

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2023-24

Name of Institution: Norfolk State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D., President

Name of Unit: Department of Mass Communication & Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: William B. Hart, Ph.D.

Date of 2023-24 Accrediting Visit: Jan. 28, 2024 - Jan. 30, 2024

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Feb. 2017

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Dorothy Bland, Ph.D.

Organization/School: University of North Texas

Signature



Team Member

Name and Title: Sonja Williams, M.A.

Organization/School: Howard University

Signature

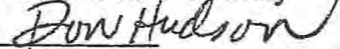


Team Member

Name and Title: Don Hudson

Organization/School: Newsday

Signature



PART 1 General information

Name of Institution: Norfolk State University

Name of Unit: Department of Mass Communications and Journalism

Year of Visit: 2023-24

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

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission on Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges
- 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. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.

Norfolk State University has degree-granting authority from the Commonwealth of Virginia. NSU's Board of Visitors (BOV), which consists of 13 members appointed by the governor for four-year-terms subject to confirmation by the Virginia General Assembly, confers degrees as authorized by statutory law (Code of Virginia§ 23.1-1902 (C) and the Bylaws of the Norfolk State University Board of Visitors (BOV Bylaws§ 2.01). The University's degree-granting authority is regulated by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEY), which in tum is authorized by the Code of Virginia (Code of Virginia§ 23.1-203).

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 full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:

February 19-22, 2017

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

May 1999

6. Insert here the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

The mission of the Department of Mass Communications and Journalism is to develop academic and professional competence primarily in undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in media careers, but also with alumni, through teaching, research and service programs that combine strong liberal arts and science studies with professional preparation. The department strives to produce graduates that meet national standards of performance on gathering, editing, reporting, interpreting, and disseminating information across the various platforms that shape public discourse.

(Adopted 2003; briefly revised 2016; briefly revised 2023)

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 16

Number of weeks in a quarter: *N/A*

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 4, 6, 7 and 10

Number of weeks in intersessions: *N/A*

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

9. List the specific undergraduate degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. *Indicate online degrees.

B.S. in Mass Communications (with two concentrations)

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:
(Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)**

120 semester credit hours

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

6 semester credit hours

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge
B.S. in Mass Communication (General Broadcasting concentration)	William Hart, Ph.D.
B.S. in Mass Communication (Journalism concentration)	William Hart, Ph.D.
M.A. in Media and Communications	Cathy Jackson, Ph.D.*

*M.A. program not being evaluated.

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

Fall 2023 full-time enrollment: 6,045 total (5,510 undergraduates; 535 graduates)
 Spring 2024 full-time enrollment: 5,194 total (4,696 undergraduates; 498 graduates)

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed.

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
1. BS. MASS COM.GB	219	166
2. BS. MASS COM	1	1
3. BS. MASS COM.JRN	19	32
Total	239	199

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 for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2024 visits. 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.)

Spring 2024

Course	Section	Students
JRN-290-02	Digital Photography 02	16
MCM-250-01	TV Production 01	14
MCM-250-02	TV Production 02	15
MCM-250-03	TV Production 03	13
MCM-261-01	Introduction to Media Writing 01	20
MCM-261-03	Introduction to Media Writing 03	4
MCM-261-04	Introduction to Media Writing 04	14

MCM-261H-0			
1	Honors Intro to Media Writing	01	2
MCM-350-01	TV Directing	01	7
MCM-350-02	TV Directing	02	16
MCM-370-01	Podcasting Praxis	01	8
MCM-480-01	Social Media	01	17

Spring 2024 Online Courses

MCM-370-90	Podcasting	90	16
MCM-491-90			
A	Intro to Internet/Web Page	90	10
MCM-491-90			
B	Intro to Internet/Web Page	90	10

Fall 2023

Course		Section	Students
JRN-290-01	Digital Photography	01	15
MCM-250-01	TV Production	01	13
MCM-250-02	TV Production	02	14
MCM-261-01	Introduction to Media Writing	01	16
MCM-261-02	Introduction to Media Writing	02	16
MCM-261-03	Introduction to Media Writing	03	14
MCM-350-01	TV Directing	01	9
MCM-363-01	Audio Production	01	14
MCM-464-01	Advanced TV Production	01	
MCM-464-02	Advanced TV Production	02	16

Fall 2023 On-line Courses

MCM-491-90	Intro to Internet/Web Page	90	10
MCM-491-91	Intro to Internet/Web Page	91	12

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2023-2024 academic year:

Total expenditures planned by the unit for 2023-24 academic year: \$1,188,663.00

Total expenditures planned by the unit for 2022-23 academic year: \$1,160,093.00

Total expenditures planned by the unit for 2021-22 academic year: \$1,153,216.00

Total expenditures planned by the unit for 2020-21 academic year: \$1,061,865.34

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$718,281.00

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

Tony Atwater, Ph.D., professor

William Hart, Ph.D., associate professor (50% release time as department chair)

Cathy Jackson, Ph.D., associate professor (50% release time as graduate studies coordinator)

Proshot Kalami, Ph.D., associate professor

Willie Marsh, Ph.D., assistant professor (50% release time as QEP director)

April Woodard, Instructor (50% release time with Office of University Advancement)

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2023. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2023. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2024, also provide the spring 2024 adjunct list in the updated information.)

