

## Report of On-Site Evaluation

### ACEJMC Undergraduate program 2014–2015

Name of Institution: Kent State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Beverly Warren, President

Name of Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Thor Wasbotten, Director

Date of 2014 - 2015 Accrediting Visit: January 20-23, 2015

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: 2009

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2014 - 2015 Visiting Team: Re-accreditation

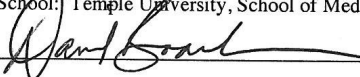
*Prepared and submitted by:*

#### **Team Chair**

Name and Title: David Boardman, Dean and Professor

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

Signature

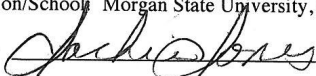


#### **Team Members**

Name and Title: Jackie Jones, Department Chair

Organization/School: Morgan State University, School of Global Journalism and Communication

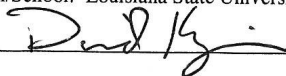
Signature



Name and Title: David Kurpius, Associate Vice Chancellor

Organization/School: Louisiana State University

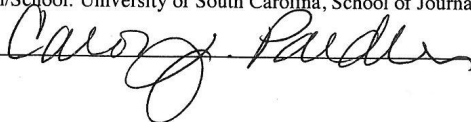
Signature



Name and Title: Carol Pardun, Professor

Organization/School: University of South Carolina, School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Signature



## PART I: General information

Name of Institution: **Kent State University**

Name of Unit: **School of Journalism and Mass Communication**

Year of Visit: **2015**

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

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

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

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

Kent State University was established in 1910 by statutory act and is maintained by the state of Ohio. It is under the jurisdiction of a board of nine voting trustees and two nonvoting student trustees appointed by the governor, subject to the advice and consent of the Ohio Senate. The university is supported financially through state legislative appropriations, student fees and gifts.

### 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: October 2008

### 5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1965

**6. Below is the unit's undergraduate mission statement. Statements should give date of adoption and/or last revision.**

*School of Journalism and Mass Communication Vision and Mission Statement*

***Vision***

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) at Kent State University will be the most relevant, student-centered, and ethically driven accredited program in the country.

***Mission statement***

We provide a relevant academic experience that balances both conceptual and practical courses, professional opportunities and multiple internships, all of which are grounded in a foundation of ethics in a diverse and global society.

***What we do***

JMC educates storytellers and those who will manage businesses or organizations that have storytelling or content as a primary function. This storytelling takes place in journalistic, informative, entertainment, and persuasive environments and encompasses multimedia and multi-platform delivery. We prepare students for careers in today's marketplace with knowledge and broad-based skills that will allow them not only to succeed but also to innovate, manage, and lead. We also prepare them for productive lives as active citizens in a world increasingly connected by communication and commerce.

***How we do it***

Everything we do at JMC is based on our values and core competencies. Students in our program will develop the following:

- Effective communication skills, grounded in strong writing. These skills today include broad-based multimedia communication skills.
- Critical and analytical thinking that allows for ethical and creative approaches to storytelling, problem solving, and innovation. Our curriculum and co-curricular experiences emphasize flexibility and adaptability. Such thinking should lead to an entrepreneurial mindset when facing challenges and opportunities.
- An understanding of audiences/participants in communication and of the communications platforms through which these audiences/participants communicate. From day one, our students begin developing their personal brands – the experiences and attributes that set them apart.
- Knowledge and expertise in subject matter through a liberal education. Graduation requirements permit deep immersion into subjects housed in other schools and departments, allowing for minors and double majors, among other ways to build subject expertise.
- An understanding of the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press of the United States, as well as an understanding of the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and to petition for redress of grievances.
- An understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communication.
- An understanding of professional ethical principles and how to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- The ability to conduct research, apply basic statistical concepts, and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- The ability to find, interpret and use data effectively for storytelling, reporting and other communication purposes.

- An understanding of culture, gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation, and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications in a global society.
- The skills to critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness.

### ***Our aspirations***

- Be recognized as an innovative national leader in professional media education, not only for undergraduates, but also for 1) scholastic journalists and their teachers, 2) graduate students, and 3) working professionals.
- Build the School's applied scholarly, creative, and journalistic output by faculty and students in support of the School's mission, its reputation and its financial resources.
- Remain progressive in adapting the education we offer to new market realities.

*(approved as part of the Strategic Plan, August 19, 2013)*

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

Semesters of 15 weeks

Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Summer sessions of two five-week and one eight-week

Intersessions of 3 weeks

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

X Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree

N/A Graduate work leading to Master's degree (Not included in Accreditation)

NA Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

### **9. List the specific undergraduate and professional master's degrees being reviewed by ACEJMC.**

\*Indicate online degrees. Bachelor of Science degree

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

The minimum is 120 semester hours, with some majors requiring more hours.

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

For the last 10 years, all students in JMC have been required to complete 300 hours of work in an Internship experience/course, for which they receive one semester credit-hour.

Students were permitted to repeat the Internship experience/course for one additional credit-hour, but this additional credit-hour did not count toward their degree. The reason students receive only one credit is that most students do their Internships during the summer, and paying for more credit-hours is often a financial burden for them.

Beginning in the fall of 2014, one credit-hour of Internship will equal 150 hours of work. Students who major in Journalism, Digital Media Production and Public Relations will be required to

complete one credit-hour of Internship for 150 hours of work but be allowed to take up to five additional hours of Internship. Some of these additional credit-hours may count in a student's JMC electives, depending on how many JMC elective hours each major requires and how each student chooses to fill these JMC elective hours.

Advertising students will be required to complete two credit-hours of Internship for 300 hours of work. They also may complete up to four more credit-hours of Internship, but these credit-hours will not count toward their degree.

