic Papers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Encyclopedia Entries	0	0	0	0	0	0
Book Reviews	14	0	4	0	10	14
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	43	2	23	0	18	43
Juried Creative Works	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-juried Creative Works	4	0	3	0	1	4
Other (specified)						
Journal Book Review Editor	1	0	0	2	0	1
Academic Magazine Editor	10	0	0	0	10	10
Professional Consulting	6	0	2	0	4	6
News website project editor	2	0	0	0	2	2

*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.

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.

Students can access the university's Web portal, which provides a place to register or change registration, an academic planner, transcripts, transfer credit information, a schedule builder, an academic progress report and scenarios showing implications for possible changes in courses, majors and minors.

The department was first on campus to require advising before registration and did so against the advice of the registrar. Five years later this became the process for every unit on campus. Only advisers can remove holds on a student's registration, and only after consultation. Advisers contact students two weeks before the first classes to remind them that they must make an appointment. There is also a system in place to discourage students from signing up for courses in their senior years that do not provide adequate progress toward graduation. The dean's office tells students during the start of classes whether they are taking a course that will delay graduation. The dean's office and individual advisers monitor compliance with guidelines of the university, the department and ACEJMC.

The unit employs the faculty adviser model. Lecturers and adjuncts are not permitted to do advising. The dean's office has a rotation system in an attempt to spread advising responsibilities evenly.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

All faculty post office hours which are also shown in syllabi along with phone numbers and email addresses. Students praise faculty for their accessibility including putting in long hours with student media. Faculty also make it a point to interact at cafeterias and university events such as concerts, lectures, athletic events and Frog Camps held for incoming first-year students. The department feels that the very nature of journalism requires more informal contact than in other disciplines.

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

Students feel they are generally kept up to date through posters, flyers, online notices, and faculty.

(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 several opportunities to work in student media: a weekly campus newspaper, high-definition weekly TV newscasts in the unit's studio that can be seen on campus cable and the department's website, the website covering campus news extensively, a weekly sports-only TV newscast, a website devoted to hyperlocal news of the neighborhood surrounding the campus, a weekly newspaper focused primarily on major campus events, a long-form news magazine produced annually,

and a Schieffer College radio station which, although not run by the department, is available to its students.

Some students do not feel the department has made a good faith effort to make sure enough student journalism organizations are on campus including those focused on minorities. However, those students acknowledge a good part of the problem is student lethargy in organizing and maintaining such groups, and faculty acknowledge finding a faculty adviser can be difficult.

(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 department provides the most recent retention and graduation information on two links on its website. The information is given to the department by the university's Office of Institutional Research.

The latest graduation and retention figures end in 2013. A ten-year average shows a retention rate of 77.3%. In fall 2013 82%. Another 13.5% moved into other disciplines. Only 4.5% left TCU. Four-year graduation stood at 62.8%. Five-year graduation at 73.7%.

SUMMARY

Students had few complaints about advising or accessibility of faculty. They are for the most part pleased with and engaged in extra-curricular activities and opportunities provided by the department, especially the big focus on student media. Students cite one exception, the lack of enough student journalism organizations.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The department's budget for the 2014-15 academic year was \$1,571,757, 54 percent of which is allocated for full-time faculty salaries. The department will lose a visiting professor line next year, but will have sufficient faculty to teach its curriculum. With the split of strategic communication, the department budget was reduced approximately 45 percent. However, this reduction did not affect equipment, supplies, travel, training, etc. The cost of producing student media falls within the journalism departmental budget, which accounts for approximately 26 percent of the allocation. The department does offset some student media costs with advertising revenue, although the campus does receive 20 percent of that advertising revenue. The unit is allowed to carry over budget dollars if invested in equipment upgrades, and has done so successfully for the past several years.

(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 department is well resourced for its size. There is excellent funding for faculty travel as well as for student travel. Both the department chair and the dean confirmed that they support faculty who need digital training and several faculty have taken advantage of this.

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

The department has space on two floors of a building that also houses some of the College's other units as well as the dean's offices. The building is 34 years old but has undergone some modernization over the years, especially a renovation in 2009 that left only one "traditional" classroom remaining. All others have extensive computer use.