Chester Branch, Ph.D. (Spring 2024)

Leha Byrd, M.A. (Fall/Spring 2023)

Theresa Ferrell, M.A. (Fall 2023)

Lateef Gibson, M.A. (Fall/Spring 2023)

Ramal Johnson, M.A. (Fall/Spring 2023)

Deanna Latimore, M.A. (Fall 2023)

Alexis Martin, M.A. (Spring 2024)

Andrew Massa, M.A. (Fall/Spring 2023)

Steven Opfer, M.A. (Spring 2023)

Kimberly Payne, Ed.D. (Fall/Spring 2023)

Tori Reid, M.A. (Spring 2024)

Maynard Scales, M.A. (Fall 2023)

Stanley Tickton, Ph.D., professor emeritus (retired June 2016) (Fall/Spring 2023)

Alisa Valentin, Ph.D. (Fall/Spring 2023)

19. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates from the unit.

2022-23 academic year: 57 (27 graduates in December 2022 and 30 in May 2023)

2021-22 academic year: 45 (18 graduates in December 2021 and 27 in May 2022)

PART II-Standard 1:Mission, Governance and Administration

The roots of Norfolk State University (NSU) date back to 1935, when it was founded as the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University with 85 students. The institution has undergone several name changes, and NSU has more than 5,000 students today. NSU's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJR) has more than 200 students enrolled and is part of NSU's College of Liberal Arts (COLA). Although the department offers a small master's degree program, only the undergraduate program is under review, per NSU's request. At the undergraduate level, there are two tracks -- general broadcasting and journalism. However, more than 90% of the undergraduate students are in the broadcasting track.

The Department of MCJR was born in 1994 after the merger of standalone units known as Journalism, which started in 1974, and Mass Communication, which started in 1975. The unit has been accredited since 1999. WNSB-FM, an 8,100-watt radio station affiliated with National Public Radio and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, went on air in 1980 and is branded as the "Soul of VA." The station has a strong music focus on Hip Hop & R&B, and also offers a variety of other programming opportunities for students.

In terms of overall enrollment, the NSU College of Liberal Arts is the largest of eight colleges at the university. NSU is in the heart of the Hampton Roads metropolitan region, which is part of the 42nd-largest designated media market by Nielsen in 2024. Norfolk is home to the largest naval station in the United States. While NSU is the only public historically black college or university (HBCU) with more than 5,000 students in this part of Virginia, the area is also home to Hampton University, a private, research HBCU with more than 3,500 students. Also, there are several other higher ed institutions in the area, including Old Dominion University (which is about four miles across town), Virginia Wesleyan and Regent University in Virginia Beach, plus Tidewater Community College with four campuses in the region. The area also is home to dozens of online higher ed options, including Strayer University and Bryan & Stratton College, plus Christopher Newport University and Thomas Nelson Community College.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit's mission statement has been revised three times since being adopted in 2003, with the most recent revision in 2023. The mission statement focuses on developing "academic and professional competence in undergraduate and graduate students interested in media careers through programs or teaching, research and service that combine strong liberal arts and science studies with professional preparation." Graduates are expected to meet national performance standards on multiple platforms that "shape public discourse."

The unit isn't required to maintain a unit strategic plan, and the university strategic plan was last revised in 2023. The unit is closely aligned with the university priorities with strategies related to the following key areas:

- Student retention, graduation and career placement
- Certificate program offerings
- Faculty and staff development
- Cultural and ethnic diversity
- Philanthropic giving

The mission statement and university strategic plan are prominently displayed on the school's website. While the strategic plan doesn't specify metrics to monitor progress, the unit has documented student retention, retention and graduation data. To its credit, the unit's retention and graduation rates exceeded the university average in 2023. The unit prominently displays four alumni such as recent alumni working for TNT on the wall of fame on the first floor of Brown Memorial Hall.

No new certificate programs have been added in the unit during the seven-year study period. However, under the chair's leadership, four courses related to social media, artificial intelligence in the media, podcasting and career preparation/readiness have been added in the last year. The department chair has been a strong advocate for technology and created the artificial intelligence and media class, which he taught for the first time in the fall 2023.

The department chair is an intercultural communication scholar and seen as supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion issues by faculty. With his support, a faculty member led the university's first study abroad program to London in 2023 with 15 students. That same faculty member was in Germany for a year-long fellowship leave sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Europe and was interviewed via Zoom. She is expected to expand the university's international connections and contribute to her research agenda related to activism, the role of women, special justice and civil rights.

(b) 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.

Conversations with more than 10 leaders outside the unit who regularly engage with the department indicate MCJR is well respected around campus and is seen as a collaborative force. "They're well positioned and respected for the skill sets they provide," one administrator said. "Every department in the university comes to MCJR for media help," another person said.