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

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Faculty in Charge</u>
Advertising	Evan Bailey-spring 2015
Digital Media Production (Television and Digital Film Production)	David Smeltzer
Journalism (Broadcast, Magazine, Multimedia News and Photojournalism)	Jan Leach-fall 2014
Public Relations	Jacquie Marino-spring 2015 Michele Ewing

Note: From 2009 – 2012, the following were the Sequences or Specialties

Advertising  
 Electronic Media (Management, Production, Sports Production)  
 Journalism (Broadcast, Magazine, Newspaper)  
 Public Relations  
 Visual Journalism (Photojournalism and Information Design)

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

As of fall 2014 – 41,213

**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):** As of fall 2014

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Undergraduate majors</u>
Advertising	111
Digital Media Production (Digital Film, Television) (Electronic Media before fall 2014)	227
Journalism (Broadcast, Magazine, Multimedia News and Photojournalism)	418
Public Relations	170
Information Design and Visual Journalism (no longer in effect fall 2013)	<u>12</u>
Total	<b>938</b>

**15. Number of graduate students enrolled:** NA

**16. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Attach separate pages if necessary. Include a separate list for online courses.**

Skills Courses Fall 2014				Online Skills Courses Fall 2014			
Course	Section	Count	Title	Course	Section	Count	Title
20004	003	10	Media Writing	20005	001	20	Fundamentals of Media Messages
	004	19			002	20	
	006	18					
21005	001	15	Advertising Messaging				
22001	001	18	Photography				
	003	12					
22002	001	19	Videography Basics				
	004	20					
22003	001	10	Videography Basics II				
	002	20					
22004	001	19	Visual Storytelling				
	002	13					
	003	13					
23030	001	10	Basic Video Production				
	002	9					
	003	8					
23031	001	10	Basic Audio Production				
Skills Courses Fall 2014				Online Skills Courses Fall 2014			
	002	9					
	003	9					
26001	001	15	Multimedia Newswriting				
	002	18					
	003	18					
	004	18					
	006	17					
	008	17					
26005	001	19	Multimedia Storytelling				
	003	16					
	004	17					
	006	6					
	007	20					
	010	18					
26007	001	11	Print Beat Reporting				
	002	16					
26008	001	15	Broadcast Beat Reporting				
30004	001	16	Writing for Video and Audio Media				
	002	14					

31002	001	17	Advertising Copywriting
31011	001	20	Creative Advertising Strategies
32001	001	19	Photojournalism I
32005	001	13	Video for Still Photographers
33032	001	8	Audio Set Up and Mixing
	002	8	
33036	001		Not Offered
33042	001	10	Studio Television
33043	001	18	Digital Cinematography
36005	001	6	Copyediting
	003	9	
38002	001	18	PR Case Studies
	002	18	
40004	001	12	Computer-Assisted Reporting
40013	001	11	Television Sports Production
40037	001	6	Scriptwriting for Video/Film
40095	005	6	Web Programming for Multimedia

**Skills Courses Fall 2014**

**Online Skills Courses Fall 2014**

40095	006	6	Big Data
42008	001	12	Advanced Photojournalism
44050	001	9	Post Production Sound
46003	001	20	Production Television News
46009	001	18	Reporting Public Affairs
	002	18	
46018	001	17	Feature Writing
46020	001	15	Magazine Design
46054	001	14	Broadcast Documentary
46057	001	14	Motion Graphics for Video Editing
48001	001	18	Media Relations & Publicity
48002	001	17	Public Relations Tactics
	002	15	
48003	001	13	Public Relations Online
48006	001	19	Public Relations Publications
	002	16	

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

\$4,908,018 is allocated for operations and salaries. This does not include benefits.

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

10% increase over the three-year period for total expenditures.

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

\$2,015,113 has been allocated for full-time faculty salaries for 2014-2015 fiscal year. This does not include benefits.

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

<b>Luke Armour</b> Assistant Professor Public Relations Flash Communications	<b>Evan Bailey</b> Assistant Professor Advertising Coordinator	<b>Greg Blase</b> Assistant Professor Undergraduate Program Coordinator	<b>Candace Perkins Bowen</b> Associate Professor Director, CSJ	<b>Beth Butler</b> Assistant Professor Regional Campuses
<b>Fran Collins</b> Associate Professor Advertising	<b>Danielle Sarver Coombs, Ph.D.</b> Associate Director Associate Professor	<b>Michele Ewing</b> Associate Professor Public Relations Coordinator	<b>David Foster</b> Assistant Professor Photojournalism	<b>Jeff Fruit</b> Professor Interim Director, SLIS
<b>Mark Goodman, J.D.</b> Professor Knight Chair in Scholastic Journalism	<b>Gary Hanson</b> Professor Journalism	<b>Karl Idsvoog</b> Associate Professor Journalism	<b>Cheryl Kushner</b> Assistant Professor Journalism	<b>David LaBelle</b> Lecturer Photojournalism
<b>Jan Leach</b> Associate Professor Journalism Coordinator	<b>Jacque Marino</b> Associate Professor Journalism	<b>Mitch McKenney</b> Associate Professor Regional Campuses Adviser, Kent Stater	<b>Stefanie Moore</b> Associate Professor Public Relations	<b>Joe Murray, Ph.D.</b> Associate Professor Digital Media Production Grad Coordinator
<b>Julie Napieralski</b> Assistant Professor Public Relations	<b>Tim Roberts</b> Lecturer Public Relations	<b>Ann Schierhorn</b> Professor Journalism	<b>Gene Shelton</b> Associate Professor Journalism	<b>Bill Sledzik</b> Associate Professor Public Relations
<b>David Smeltzer</b> Associate Professor Digital Media Production Coordinator	<b>Stephanie Smith</b> Assistant Professor Public Relations	<b>Federico Subervi, Ph.D.</b> Professor Journalism	<b>Wendy Wardell</b> Lecturer Advertising	<b>Thor Wasbotten</b> Director and Professor
<b>Ben Whaley, Ph.D.</b> Assistant Professor Digital Media Production	<b>Traci Williams</b> Associate Lecturer Digital Media Production	<b>Chance York, Ph.D.</b> Assistant Professor Advertising	<b>Sue Zake</b> Assistant Professor Journalism	