A space known as the Convergence Center on the second floor has 37 workstations, a New Media lab with 16 workstations, and two media labs with a total of 32 workstations. The Center is where most student media are produced. Three faculty members have space in the Center to be close to students working there. On the first floor is a very modern, well-equipped broadcast studio. The department uses an 800-square-foot sound stage and a 300-square-foot control room. The Center has some broadcast equipment. Some faculty members and students would like to see more use made of the studios, especially for newscasts.

Space is a problem on the second floor partly because it also houses the Department of Strategic Communication with its more than 400 majors. In the fall of 2015 the dean hired an architect to explore how to expand space through renovation.

(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 stationary broadcasting equipment is excellent including cameras, lighting, Teleprompter and control room equipment. The department also has flat-screen TV's. Portable equipment also is modern and plentiful including 35 video camera kits, 14 still camera kits with 20 professional lenses, two MacBook Pro laptops with Final Cut Pro X, eight audio recording kits, three lighting kits, a drone with a camera and a Livestream portable multi-camera recording system.

Students and faculty say there is good access to equipment. Maintenance is not a problem. The one complaint sometimes heard from faculty is that not enough use is made of the equipment, e.g., that the studio should be used for more newscasts.

Under university policy the department receives new computers every four years. The university also has an agreement with Adobe, enabling students to buy Creative suite on campus at a discount. This gives students the opportunity to work outside the Convergence Center. Some faculty members feel that within the Convergence Center there would be more opportunity for collaboration among students and for fewer single byline stories if, instead of stationary desktop computers, laptops were used enabling students to sit side by side while working together.

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

Faculty and students use both the university library and the university's online system. No complaints were heard from them.

SUMMARY

This is a well-funded, well-equipped department that, as the dean acknowledges, requires some renovation to provide additional space. Faculty and students say that, space aside, they are generally provided with what they need. Some faculty members feel the department should make more use of the excellent equipment.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

The unit and its faculty advance journalism and mass communication professions and fulfill 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.

The university publishes a quarterly magazine primarily for alumni. Articles often focus on department alumni. The Schieffer College sends regular email newsletters and has an alumni website. The department's own website and social media accounts also often target alumni. Faculty also stay in touch informally with alumni, both to promote students nearing graduation and to elicit ideas. Alumni contacted by the site team seem to be satisfied with efforts at outreach.

Faculty and staff are engaged with professionals both informally and through national associations. The College has a Board of Visitors, comprised of professionals and alumni, who annually visit.

Some faculty members, worried about declining enrollment, would like to see more outreach to alumni, professionals and others in an attempt to "sell" the department.

(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.

Faculty advise campus student media. The Texas Center for Community Journalism, headed by a department professor, offers workshops, seminars and consulting services for community newspapers, especially in helping them to develop online editions. The annual Schieffer Symposium brought prominent journalists to campus, such as Bob Woodward and Bob Schieffer's successor as anchor of the CBS Evening News, Scott Pelley. The week before the site visit, Schieffer called a halt to these symposia.

The department sponsors or co-sponsors panels and addresses on diverse topics, such as the future of U.S. airlines, women in sports journalism, the (partial) lowering of racial barriers in sports, and excessive government secrecy in national security policies. While not every event seems wholly relevant to journalism, they should be of interest to aspiring journalists who one day will cover such subjects.

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

The department encourages faculty involvement in academic associations. Faculty say that, as a general rule, enough funding is provided for travel to academic meetings and training sessions. The list of academic associations with which faculty are involved is extensive.

(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.

Several faculty members speak to community groups, locally, regionally and nationally. Some also volunteer for projects ranging from Meals on Wheels, teaching at a special needs school, and church activities.

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

The department holds an annual workshop for between 15 and 20 high school students. They report, write stories and produce a newspaper at the end of two weeks. Students from a nearby high school where broadcast journalism is taught often visit the department. Faculty members also visit high schools.

SUMMARY

The department is engaged with its alumni, the professional world, and the community. It gives and also receives from these associations. The definition of a good citizen applies to the department as a whole. More engagement will be needed to promote the department as it struggles with enrollment numbers.

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.

In 2006, journalism faculty transformed the ACEJMC 12 values and competencies into The Schieffer Seven. All, except for the absence of history, coincide nicely with the intent of the core values/competencies required by the accrediting body.

- Writing and editing
- Tools of mass communications: statistics, research and technology
- Law and free press
- Diversity
- Critical and creative thinking
- Theory
- Ethical standards

What wasn't identified in the plan was where within the curriculum these would be measured and how they would be evaluated.