The unit's leader is completing his second three-year term as department chair and has provided stability since 2018. Under his leadership, several new courses have been added to the curriculum, focusing on social media, artificial intelligence, podcasting and media career prep.

Colleagues describe the department chair as dedicated, hardworking, fair and collegial. However, students said he was a poor face-to-face communicator. Students and faculty reported the teaching faculty is understaffed. Faculty also expressed concerns about manual hiring processes and paperwork "stuck in the last century" that hamper operating efficiencies. One person suggested the university could "use AI to automate or put some things online to speed up processes." The heavy 4-4 teaching load and expectations for research productivity also were raised as concerns within the unit. A senior administrator shared that the university has more than 30 open positions during the site team's visit and changes are in the works for HR systems as well as a study of how to best re-align faculty workload expectations with discussions about moving the institution from a largely teaching institution to a Research 2 institution.

The department chair is viewed as a solid, technical person and hands-on professor. In addition to serving as chair, he teaches two classes, chairs the curriculum committee, serves as assessment coordinator for the unit and chaired the MCJR Week Planning Committee in 2023. However, students said he rarely participates in extracurricular activities for students in the department and is not a strong face-to-face communicator who often relies on email exchanges.

The department chair typically serves two terms, but may continue beyond that if no other faculty runs for chair and is approved by the provost. This is a major time of transition as two full-time faculty searches for assistant professors in public relations and journalism were underway as well as a search for a permanent dean in the College of Liberal Arts during the site team visit.

Although the provost said faculty lines can be filled, it was apparent there were fewer full-time faculty than in 2017. One emeritus faculty member who retired in 2016 consistently has taught a class since he retired. A former MCJR professor and longtime department chair who retired in 2019 was recruited back as interim COLA dean last year. She is a strong ally and supporter of the unit.

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).

There was no evidence that NSU and the unit had data on the ACEJMC searchable database prior to the site team's visit, and that was uploaded the week of the site team's visit.

(d) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts them annually in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its websites.

Graduation and enrollment data for 2022 and 2023 are on the unit's website. The data provided show the undergraduate graduation and retention rates are higher than the university average for the two years reported. However, context is missing for the number of students the percentage represent on the website, and it is unclear from the website what the graduation/retention rates have been for 1998-2021. See the assessment section (standard 3) of this document for more discussion about assessment tracking of student learning outcomes.

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

The faculty meets about once a month. At the time of the site visit, there was evidence of PowerPoints from six faculty meetings during the 2023-24 summarizing information shared, as well as PowerPoints dating to 2018, but no minutes to reflect discussion per se. This speaks to communication and staffing issues. Given scheduling issues, meetings often have been via Zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Given the small faculty, they often operate as a committee of the whole. The department chair does double duty as the Curriculum Committee chair. With two faculty searches underway during the visit, two other senior faculty members are chairing those committees, and outside members from other departments have been enlisted to help. The same is true for the annual Faculty Evaluation Committee.

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

Per the faculty handbook, the department chair is selected for a three-year term by the faculty, and the appointment is renewable. The department chair can be renewed twice or more based on faculty support, and a former chair served for 12 years in that role. The department chair is evaluated on an annual basis by the dean with feedback from faculty, student teaching evaluations and self-evaluation.

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

Per the university handbook, the faculty, staff and students can express concerns. The process is that students are to share the concern with the faculty member, and if it is not resolved, it goes to the chair. The chair reported there have been no formal student, staff or faculty grievances filed with the dean or Equal Opportunity Office during the last seven years from the department.

SUMMARY:

Since the last accreditation visit in 2017, the department has moved into a new building, navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic with leadership in transition. The current department chair has provided stability and led efforts to strengthen curriculum with courses such as Artificial Intelligence and Media, as well as social media. With two faculty searches and the COLA dean search underway, it is apparent those will be critical hires to continue forward momentum.

Overall evaluation compliance/noncompliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II -- Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Students in the unit complete academic requirements for a baccalaureate degree that meet the liberal arts and sciences/general education requirements of the institution. Programs may identify classes within the unit that contribute to a liberal arts and social sciences perspective for graduates from the unit.

To graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree from the unit, students must successfully complete 120 credit hours. Those hours may be earned in the following manner: 39 credit hours either in the journalism track or the general broadcasting track; 40 hours of general education courses in liberal arts and the sciences; 26 credit hours in specified courses outside the major; 15 elective credit hours. Students are not required to pursue specific minors, but they may choose to concentrate their 15 elective credit hours in a field of interest other than communications. For example, the chair of the Sociology Department said Criminal Justice courses are popular among MCJR majors.

Students in the Journalism track are required to take 15 credit hours in non-skills-based courses in their major. In the General Broadcasting track, students are required to take 18 credit hours of non-skills-based courses. Since the previous ACEJMC re-accreditation site visit, the unit has added four new elective courses to its curriculum: Social Media, AI in Media, Podcasting Praxis and Career Prep.