**19. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2014. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2014.**

Spring 2014	Fall 2014
Kathleen Barnes	Tracy Baughman
Tracy Baughman	Pete Beatty
Bonnie Bolden	Bonnie Bolden
Tami Bongiorno	John Bowen
John Bowen	John Butte
John Butte	Michael Chritton
Roseann Canfora	Mark Dawidziak
Mark Dawidziak	A Brian Dengler
Brian Dengler	Tim Harrison
Rachel Dissell	Gary Harwood
David Foster	James Hurguy
Matt Fredmonsky	Phil Johnston
Scott Galvin	John Kerezy
Tim Harrison	John Kroll
Gary Harwood	Stephanie Lawrence
Ben Hollis	Phil Long
James Hurguy	Robert Makar
Phil Johnston	Duilio Mariola
John Kerezy	Mike Olszewski
John Kroll	Matt Pallotta
Stephanie Lawrence	Johnathan Peltz
Phil Long	Amy Petkiewicz
Robert Makar	Ron Russo
Eric Mansfield	Steve Savanyu
Duilio Mariola	Sarah Szweda
Collin McEwen	Phil Trexler
Gary Mote	Mark Turner
Michael Olszewski	Traci West
Matt Pallotta	Kathy Worcester
Johnathan Peltz	Bruce Zake
R Shane Roach	Sue Zimmerman
Ron Russo	
Carl Schierhorn	
Sarah Szweda	
Josh Talbott	
Phil Trexler	
Mark Turner	
Craig Webb	
Traci West	
Sue Zimmerman	

**20. 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.**

In the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the professional Advising office tracks student progress and makes sure students are in compliance with the 72-hour rule. The advising office also works with sequences within the School to make sure any curricular change(s) will allow students to move forward in our program appropriately.

During the required advising appointment the assigned academic adviser reviews current semester concerns, opportunities for students outside of the classroom and their progress towards degree. The tool used and provided to both the student and adviser is the Graduation Planning System (GPS), which is available in FlashLine (Prior to 2010, the auditing system used was KAPS, a DARwin Interactive Audit software system.). The GPS audit includes all requirements for earning a degree in the student’s declared major. It also includes a student’s individualized plan of study, which is created in consultation between the student and his/her adviser and outlines, semester by semester, what the student must complete to graduate. As part of those requirements, GPS is programmed to keep track of how many classes a student has taken that apply to either the 80/65 accreditation standard or the 72-hour standard, depending on the student’s catalog year. This, along with all graduation requirements, is reviewed with the student during each advising appointment.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total Percent</b>
2013-2014 academic year	<u>142</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>100</u>
2012-2013 academic year	<u>174</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>100</u>

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has a detailed strategic plan that includes a thoughtful analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; is grounded in good methodology, and results in 10 major goals. While it is relatively new (August 2013), it presents a well-organized and thoughtful approach to incrementally improving the School. The Dean and Provost both support the School and its plan. There is an overall positive relationship between the JMC leadership and the College and University leadership. The plan includes goals on improving student learning outcomes and learning experiences, increasing enrollment and diversity in the classroom, improving retention, supporting and developing faculty, maintaining high-quality facilities, promoting global engagement and awareness, strengthening relationships with alumni, supporters and industry, and increasing external financial support.

The plan's goals are broken down into objectives, expected outcomes and metrics/measures. The plan identifies what the School seeks to accomplish with clear metrics for measurement. At times, however, the strategies do not go deep enough to achieve goals. An example is keeping recruitment at more of an institutional level of visits and communication and less of an individual engagement level of connecting with diverse, top students and helping them see the opportunities at KSU and in the School. Overall, the plan appears to be one that can be implemented and measured with faculty, staff and student buy-in.

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

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has a Faculty Handbook that was approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) in 1988 and is reviewed at least every three years. The FAC approves all changes. Alterations or amendments approved by the FAC are then sent to the Director and Dean for approval. The JMC Faculty Handbook was last updated September 2014.

The JMC Handbook details the School's organizational structure and duties of the Director, Associate Director, Coordinators, and Faculty Advisory Committee. It also provides details about committees within the School. The document also gets into the details of hiring and employment with sections on how faculty will be assessed for their work product and engagement. The promotion and tenure criteria are also clearly stated. A faculty-grievance section and a section on student expectations and appeals are clearly presented. Faculty involvement in the governance and day-to-day running of the School are evident in conversations with faculty and leadership.

**(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 JMC administration is seen as focused, strong and visionary. One faculty member said that the JMC would not have been ready for re-accreditation had it not been for the Director and Associate Director. The Provost and Dean of the College are both pleased with the Director's leadership and had positive remarks about the work he has completed and his plans for the future. They noted his ability to get things done quickly and to involve faculty in the process. The Dean called it a "sea change" since Professor Wasbotten arrived at KSU.

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

The JMC Director reports to the Dean of the College of Communication and Information. He/She is appointed to the position following University Policy Register 6-05 (B). The policy states that the appointment is made based on a "positive recommendation of the president and the approval of the board of trustees." The Director serves at the pleasure of the Dean. According to the policy, the administrative officer appointment is made on a continuing basis. The duties of the Director, Associate Director, Faculty Advisory Committee and Coordinators are all detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

The Dean evaluates the Director annually. The Dean also leads a faculty evaluation of the Director leading to a recommendation for continuation or non-continuation. This occurs every three years with approximately five faculty members participating in the review. The evaluation of administrators reporting to the Director is handled annually using a process defined by the Kent State Human Resources department. The Director works with HR and the employee through the process. JMC is the only unit on campus with a 12-month Associate Director.

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

The School has a clear policy for handling student complaints, and students appear to understand and utilize it.

The faculty grievances and appeals process is detailed in the Faculty Handbook. The faculty member initiates the process by meeting with his/her Sequence Coordinator. If unresolved, the issue moves to the FAC, which makes a recommendation to the Director. If the issue is still not resolved the faculty member meets with the Director as the final step in the process.