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

There is a plan that was developed when journalism and strategic communication were combined in a school. This plan was adopted days before the previous site visit in 2010. While the plan is still in place, it is obvious that there has not been a concerted effort to tailor the plan towards journalism, and the plan does not contain any objectives, benchmarks, measurement instruments, or tactics for systematically gathering, analyzing, dispersing, and using the information obtained. There are multiple direct and indirect measures, but the self-study did not contain any examples of instruments, rubrics or consistent tactics for reporting results to faculty. Specific courses are identified for assessment but the syllabi do not reflect this nor does it appear there is a consistent effort to disseminate information to faculty. There does not appear to be a concerted effort to assess the “core” curriculum, which could relate to faculty assertions that students do not seem prepared for upper-division courses.

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

The self-study does contain reports of assessment activities for three years since the last accreditation visit. It is impossible to determine what was measured and how without viewing the instruments and having benchmarks established to identify how students compare against the norm. There is no assessment committee or anyone in charge of overseeing assessment, and the self-study identifies the need to “reinvigorate systemic assessment processes”.

(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 department regularly invites alumni to campus and faculty are diligent about maintaining relationships with graduates. There is no formal program to track graduates or to include them in assessment. The self-study indicates that the majority of students remain in the Dallas-Fort Worth area providing opportunities for the faculty to engage graduates regularly.

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

There is evidence that the department uses professionals to review various types of student work. This is not done in a systematic way and no consistent rubrics were used to be able to assess the learning objectives over time. At best, professionals are invited to critique student's work, but not to assess it in terms of meeting the criteria set out in the Schieffer Seven.

SUMMARY

Assessment is haphazard at best. While a plan was developed in 2009, it lacks objectives and consistent measurement tools to assess the learning objectives identified in the Schieffer Seven. While some of the areas have been reviewed, there have been no rubrics nor systematic gathering and aggregation of data to determine if students have the values and competencies set out by the accrediting standards as well as the departmental standards. The unit was found in non-compliance of this standard during the last accrediting visit, but failed to improve on assessing the curriculum or reporting back to faculty. There is serious concern from faculty that the "core" curriculum is not rigorous enough and does not prepare students for advanced courses. This could be resolved with a systematic assessment process, which the self-study acknowledges they do not currently have.

NON-COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths:

- Well-resourced
- Engaged, satisfied students
- Great facilities
- Strong brand identity
- Good relationships with local media
- Robust student media

Weaknesses:

- Too few tenure-track faculty
- Declining enrollment
- Uncertainty following a period of drift
- Lack of assessment
- Lack of “journalism” policies and procedures since the split from Strategic Communication
- Lack of a systematic diversity discussion amongst faculty

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

Standard 9: Assessment

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

The journalism department needs to take assessment seriously and develop a strong assessment plan that measures The Schieffer Seven values and competencies appropriately and consistently. Assessing the core curriculum is critical to meeting the expectations of the Schieffer Seven and confirming students' ability to perform beyond the basic skills of journalism.

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

There needs to be an assessment plan developed with objectives, direct and indirect measurements, appropriate measurement tools and a systematic process for collecting and reporting data. The unit should have completed at least one assessment measure related to the core curriculum.

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 site team found the TCU Schieffer School of Journalism and Strategic Communication out of compliance on standard 9: assessment. While the school did have an “excellent plan” it was only completed days before the site visit. As a School there was an attempt to implement the assessment plan, and an attempt to collect data, but the department has been unsuccessful in collecting what they are measuring as well as the measurements, and have not been consistent in their efforts to assess learning outcomes.

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.

There were gaps in sections of the self-study that required more concise information.

TCU
BOB SCHIEFFER
COLLEGE of COMMUNICATION



March 3, 2016

Susanne Shaw, executive director
Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
Stauffer-Flint Hall
1435 Jayhawk Blvd.
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045-7575

Dear Dr. Shaw:

We are writing to respond to the site team's recommendation of provisional accreditation for the Journalism Department at TCU as a result of non-compliance on Standard 9, Assessment. While our department does not challenge the ultimate finding of non-compliance in this area, we respectfully question the site team's recommendation of provisional accreditation based on non-compliance on only this one standard.

If the provisional accreditation recommendation was made based on the site team's concerns that our program has done nothing on assessment since 2010, when we were found in non-compliance on this standard for the first time, we would like to point out the progress that our department has made in assessment over the past six years.