However, the unit's ability to continue to develop and offer new and innovative upper-level elective courses is compromised by the fact that since the last ACEJMC re-accreditation visit, the unit has lost -- through retirement and resignation -- several full-time faculty members. There were only six full-time faculty members in the unit during this re-accreditation visit. Four of those six faculty had course reductions because of administrative responsibilities, and another faculty member was on leave from the university after earning a competitive, year-long, European Union-funded research fellowship in Germany. Therefore, the unit employed twice as many adjuncts as full-time faculty -- not an ideal situation for curriculum continuity, nor for students' ability to regularly interact with adjuncts outside of the classroom.

To its credit, the unit is currently conducting searches for two assistant professors -- one in journalism and the other in public relations. The projected hiring of two full-time, tenure-track professors, by fall 2024, should definitely strengthen the unit's curriculum offerings. As well, the unit is encouraged to seek administrative approval to hire more full-time faculty to reduce its current outsized reliance on part-time adjuncts.

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

The unit's core requirement includes 15 credit hours of skills-based as well as media theory and history-based courses. In the General Broadcasting track, Introduction to Media Writing, TV Production, and Introduction to the Internet and Web Design are the skills-based requirements; Media and Society and Media Law are the required theoretical/history-based courses.

In the Journalism track, Basic Writing, Copy Editing and Introduction to the Internet and Web Design are the skills-based mandated courses. Society and Media and Media Communications Theory are the required media theory and history-based courses.

In addition to the core courses, students in both tracks are required to take classes from a list of restricted MCJR electives organized into six preset subgroups. For journalism majors, four of the elective subgroups offer choices between two or three practical skills-based courses, while the other two subgroups offer theory and/or history-based class choices. For example, in one subgroup of elective courses for Journalism majors, students must select between Law and Mass Communications or Ethics in Media; another subset gives students a choice between TV Production or two photography courses.

A similar set of choices is available for General Broadcast majors -- the largest population of students in this unit. Four subgroups offer students in this track choices between theory or history courses; two other subgroups offer classes that are skills-based. In both cases, the restricted MCJR elective groupings provide opportunities for students to obtain a balanced exposure to the practical as well as the historical, theoretical and critical aspects of their major.

In addition, the unit's syllabi adhere to and lists ACEJMC's 10 professional values and competencies, and the syllabi clearly indicate which values and competencies are addressed in each course.

(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, synchronous or asynchronous, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of contemporary digital and technological media competencies.

During the spring 2024 and fall 2023 semesters, a majority of the unit's courses were taught in person; only nine of 32 spring MCJR courses and eight of 30 fall MCJR courses were taught online. Whatever the method of delivery, instruction appeared to be demanding, current, and reflective of professional expectations and technological competencies -- especially since the unit video and audio studios are professionally equipped and maintained by an experienced TV/video systems engineer and in-house production manager.

(d) The unit demonstrates efforts to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

The unit is very supportive of the faculty's need for professional development to keep up with the constantly evolving technological needs and ethical practices in the journalism and mass communications landscape. The department has set aside some funds that faculty members can use to cover travel expenses to industry-related conferences and workshops. But a more substantial pool of travel support for faculty professional development endeavors are available through the University's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). MCJR professors have taken full advantage of CTL support, enabling them to "see the world" as one professor noted, while interacting with global media scholars and professionals at conferences, symposia, an/or training workshops.

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

The student/faculty ratio in the unit's skills-based classes in both the general broadcasting and the journalism tracks are under ACEJMC's 20 to 1 limit, averaging about 15 students overall.

(f) 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. Units 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).

MCJR students are encouraged, though not required, to complete media internships both on and off campus. It is noteworthy that a Virginia state law set to take effect on July 1, 2025, mandates that baccalaureate degree programs at public institutions of higher education must include an internship or work-based learning experience. To receive internship credit, current MCJR students must provide written documentation of 150 hours of work, as supervised by the internship professor of record and the internship provider. Students can earn up to six credit hours through internships.

SUMMARY:

The unit's curriculum and instruction satisfy ACEJMC and NSU core values and competencies, and the department has made strides in revising and upgrading its curriculum.

Overall evaluation (compliance/noncompliance): COMPLIANCE

PART II -- Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written assessment plan that has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media world. The unit posts its assessment plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

Per the self-study, the unit's assessment plan was adopted in 2019 and last updated in 2023. During the site visit, NSU officials showed that the university uses the Taskstream system and creates reports using Watermark. However, there was some confusion about what was posted on the department's website. ACEJMC's 10 core values and competencies are on the department's public-facing website, and that is not the same as the assessment plan.

As outlined in the self-study, University Administrative Policy #39-01, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, requires all degree offerings to be assessed annually to address student learning and other improvements. During the site-team visit, we received documentation of the annual plan dating to 2018, and the university now uses the Taskstream system to track annual progress.

(b) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the professional Values and Competencies" of the Council. (See Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.)