The staff grievance policy and many of the faculty grievance elements are handled through the Kent State University Human Resources department. This is in part due to the centralization of HR function and the strong union presence on the campus.

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

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet these requirements.**

Over the past two years, according to the self-study, the school has been 100 percent compliant on the requirement for 72 semester hours outside JMC. There was some confusion about what counted for “outside hours,” but this was clarified in recent years. A faculty meeting during Spring 2014 placed this issue on the agenda. Since then, it appears that the school has worked hard to make sure students and faculty understand the rule.

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

As with many journalism and mass communication programs across the country, JMC has been in the process of reviewing and revising its curriculum. At the time of the visit, the Digital Media Production sequence had completed changes and had rolled out its new curriculum. The new programs in Journalism and Advertising will go into effect with the Fall 2015 catalog. In the Public Relations sequence, curriculum changes have occurred incrementally.

Following is the description of the curriculum under the 2014 catalog requirements:

The only class that is required for all students and taught across the curriculum to all sequences is the first introductory lecture course, JMC20001: Media, Power, and Culture (which replaces Introduction to Mass Communication under the old curriculum). This course is taught both online and in a regular classroom. The instructors follow a similar syllabus. This class fills a social science requirement for JMC students. In addition to JMC20001, all majors also take a Media Law class, an Ethics class and an introductory writing class, but these are specific to particular sequences.

### *Advertising:*

The Advertising sequence includes 39 hours of required courses: In addition to Media, Power, and Culture, the required courses are Media Writing, Audience Analysis and Research, Principles of Advertising, Advertising Messaging, Principles of Public Relations, Advertising Copywriting, Advertising Media Planning, Creative Advertising Strategies, Ethical Issues in Integrated Communication (1-hour), Law of Advertising and Public Relations, Advertising Account Management, Advertising Campaigns, and a required internship (2-hour).

Advertising students spoke eloquently about the importance of knowing theory as well as skills in order to prepare for a career in advertising. They were able to discuss issues about advertising law,

the history of advertising, issues of stereotypes in advertising, etc. They praised their instructors for their high standards and all agreed that they have been challenged in their courses. There is room in the curriculum for some electives and the students seemed to take advantage of this by choosing classes they perceived would help them in their careers. For example, one student discussed his Google Analytics class he was currently taking.

*Journalism:*

Currently, there are four areas of concentration within the journalism sequence: broadcast news, magazine, multimedia and photojournalism. All journalism students take a 19-hour core, including Media, Power and Culture, Multimedia Techniques, Multimedia Newswriting, Multimedia Storytelling, Law of Mass Communication, Ethics and Issues in Mass Communication and an internship.

In the broadcast concentration, students take Broadcast Beat Reporting, Computer-Assisted Reporting or Online Journalism, Producing Television News, Reporting Public Affairs, Advanced Broadcast News or Broadcast Documentary and one elective.

After the 19-hour journalism core, magazine students take Print Beat Reporting, Copyediting, Reporting Public Affairs, Magazine Publishing, Feature Writing, Magazine Writing and Editing and either Magazine Design or Cybermedia Production as well as one course from a list of appropriate courses for a total of 42 hours.

In the multimedia news concentration, in addition to the 19-hour journalism core, students take Print Beat Reporting, Copyediting, Computer-Assisted Reporting or Online Journalism, Newspaper Design, Reporting Public Affairs and Feature Writing. In addition they take two directed electives from a list of appropriate courses for a total of 42 hours.

Students in the photojournalism concentration take (in addition to the journalism core) Photography, Visual Storytelling, Photojournalism I and II, Video for Still Photography, Sports Photography and Advanced Photojournalism. In addition, they choose either Fashion Photography or Entrepreneurial Documentary Photography for a total 42 hours.

Students in the Journalism program spoke enthusiastically about their course requirements. While they said they took classes that are conceptually based, most focused their comments on skills courses. They also voiced concerns about the multiple concentrations within the sequence. As one student said: "It's all journalism. Everything, including journalism and PR are so interrelated." Another student wondered why "it's so hard to take classes in other areas."

*Digital Media Production:*

This sequence requires 40 hours of classes. Besides the Media, Power and Culture class, students take Video/Audio Production Aesthetics, Video/Audio Fundamentals, Writing for Video and Audio Media, Student Media Practicum, Law of Mass Communication, Ethics and Issues in Mass Communication, Internship and the Senior Digital Media Production Project. In addition, they take 8 hours of courses from a list of skills-based electives, including Location Sound Recording, Digital Cinematography, Digital Video Editing and Producing and Directing for Single Camera. Finally, they take 6 hours of advanced digital-skills courses.

Students in the Digital Media Production sequence had significant and widespread concerns that they aired with the site team at both the general student meeting and the follow-up sequence-specific meeting, attended by more than 30 of them. When a student expressed, "Our major is the

afterthought of the school,” others nodded in agreement. While they hailed the extracurricular opportunities the school offers, particularly in student media, many complained about the caliber of their classroom instruction. They noted, “There is no sense of rigor in the classroom,” and “They need to hold students to a higher standard; it's insulting what they let us get away with.”

Many students in DMP called for clearer connections between the classroom and such extracurricular activities as TV2 and KSU Independent Films, as well as more faculty involvement in those activities. One area that was a particular lightning rod of student complaint was in audio instruction. Students complained about the lack of faculty with industry-current knowledge and the shortage of up-to-date equipment.

*Public Relations:*

This sequence requires 45 hours with no opportunity for electives. Besides the Media, Power and Culture class, students take Multimedia Techniques, Audience Analysis and Research, Multimedia Newswriting, Multimedia Storytelling, Print Beat Reporting or Broadcast Beat Reporting, Principles of Public Relations, Public Relations Case Studies, Ethical Issues in Integrated Communication, Law of Advertising and Public Relations, 1-hour Internship, Media Relations and Publicity, Public Relations Tactics, Public Relations Online Tactics, Public Relations Publications and Public Relations Campaigns.