In 2009, the then-Schieffer School of Journalism, which included both journalism and strategic communication divisions, created an assessment plan that established three-year cycles for assessing the seven learning goals in the "Schieffer Seven" (writing and editing; tools of mass communication; law and free press; diversity; critical and creative thinking; theory; and ethical standards). The assessment activities were overseen by a committee and involved both the journalism and strategic communication divisions.

This plan was followed for the first three years, with direct and indirect assessments on the journalism side of the program that included the following:

- Indirect assessment of student outcomes in Writing and Editing by five external professionals, examining portfolios and student media (2010).
- Direct assessment of Law/Free Press and Ethical Standards through a 30-question test of cohorts of first-year students and graduating seniors, affirming significant increases of learning throughout the program (2010).
- Direct assessment of Diversity and Theory standards through a 10-question, three-essay test of cohorts of first-year students and graduating seniors, confirming that student learning in these areas was adequate (2011).
- Indirect assessment of Tools of Mass Communication and Critical/Creative Thinking through an external expert review of the Daily Skiff newspaper, TCU360 website, and TCU News Now broadcast, which are the core products of our skills courses in Reporting, Multimedia Reporting, Public Affairs Reporting, Sports Reporting, and Newscast. As a result of this assessment, student media – and the courses that require student participation in student media -- were overhauled and converted into digital-first operations over the following year (2012).

In 2012, TCU's chancellor and provost provided funding for a year-long, thorough program review to examine the Schieffer School's mission, curriculum, resources, governance, and leadership, including site

visits to dozens of programs and businesses throughout the country. The final report, completed in 2013, was an indirect assessment of the program that led to substantial changes in journalism program focus, curriculum and governance. The university's response to the report also ultimately led to the split of the journalism and strategic communication programs, affecting the assessment plan. After this point, assessment in the journalism program continued, but was ad hoc and targeted at addressing specific issues in the program, including the following:

- Direct assessment of Writing and Editing through pre- and post-test of grammar topics through the online grammar modules offered in the introductory Media Writing course, showing that the grammar modules were leading to significant improvements in learning outcomes (2013).
- Indirect assessment of Writing and Editing and Critical/Creative Thinking through professional expert review of a semester-long capstone project involving partnership with local media, leading to further efforts to partner with professional organizations on content (2014).
- Indirect assessment of Tools of Mass Communication, Theory, and Critical/Creative Thinking through interviews of former and current journalism students, informing a curriculum overhaul that now requires Multimedia Reporting but fewer total hours to allow more student media participation, among other changes (2015).
- Indirect assessment of Writing and Editing and Tools of Mass Communication through a thorough review of the Skiff and TCU360 – student media that largely feature content produced by students in reporting and multimedia skills courses – by an external student media expert, resulting in changes in training, organization and leadership (2015).

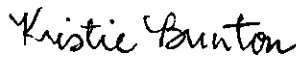
Admittedly, after the journalism and strategic communication programs were split into separate units in 2013, assessment deviated from the original plan and became more ad hoc and indirect. However, we would like to make sure the committee is aware that this ad hoc assessment has remained an important aspect of planning and governance in what is now the Journalism Department. For example, curriculum changes in 2015 were based on student input into their needs as recent (and soon-to-be) graduates of the program. The changes in student media, and as a result to our skills courses in Reporting, Multimedia Reporting, Public Affairs Reporting, Newscast, Sports Journalism, and Capstone courses – occurring in this academic year – are a direct result of the external review of student media conducted in 2015.

The past two years have been times of tremendous change in the Journalism Department at TCU. Nevertheless, we have continued to assess the program to improve student learning outcomes, and we are committed to further improvement in assessment with the appointment of a new faculty assessment chair, who will be charged with bringing in assessment experts to help us create a new assessment plan with opportunities for more regular and direct assessment. We would have liked to have further conversation with the site team on assessment matters, so we could have better discussed our progress in this area. While we understand that our activities since 2010 do not amount to compliance with Standard 9, please accept this letter as our effort to explain what we have been doing, and as support for our request for full reaccreditation.

Sincerely:



John Tisdale, Ph.D.
Chair of the Journalism Department



Kristie Bunton, Ph.D.
Dean

Cc: Dr. Jan Slater, dean of the College of Media, University of Illinois