A review of syllabi during the site visit showed the department consistently has included the 10 ACEJMC values and competencies in the assessment plan and syllabi.

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

The unit's plan includes direct and indirect measures that are reviewed annually. They include three direct measures: test scores on final exams, rotating assessment of specific classes over a three-year cycle, and internship reviews.

As for the rotating assessment, it appears the unit typically has two core courses included for three consecutive years. For example, during the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 cycles, the two courses assessed were TV Production and Media Law. In the TV Production course, the rubric evaluated technical aspects, creativity, quality of writing, social benefits and follow-up on PSA with a goal of 80% of students passing. In the Media Law class, the comprehensive exam was assessed with a goal of 80% of students passing. There was some concern about the lack of pre-testing in direct measures and whether the loop was closed on the Media Law class. For example, for at least two consecutive years, final scores were 50% or less on the Media Law final, with a goal of 80%. Although there was a change in instructor and the final was moved from an essay to a multiple-choice exam during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not apparent that a pre-test was ever done in that class, and students had not met the target of 80% pass rate on the final exam before the rotation to assess other courses began. For the 2022-23 cycle, the two courses assessed were Web Design and Media Writing. According to the 2022-23 assessment data, about 60% of students received the target score of 80% or higher in the Media Writing course. The unit attributed the low result to higher standards of a faculty member and recommended looking at "student evaluations of the faculty member" and "study more closely specific values and competencies in the course." In the web design course, 86% of students taking the course achieved the targeted score of 80% on the final exam. Again, there was no mention of pre-test of key concepts.

Indirect measures have included student surveys, student awards and alumni surveys. Students also have the opportunity to provide feedback to faculty via course evaluations each semester. However, the course response rate generally has been low. For example, of 28 undergrad classes in the unit, the average response rate was 9%, and in more than half of the classes, not a single student completed the faculty evaluation form.

A spring 2020 survey showed students have strong interest in film and being announcers, especially on radio or TV. The department has been responsive, and that explains the department's support for hiring two adjunct instructors with exceptional radio backgrounds to teach radio and podcasting courses. Also, a faculty member with strong interest in film was hired in 2021 and led the university's first study-abroad course for 15 students in London. That same survey showed strong student interest in social media. There also have been other curriculum improvements, including a social media class launched in 2023, as well as a media career planning course launched in the spring 2024, to close the loop.

The department also partnered with the Office of Academic Effectiveness to get feedback from graduating seniors, and the most recent surveys showed more than 90% of MCJR majors reported the department has enhanced its understanding of information tech skills and human diversity. Additionally, 100% of the graduating senior survey respondents said the program has enhanced their understanding of critical thinking and written communication skills.

(d) At least one direct and/or indirect measure should include journalism and mass communication professionals engaged in assessment data collection.

Industry professionals are involved in the program by providing feedback to interns, and at least five alums serve as adjunct instructors. Some alums hire students as production assistants and interns, and professionals at Virginia media outlets report they have hired NSU alumni and are satisfied with graduates of the program. The advisory board also includes a variety of industry professionals and alumni who provide counsel to faculty and students, as well as access to various media employment pathways. Interviews with more than 10 alumni and industry professionals made it loud and clear that internships and job placement are imperative going forward. They repeatedly said students need to think beyond the sports, entertainment and newsrooms to sales, social media and other media business-related opportunities to mine around-the-clock opportunities.

(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction. There is substantial, concrete evidence of "closing the loop," generally and specifically. Multiple examples of "closing the loop" are evident.

As documented above, assessment is a work in progress, and the unit has made substantial progress with curriculum changes, and that is reflected in hiring talent to ensure students remain abreast of the everchanging media ecosystem.

SUMMARY:

Assessment is an ongoing process, and someone said it needs more intentional discussion in meetings. One alum said industry outreach must be a greater part of assessment. "The program is good, but it needs to stay in touch with alumni working in the industry." He added, "Textbooks are textbooks and practical experience is totally different." Another alum discussed the lack of diverse representation in much of the media business, and praised the program for creating a "pathway of opportunities."

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II -- Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written diversity plan that has been implemented and discussed annually, for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse, culturally proficient faculty, staff 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, identify under-represented groups and articulate key performance indicators upon which the unit intends to focus and improve.

The unit follows the university's strategic plan on diversity and inclusiveness, but has its own comprehensive plan posted on the website. When asking questions about DEI while on campus, there was no concern among administrators, faculty, students or staff. The department chair said DEI issues such as gender, race and sexual orientation are discussed in class. Administrators and professors say they're "fine" on the diversity recruitment front related to faculty and staff (there are two full-time openings). The challenge on the student front has been gender: recruiting and retaining male students.

The journalism program's diversity and inclusiveness plan outlines five goals. This, extracted from the program's executive summary for the accreditation process, states the mission: "The department, deeply rooted in its HBCU identity, adopts a comprehensive approach to diversity and inclusion. This approach spans curriculum development, recruitment, retention, and community engagement, fostering an educational environment that not only respects but actively values and celebrates diversity in all its forms."