The Public Relations students mentioned that there was a marked difference between the 3-hour ethics class that the Journalism and DMP students take and the 1-hour ad/PR version that they take. They said that, rather than process, the class focused on current cases. However, when discussing the class with the instructor of record, it was clear that the class was, indeed, built on a logical conceptual progression.

**(c) Instruction, whether onsite or online, is demanding and current; and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued. (If the unit has more than one sequence, address the quality of instruction by sequence.)**

*Advertising:* The Advertising classes are demanding and current. Students universally praised the faculty for pushing them hard and preparing them for advertising careers. During the lunch meeting with external constituents, one advertising professional said he regularly worked with advertising students and often hired them upon graduation. He said they were the best-prepared students he encounters.

*Journalism:* The journalism curriculum is modern, and faculty include some with strong national reputations in law, scholastic journalism and international communications. In visiting faculty offices, site team members noticed several awards for teaching and service on faculty members' walls.

*Digital Media Production:* Students in the DMP sequence were less complimentary about the instructors than students in other sequences. As noted above, students felt that they did not learn as much as they should in the DMP classes and that instruction could be more current.

*Public Relations:* The Public Relations sequence teaches a current curriculum, which meets the standards of the typical coursework progression that PRSA recommends. In student meetings, some students in other sequences commented that the PR sequence was the “golden” sequence, praising the major for preparing students for a variety of careers inside and outside public relations.

**(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.\***

In talking with students and faculty and reviewing the self-study, it was clear that the skills courses in JMC uphold ACEJMC's recommendations. All skills classes were held at the 20:1 ratio.

**(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.**

All students are required to complete at least one 1-hour internship, and many students complete more than one (usually not for additional credit, however). Internships taken for academic credit are closely monitored, and students, if successful, receive an "S" for completion. The school has an extensive and active student-media portfolio and many students take advantage of the opportunities, some starting as early as their freshman year. Students can choose from a live daily newscast, original entertainment television programming, a radio program, the school's newspaper, several magazines and even a movie production segment, KSU Independent Films, which produces an original movie once every two years.

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



## PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- a) **The unit has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The 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 School’s self-study declares: “Of all of the standards in ACEJMC accreditation, Standard 3 is the one where we have made the most progress.” There is certainly plenty of evidence in that regard. In particular, since the 2009 site-team visit, the School has crafted and adopted an entirely new and impressively detailed and comprehensive Diversity Plan. It rivals or surpasses any this team has seen, and sets a high bar for the School moving forward from its 2013 adoption.

In many other regards, the School has underscored its commitment to diversity since its last re-accreditation. The Diversity and Globalization Committee, which authored the plan, was created in 2013. A Diversity Speaker series was launched in 2012, and has hosted many distinguished speakers of color. A Recruitment and Retention Committee was created to focus on increasing the diversity of the student body and improving performance. The school established a Coordinator for Diversity Initiatives, a professor of color on the faculty. Efforts to improve the racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty were stepped up (though to limited result, so far), as part of a university-wide initiative.

It is clear that this is a living, breathing diversity plan that is both a call to arms and a measuring stick, and not just a document destined to collect dust until the next self-study preparation.

- (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 reflects the values this standard espouses. As is the ideal, it offers some courses specifically oriented to issues of diversity and inclusion in communication and media and other, non-diversity-focused classes into which these issues are deeply embedded. The diversity-focused classes taught by JMC faculty include:

- Media Power and Culture, a core required course
- African American Media
- Black Hollywood
- Managing Media Diversity

Additionally, a “diversity statement” is required in the syllabus of every course offered by the School. On the international front, the School has established new study-abroad opportunities for its students – many of whom have never traveled outside the United States – to experience diverse cultures.

The students with whom the site team met reflect a clear sensitivity to issues of diversity and inclusion, and it appears these are woven into the School’s fabric.

**(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.**

Since the last ACEJMC site visit, the School has made clear progress in setting goals and strategies around the recruitment of minority faculty. However, it is yet to see many concrete results of those strategies, and must continue to make this a top priority.

Particularly troublesome is the makeup of the full-time faculty, where only three of the 34 members are non-white. (Women number 15 of the 34.) The leadership of the School recognize this as a significant issue and are working to address it. Notably, in the 2013-14 academic year, searches for two open tenure-track positions were offered to minority women, but neither of those offers was ultimately accepted by the applicants, and the positions were filled by white candidates. In the previous year, a distinguished Latino scholar did join the faculty and is taking a leadership role on diversity issues in the School and across campus.

The site team discussed this situation with the University's Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, who outlined some extraordinary efforts under way to address such shortcomings across the campus. Site-team members found her presentation impressive and came away optimistic that positive change is in the offing.

The School has made significant and much-needed progress in diversifying its adjunct faculty, moving from 5 percent nonwhite to 12 percent over the past year. The Director expressed his commitment to continue to grow that percentage through targeted outreach.

**(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 School has made great progress in diversifying its student body, from 7 percent in 2002 to 15 percent in 2008 to 17 percent in 2014. This exceeds the percentage of the University as a whole and of the University's geographic service area.

As is nearly always the case, this progress did not occur without focused effort. The outreach efforts of the School are impressive, and include:

- Creation of a Recruitment and Retention Committee, a charge of which is to highlight and track minority enrollment.
- Creation of the Student Voice Team, including a diverse collection of undergraduate and graduate students who meet with the Director and with the Diversity and Globalization Committee and are directly involved with recruitment and retention efforts as well as other student affairs in the School. (Notably, however, there was little awareness among other students of the existence of the Student Voice Team.)
- Improved coordination with the University's admissions office and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to develop strategies to recruit students of color.
- Direct outreach to high-school educators through the Journalism Education Association, the Ohio Scholastic Media Association and the American Society of News Editors Summer Institute.
- Direct outreach to prospective students, including nontraditional students such as veterans and home-schooled students, with a focus on diversity.

Similarly, the School has stepped up its retention efforts and is working to elevate the profile of its minority students.

**(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 School's proactive approach to diversity and inclusion is evident in its culture and climate. One faculty member of color noted vast improvement in the School's dedication to this area in recent years.

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

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.**

Expectations and requirements for tenure and promotion are clearly outlined and documented. The unit has a formal review process, which includes written student and peer evaluations. Evaluations are public record.

Some of the sequences have a pool of part-time faculty from which to draw to teach a course or additional section of a course. When a new, part-time faculty member is hired, that instructor is evaluated at the end of the semester to determine whether the faculty will remain in the teaching pool. While some adjuncts have taught continually for a number of years, others are brought in occasionally and those who do not receive good evaluations typically do not return.

Formal student evaluations with University-required questions and other questions devised by the School are used for each course taught. The results of the evaluations are made available to the individual instructor. The University is moving toward making the evaluations online only.

The School also has a Peer Review Committee, which administers the review of each full-time professor. Sequence members evaluate new faculty and work with the Director to deliver the results to the faculty member with detailed, instructive comments.

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

Tenured, tenure-track and full-time non-tenure-track faculty taught between 41 and 52 percent of classes in the unit over the past three years, with a low of 41 percent in the 2012-13 year and 52 percent in fall 2014. The Director set a goal to have 55 percent of classes taught by full-time faculty. The Fall percentage fell short of that goal by just four classes. Teaching and service have long been emphases in the program, balanced by attention to scholarly and creative work.

**(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.**

Since the last accreditation review, four senior faculty members retired and a fifth faculty member died. Eight faculty members received tenure, 12 were promoted and four were denied tenure.

Three faculty members are expected to retire this year and at least two more retirements are likely in the next two to three years. During that same period, the unit had nine faculty searches; all were successful. Currently, there are 34 full-time faculty, including 19 tenured, two tenure-track and 13 non-tenure-track. Out of six full professors on the faculty, one is a woman.

The imbalance between traditional academics and practitioners remains. With two, and possibly three, lines opening this year, there is an opportunity to begin to adjust the imbalance. Job descriptions for tenure-track and non-tenured positions clearly outline expectations.

Further, the University's TT Collective Bargaining Agreement requires a 1+ balance between tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty.

Faculty vitae show a wide and varied range of activity, including scholastic media, a nationally recognized exhibition on pioneers who integrated Florida schools, teaching summer sessions at The Poynter Institute, ethical issues in data mining, service on a Fulbright national screening committee and refereed conference papers.

Part-time instructors are hired on an as-needed basis.

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

In addition to the written forms for student and peer evaluations, which are conducted in person, sequence members also observe teaching directly for first-time faculty.

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

This School is seen by many on campus as one of Kent State's shining lights. With its plethora of student media and its high-profile alumni, it cuts a large profile in the region. Representatives from other units on campus give JMC high marks for its efforts to improve recruitment and retention and for its ability to prepare students for the workplace. They suggest, however, that scheduling and course offerings needed to become more consistent, that better follow-up with and tracking of recent alumni would be beneficial and greater effort should be made to have the professional and research faculties work more collaboratively.

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

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School offers all faculty a minimum of \$750 per year to travel for scholarly or professional activity. Depending on the purpose of the travel, faculty members also may be eligible for additional funds. In addition, supplemental funds at the university level are competitively available. All tenure-track faculty, whether professionally focused or academically trained, are required to engage in scholarly activity.

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

The School specifies its expectations for scholarship in its tenure-and-promotion document. Whether creative scholarship or traditionally academic in nature, work is expected to have undergone “meaningful peer review.” Impact, citations, acceptance rates, copies sold (for books), unique visitors (such as with blogs), etc., are typical ways the unit defines excellence in scholarly achievement.

**(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 on both the tenure and non-tenure track each receive a formal letter at the beginning of their appointments that clearly outlines expectation for progression toward promotion and tenure (if eligible). The tenure document clearly outlines the kinds of scholarship appropriate for creative-oriented faculty as well as traditionally trained. Some faculty, however, expressed confusion on what the priorities were for consideration for tenure or promotion.

**(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.**

Over the past six years, according to the self-study, faculty have produced nine scholarly books, 18 refereed journal articles, 68 awards and honors and three juried creative works. They have produced scores of conference papers, essays, book reviews, book chapters, etc. A few faculty members have published in highly regarded outlets such as the *Journal of Broadcast and Electronic Media*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Mass Communications and Society* and *Journal of Public Relations Research*. One faculty member regularly contributes to PBS Media Shift’s Education Shift blog. Another faculty member’s recent book has been recognized as one of Amazon’s “Editor’s Favorite Books of the Year.” While much of this scholarship is admirable, when considering the six-year period, productivity levels remain lower than would be acceptable at other research-extensive universities.

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

In reviewing the self-study as well as speaking with faculty members and with the Provost, it is clear that the University has increased (and will continue to increase) its focus on improving the scholarly output and reputation of Kent State. Not all the faculty view this as a positive development, however. For example, one NTT faculty member stated that “without question” faculty not on the tenure track were treated as “second-class citizens” and that the university is becoming too focused on research to the detriment of the students. While there was a brief mention of a “Media Mindsets Initiative” (a college-wide effort to promote collaboration across disciplines) in a scholarship report provided to the site team, there was little evidence of this during the visit. Some faculty expressed a desire to work more collaboratively with colleagues in other disciplines. The site team spoke with faculty in other schools (within the college) who also expressed a desire to work more closely with faculty in JMC.

Although a tension between the tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty seemed apparent (and some evidence of tension between creative-oriented tenure-track and academically oriented tenure-track faculty), it was clear that the faculty as a whole respected one another and allowed for differing points of view.