Some of the things gleaned from the unit's self-study include the commitment to:

- Recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff
(The school has lost four women instructors over the past few years. Pay, red tape in the hiring process, i.e., paperwork, are the challenges in recruitment/retention.);
- Introduce students to outside perspectives *(This is happening, as speakers are coming in from all across the region and country. There are limited funds here for speakers.);*
- Provide students a curriculum enriched with domestic and international perspectives
(Students are getting the domestic perspectives; there was little mention of international perspectives during the site visit.);
- Reflect the demographics of the Hampton Roads metro region
(This standard is being met; the numbers in the self-study back this up.);
- Foster an environment that values and celebrates diversity
(This is being accomplished through journalism week on campus, as well as in other areas. Everyone in the program refers to Mass Comm as "family." It's a close-knit group.)

The unit posts its diversity plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The diversity and inclusion plan is not labeled as such on the university's website. Prior to the plan receiving an update in 2023, it had not been revamped in 13 years, since 2010.

To find the plan quickly, you have to go into the search engine on the site and look for "journalism." Labeled on the left side of the site, you'll find "Plans and metrics." Within that topic, you'll find the university's goals on diversity and inclusion. It's a nicely written five-prong approach. This could be more prominent on the website, however.

(b) The unit's curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit's curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.

The unit's self-study states, "The curriculum provides students with opportunities to explore issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, accessibility, and ideology and related issues of representation in media. Many special topics courses address diversity and inclusion directly, while others infuse these topics within the broader context of communication in society."

The department chair and at least two professors, as well as a couple of students, said this is happening in classrooms. The unit offers a cross-section of courses: domestic and global perspectives. Some of the courses offered, according to the self-study, include: covering diverse cultural groups; the evolution of films with diverse directors; international mass media systems; examining people of color in the media industry, and the study of diverse storytelling featuring Black podcasters. The school offers seven such classes. The unit's Media Production Center features a hands-on program - Production House - set up for students to get "live" experience as producers and directors (seven undergrad interns; one fellow). This program brings in a diverse mix of guests for its various five shows.

From a global perspective, the department partnered with the university's Office of Global Studies and offered a summer 2023 study-abroad course in London, where students produced multimodal/multimedia storytelling packages.

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to enhance all faculty members' understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and ability to develop culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit also demonstrates intentional efforts to recruit and retain faculty and professional staff who are from demographics that are historically, domestically marginalized.

The unit's mission statement is posted to the website, along with objectives and the university's strategic plan. DEI stands out in the mission. The unit states in the self-study that it meets monthly with staff to discuss student and faculty recruitment, enrollment, curriculum, retention, etc., and during that meeting, metrics are reviewed. This does not appear to be happening, on a consistent basis. This could be because it's such a small faculty and staff.

An emphasis has been placed on recruiting male students, everyone agrees. There's a problem recruiting and retaining there. In the Production House program, seven of the eight interns are young women.

NSU has done a pretty good job recruiting people of color. Of those hired -- part time or adjunct faculty -- from 2020-21 through 2022-23, three offers were made to and accepted by females, and of four offers made to people of color, all accepted. Of note: All hires during that cycle were made in one academic year: 2021-22 [there were only three (3) openings, but 25 names were part of the hiring pool, and seven (7) minorities were finalists; one (1) international hire was made].

The unit has only six full-time faculty: three females (2 Black/African American; 1 International, any race) and three males (2 Black/African American; 1 white). The adjunct staff for 2022-23 totaled 15: 42% Black women; 33% Black men, and 25% white men. There currently are two full-time openings. One challenge in recruitment: The unit is in need of professionals who recently left or are currently still working in the field.

(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit, retain and graduate a student population reflecting the diversity of the population the institution aims to serve.

The self-study stated the unit is aligned with NSU's mission as a public HBCU in the Hampton Roads region, which has a population of 1.7 million people and includes 16 jurisdictions. The region is 60% white and 31% Black (2020 Census report). The area has a 51% female population.

Based on the 2022-23 academic year, the journalism program is about even in Black/African American and gender (104 female students; 103 male). The program does not have many white students: three (3)

total; that's almost even (percentage-wise) with the university's enrollment as a whole. On the international student front, recruitment is lacking: only one (1) student. Same for other minority groups: 10 Hispanic/Latino (3.8%, slightly under the region's 6.4%), and no Asian students (3.8%, region).

The majority of students are from Virginia. The bulk of the unit's out-of-state students are from Maryland (12). The school recruits across the country, including New York (5 students) and New Jersey (6 students).

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

The university started an incident reporting system in April 2022 to address issues including harassment and discrimination. The university says it is in line with federal laws, including Title IX. Additionally, the Brown Memorial Hall building has disability accessibility, including an elevator, in accordance with state and federal law. The building, overall, is a wonderful facility: clean, with all the equipment needed to get students to the next level.

Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the laws of the countries in which non-U.S. institutions are located.

Academic year: 2022-2023 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	Percentage of total faculty	Male	Percentage of total faculty
Black/African-American	2	33%	2	33%
White			1	17%
American Indian/Alaskan native				
Asian				
Hispanic/Latino (any race)				
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander				
Two or more races				
Other race				
International faculty (any race)	1	17%		

Academic year: 2022-2023 Part-time/adjunct faculty

Group	Female	Percentage of total faculty	Male	Percentage of total faculty
Black/African American	5	42%	4	33%
White			3	25%
American Indian/Alaskan native				
Hispanic/Latino (any race)				
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander				
Two or more races				
Other race				
International students (any race)				

SUMMARY:

Overall, the unit's DEI plan is in lockstep with the university's goals, though there was not much talk about initiatives during the site visit. The unit appears to be doing its best, especially with the workload professors take on each semester. The diversity and inclusiveness plan was revised in 2023, with an emphasis on global and domestic perspectives.

Students and alumni are being engaged to help in recruitment and retention. Student retention is positive within the school: 72% in 2023, compared with 66% in 2022. With faculty, that rate is 70%, up 9% year over year. The goal is to hit 80% by 2025, and there are four goals in place to achieve that metric, according to the self-study. They include working with the Student Success Center and the Writing Center, and establishing a male mentorship initiative university-wide.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II -- Standard 5: Faculty

Under performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity and service.

As mandated by the NSU 2021 Faculty Handbook and by ACEJMC's accreditation standards, the unit's faculty is responsible for adhering to the university's Mission, Vision and Core Values Statements. The handbook also states that "faculty members have the primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Accordingly, each faculty member shall develop and maintain an academic atmosphere conducive to the spirit of free inquiry and academic integrity."

Therefore, the MCJR faculty has worked diligently to upgrade and fine-tune its course offerings to reflect current trends or issues in the discipline. New courses such as Social Media, AI in Media, Podcasting Praxis and Research, and Media Methodology offer students and faculty different avenues to study and dissect industry and societal advances and challenges. Those courses, along with plans for the possible creation of new courses in film and filmmaking, as well as in media research, demonstrate the faculty's commitment to curriculum oversight, revision and expansion.

Despite the faculty's substantial if not overbearing teaching load -- the university mandates a 4-4 course load unless reduced because of administrative duties -- MCJR faculty has an impressive record of scholarly research and publication. They have presented 33 conference papers and published eight (8) referred journal articles, three (3) book chapters and two (2) invited academic papers. Unit faculty members also received one external and three (3) internal grants, 10 different awards and/or honors; and presented two (2) non-juried creative works.

Their service includes leadership and membership on the NSU Faculty Senate, MCJR Graduate Program Coordinator, Director of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, Special Assistant to the Vice President of Advancement, creation of the university's first Study Abroad immersion in London, and Faculty Advisor of the student-run newspaper, *Spartan Echo*.

(b) The unit's faculty (full time and part time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.

The faculty (including full-timers and part-timers) have more than 200 years of collective professional and academic experience. They are active in a variety of academic and professional organizations ranging from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to the National Association of Black Journalists.

(c) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear.

Through the unit's small (approximately \$8,000) travel/research budget line and through the NSU's Center for Teaching and Learning, MCJR can and has applied for funding to support research and/or creative project activities.

And the university's promotion and tenure expectations and procedures are very clear. The NSU 2021 Faculty Handbook (and its revised March 2021 edition) indicates the minimum eligibility for promotion and tenure, including degree requirements required (the Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree); years of teaching experience within and outside of the NSU; documented evidence of excellent teaching ratings; scholarly research activity and grantsmanship, and professional and university service.

The NSU Faculty Handbook also clearly lays out the entire promotion and tenure application process faculty, including the recommended dates by which a department's promotion and tenure committee, the department chair, the college dean, the university review committee, the provost and the university president should receive and render their decisions.

(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.

Through the department faculty's impressive number of research/conference paper presentations, general media presentations, media appearances/interviews, referred journal articles, book chapters and book publication, the MCJR unit has shared findings that are appropriate to the mission of the unit. The mission states:

The Department of Mass Communications and Journalism shall advance academic and professional competence primarily in undergraduate and graduate students that are interested in media careers, but also in alumni and mid-career media practitioners, through programs of teaching, research and service that combine strong liberal arts and science studies with professional preparation. The department shall strive to produce graduates that meet national standards of performance in gathering, editing, reporting, interpreting and disseminating information that would shape public discourse.

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

According to leaders from the NSU departments of psychology, sociology, history, business, political science, English, career services and communications and marketing, the unit is highly respected for its citizenship and service, the quality of its teaching as reflected by its students, and its scholarly publications.