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

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) Faculty and/or professional advising staff ensure that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising.**

Without question, the School is in transition and this is evident within the advising staff. They are juggling multiple catalog requirements in the midst of curriculum revisions. They have had to deal with some personnel changes as well. Even so, the student services office is organized and visible to students. There are multiple informational resources available in the student services area that can help students navigate their course requirements.

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

Students offered praise for the availability of instructors. They consistently spoke positively about how helpful faculty members are. For example, one student gave an example of how he had left the School three years before and was interested in re-enrolling. The student said that the faculty member was exceptional, meeting with him and getting him into the appropriate classes all within a few weeks. The faculty spoke with equal enthusiasm about their students. They did not leave the role of advising only to the professional advising staff, but also participated in helping students understand course options.

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

The dramatic entrance to the building features multiple monitors highlighting upcoming events, student media and other pertinent information to students. If that were not enough, posters and flyers are visible on walls and doors throughout the School. In addition, the JMC academic advisers follow a communication plan that dictates regular reminders to students of impending deadlines and focusing them on requirements. Getting students to pay attention to emails is not always easy, so the advising staff is planning visits to classes to remind students of required advising visits. They also note changes in the curriculum and provide opportunities for students to ask questions.

**(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.**

JMC has a cornucopia of extracurricular activities, particularly within student media. It is evident that most if not all the students participate in student media at some point before they graduate. Especially noteworthy is that all avenues were open to students regardless of their sequence. For example, advertising students worked in TV2; public relations students published in the student newspaper; broadcast students participated in PRSSA.



**(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 gathers, maintains and analyzes graduation and retention rates. While percentages are low compared to many other accredited programs, they are better than the University rates and they are consistently improving. During the six years of the accreditation cycle, the six-year graduation rate was 32.54 percent. Retention rates are higher (65.82 percent for third-semester students; 41.25 percent for seventh-semester students). Data are published on the School's website. The University is committed to increasing both retention and graduation rates and is developing several strategies to help. Central administration looks to JMC as a strong example of a unit committed to retaining and graduating its students.

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

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has been treated extraordinarily well over the past decade, at a time when many journalism and communication programs – especially those in resource-restrained public institutions – are scrambling to sustain, let alone to grow. The investment began with a \$21.5 million renovation and expansion of the School’s home, Franklin Hall, completed in 2007. It has continued with steady budget growth, including an increase of nearly 10 percent over the past two years, from \$4.5 million to \$4.93 million.

Kent State operates under the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget paradigm, under which all income and costs accrue to the units who generate them. This model requires detailed annual budgets and in principle places more budgetary decisions into the hands of the School’s Director and its faculty.

There is ample evidence that the Director has tied budgetary decisions to the School’s strategic plan, which was developed by administration, faculty and staff. An example: A goal of the strategic plan was to “strengthen the School’s relationships with alumni and friends in the media/communications industry as well as the broader business community, nonprofit and public sector.” To support this goal, a new position – Coordinator for Outreach and Marketing – was created and funded by 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.**

Kent State’s administration has identified JMC as one of its pillar programs, a high-profile school that elevates the reputation of the University as a whole. As such, the School receives excellent consideration from a budgetary standpoint. In fact, under the RCM model, the School has operated in recent years at a deficit. The shortfall has been made up with University funds. The School’s salaries are in line with those across the College of Communication and Information and the University as a whole. Additionally, the School has had great recent success in fund-raising. In 2012, the School had an endowment of about \$3 million; at the time of the site visit, that endowment was nearly \$8 million.

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

In the view of this experienced site team, Franklin Hall is one of the most impressive facilities in the country. It is a gorgeous, Georgian-style, four-story building constructed in 1926 and renovated and expanded by one-quarter to 80,000 square feet in in 2005-07. Inside, it is bright, efficient and flexible. Among its features:

- A magnificent main lobby with an Alumni Hall of Fame and six large plasma-screen displays highlighting student work.
- A \$2.5 million, fully outfitted HD digital video studio, comparable to those found in mid-market cities.
- A large converged newsroom that looks into the studio and houses various student-media outlets, facilitating their cooperation and coordination.
- A variety of computer labs, including a state-of-art Media Lab.

- An industry-standard focus-group room featuring a two-way mirror and audio-visual components.
- A 150-seat “smart” auditorium.
- Quality office space for all faculty, including adjuncts.

Students reflected that the facility was a major selling point in their recruitment to Kent State, and they clearly are proud to be associated with it.

**(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 School takes a continuous-improvement approach to technology, and – with the notable exception of audio production – appears to maintain those at industry-standard levels. The School uses an innovative system for checking out equipment to students. The system is based on a bar code system that feeds the University Library checkout computer system. The partnership with the library is unique and clever. The students report the system works well. Staff report a significant decrease in lost or damaged equipment and a significant increase in collecting fines for late fees.

Students and faculty do express concern about technology support. They have high regard for the staff person responsible for it, but say he desperately needs help. Some students also complain about technology-rental fees, which they say are exorbitant and put low-income students at a disadvantage.

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

The University’s library has recently undergone major renovation and is impressive. There is a librarian assigned to JMC.

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

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (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.**

Once a semester, the School publishes *Jargon*, a publication that is mailed out to nearly 8,000 alumni and is posted on the unit's website. The website also features an expanded section of alumni news and events. The School's Facebook and Twitter pages alert alumni to events and provide updates on student and unit accomplishments. During Homecoming each year, two major alumni awards are presented. One recognizes an alum who is well-established and respected in the media and communication industry and the other to honor alumni who have risen quickly in their professions.

The undergraduate sequences also bring in working professionals across disciplines, including alumni, to expose students to updates in technology, industry trends and current case studies. The concentrations regularly invite professionals in to help coach students, bring in speakers and participate in professional workshops.

- (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 are actively involved in a wide range of events, including a joint annual media ethics conference with the Poynter Institute, a multimedia workshop and the Ohio Scholastic Media Association Workshop. The School also engages professionals as guest speakers, adjunct faculty, coaches and mentors to students and exposing students to real-world examples of crisis management, effective communication and practical production dilemmas.

- (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 School's Center for Scholastic Journalism, in addition to serving as an advocate for high school and middle school journalism, is a research center that aims to increase academic rigor and editorially independent student media. The unit is also home to the Ohio Scholastic Media Association, which is the only statewide scholastic press association.

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

The unit hosts a summer Multimedia Workshop, screens documentaries and supports a number of projects, including:

*A JMC Conversation* is a series in which the School holds "conversations" on important topics with faculty and students. The series, which was launched in fall 2014, focused on Terrorism and the Media, and during the visit students discussed plans for a spring 2015 discussion to address race relations on campus.

TV2, the student-staffed television station, hosts *Portage Pulse*, a weekly public-affairs program and students participate in *Tiger Legacy*, a community storytelling project.

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

The School provides a co-curricular Student Media experience that is open to students across the campus. In addition to *The Kent Stater*, the student newspaper, there is TV2, kentwired.com, Black Squirrel Radio and *The Burr*, a student magazine.

Faculty also are active in professional associations, including the Public Relations Society of America, the Radio Television Digital News Association, Ohio News Photographers Association, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Knight Foundation.

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

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council.**

The unit has adopted the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies. The School restructured the 12 competencies under five key areas. All 12 are properly represented in the reformatted statement. The students indicated awareness of the multiple posters around the JMC building and the screen savers on lab computers in the building representing the competencies. However, when students in a group meeting were asked directly about the competencies there was little knowledge or understanding of what these were or the relevancy to their journalism and mass communication education. When this disconnect was mentioned to faculty, they were surprised given the efforts the School took to make the students aware.

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

The School has an aggressive assessment plan that is well thought out; however, it is fairly new, replacing a previously implemented plan the then-new administration thought inadequate. The current Student Learning Assessment Plan was approved in August 2013. Faculty are heavily involved in assessment at the School. They work with alumni to assess capstone projects. There is a question of bias in the inclusion of faculty in this evaluation due to their ties to the School and potentially students. The internship supervisors’ assessment and the exit exams are both appropriate and well done. The five indirect measures are typical, sufficient, and well-displayed.

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

The data were collected and analyzed for the 2013-14 academic year and a report generated. While it is true that the School has conducted assessments prior to 2013, the issue of closing the loop on assessment was noted in the 2008 report finding the School in noncompliance. In the middle of the six-year period examined for this self-study, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication instituted a major curriculum renovation. This forced a reworking of the existing assessment plan with a new focus and system for gathering and analyzing direct and indirect data.

The self-study did not make it clear that the School had closed the loop in assessment since the new curriculum was instituted. Documents gathered during the site team visit indicate that faculty were involved in the assessment process and resulting changes. Minutes from an August 2014 faculty meeting

specifically address reaction to the assessment data. The Associate Director was also able to provide an eight-page summary of course and curriculum changes across sequences in the JMC indicating significant changes for the current academic year. These changes were being implemented at the time of the visit and thus no assessment of the effect of the changes is available.

**(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 of Journalism and Mass Communication has significant and strong professional and alumni relationships in Northeastern Ohio. The students made numerous references to these connections and their value to the School and students for fundraising, internships, guest speakers and jobs. It is clear from the discussions with students and faculty that there is mentoring throughout the program and well into careers. Students did note that the School needs to expand its reach to help them get better national internships and jobs. The faculty said that many of the alumni live outside of the state and could help with an effort to expand the connections nationally.

JMC has an ad hoc system for tracking alumni using word of mouth, connections to faculty and LinkedIn. The School administrators are aware of the issue and have hired a person to develop a systematic tracking of alumni for multiple purposes, including fund-raising.

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

The School's use of professionals and alumni in the assessment process is built in for the past year. The School provided the names of four external reviewers for each sequence in the School. All were professionals in the respective field. The use of professionals centers around assessing student success at achieving core learning objectives. Another 104 professionals served as guest lecturers with many more serving as "go-to" internship supervisors for students.

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

### PART III: Summary by site visit team

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

##### Strengths:

- Stellar facilities and technology
- Energetic, focused leadership, backed by support from the College and University
- Strong regional reputation and enthusiastic support from students and alumni
- Engaged, committed faculty
- National reputation in the study and leadership of scholastic journalism
- Extensive and excellent student media and organizations

##### Weaknesses:

- Lack of diversity in the faculty, both full-time and adjunct, despite progress in strategies and actions
- Small number of research-focused faculty, and limited faculty productivity, both scholarly and creative
- A sequence, Digital Media Production, that is not performing at the level of the others and leaving many students deeply unsatisfied
- Disproportionate focus on skills at the expense of conceptual learning

#### 2) List the standards with which the unit is not in compliance. None.

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

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

#### 5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to the recommendation. N/A

#### 6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.

##### Weaknesses noted in the last accreditation report were:

- *Continued problems in the recruitment and retention of minority students, despite concerted efforts by School leaders and documented progress.* The School has made notable progress in this regard, as documented on Standard 3 above. This is the result of a series of focused and deliberate actions by the University and the School.



- *Uneven support for the visual and electronic sequences compared to news, advertising and public relations.* These sequences no longer exist as they were, but the replacement sequence – Digital Media Production – still appears to be inadequately supported. The students and faculty describe it as a “second-class” part of the School.
- *Insufficient evidence that assessment data are being used to inform curricular changes.* The School’s new assessment plan is fully implemented and the faculty is engaged in the process. In the last report, the School did not properly use professionals and alumni to assess student learning. Now they are doing a good job of utilizing professionals to assess student capstone projects. The data are then used to inform changes in the curriculum and improve student learning.

**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 seasoned site-visit team has reviewed many self-studies, and this was one of the best, most elegantly done we have seen. It was superbly organized, well-written and clear. However, the program weaknesses we ultimately discovered were not as evident in the report as we might have expected.