SUMMARY:

The unit's faculty are a committed and knowledgeable set of scholars and media professionals who care about their students -- and the students feel the "family-like" attention and care. The students also indicated that they truly appreciate the "content" the professors provide in their classes. Additionally, MCJR faculty are productive researchers and producers, despite the often-heavy teaching loads they are required to maintain based on NSU Faculty Handbook mandates. With the loss of four full-time faculty members since the last reaccreditation period, the unit needs to reverse the 2:1 adjunct to full-time ratio. The unit has started down that path by committing to hiring two tenure track faculty members this year.

Overall evaluation (compliance/noncompliance): COMPLIANCE

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Totals (9)
		Full Professors (1)	Associate Professors (4)	Assistant Professors (3)	Other Faculty** (1)	
Awards and Honors	10		1	4	5	10
Grants Received Internal	3	2		1		3
Grants Received External	1		1			1
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored						
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored						
Books Edited						
Book Chapters	3		3			3
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	8			8		8
Refereed Conference Papers	33		14	19		33
Invited Academic Papers	2	1		1		2
Encyclopedia Entries	1		1			
Book Reviews	1		1			
Articles in Non-refereed Publications						
Juried Creative Works						
Non-juried Creative Works	2		1	1		
Other (please specify)						

*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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The turnout for student meetings was low with about 10 students present in two sessions. Those students praised several faculty members (full time and part time) for sharing a wealth of experience and providing lots of hands-on experience in areas such as radio, TV production, announcing, reporting and photography. "What we learn in content is superb," said one student who has been involved in the radio station and is an entrepreneur with a public relations firm, too. "We're ready to go into the media world." Two other students shared they have earned prestigious internships and even a full-time job offer based on what they have learned at NSU. Internship opportunities are announced to students in person as well as through email and social media. Internships are not required for graduation, but are encouraged by faculty.

Most of the students shared they expected to complete their programs of study on-time, but one student expressed concern that there have been shifts in some journalism class offerings due to low enrollment. That, the student said, could cause her to not graduate on time.

(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.

The department has two full-time advisers, and each student is assigned an adviser. Students who are freshmen and sophomores (first 60 credit hours) are advised in the Patrica Lynch Stith Student Success Center as part of the 2+2 Spartan Advising Model, and they meet with their adviser each semester. Students classified as juniors and seniors (60+ credit hours) are advised in Madison Hall, where the WNSB radio station is located and some MCJR classes are held. Students with poor grades are required to have additional sessions prior to registration and mid-term evaluations, if needed.

Most students said the advisers are helpful, and the professional advising model has helped faculty deal with heavy teaching workloads. Each student has access to a curriculum map in person and online. Faculty office hours are posted on their doors, and students say faculty are generally accessible.

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

"Everyone is so welcoming," was a current refrain from students in the student meetings. Students shared there is a good balance between "hands-on" experience and "textbook" learning in classes. In addition to face-to-face advising, a monthly e-newsletter is sent to students with academic deadlines and other events. An electronic tracking system also is used to keep students on track. However, students said university officials send out too many lengthy emails and can improve by connecting with students on social media platforms with shorter messages and using the video monitors in buildings, as well as the NSU Tower marquee, to showcase more student work.

(d) The unit and institution provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities relevant to the curriculum and that help develop the students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.

As documented in the self-study, extracurricular activities that enhance students' professional abilities and intellectual interests include access to the radio station WNSB-FM, the Production House, the independently run student newspaper *Spartan Echo*, as well as student chapters of the National Association of Black Journalists and the Broadcast Education Association.

WNSB markets itself as the "Soul of VA" and is known for its Hip Hop and R&B formats. The station reaches more than 100,000 listeners a week, according to station management. While the station covers the seven cities (Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Hampton Roads, Newport News and Chesapeake) in the metro area, its signal also reaches parts of Northeast North Carolina. WNSB broadcasts around the clock and is live on air from 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Friday. Typically, the station has about eight interns per semester and another 15-20 students who volunteer or serve as work-study students. Students, regardless of their major, also have pitched podcasts and spoken word performances from the station. The station is online at WNSBonline.org and available on the TuneIn app. WNSB has a mobile van used for community outreach. Among the community outreach events: Keep Norfolk Beautiful cleanup campaign, an annual Daddy Daughter Party and a "Feed the City" food drive partnership with a local church.

The Production House is led by an alum who does triple duty as the broadcast production manager, adviser to the Content Creator Club, and teaches three classes as an adjunct instructor. He gets glowing reviews from students. The Production House employs seven undergraduate students and a graduate student fellow each semester to help market and showcase stories about NSU people and happenings. Broadcast students also provide content for the closed-circuit TV station on campus as well as YouTube. The student-produced programs include the following:

- "Beyond NSU" highlighting alumni stories;
- "Say Word," a poetry program;
- "Air It out," a talk show;
- "Meet the Player," a sports program;
- "Green and Go Gossip," a campus news show.

Students said the *Spartan Echo*, the independent student newspaper established in 1952, is shooting for a "digital-first" mindset and has a .org website and *Spartan TV Echo* component, but the station does not produce a live TV newscast. As for its digital presence, *Spartan Echo* had 693 followers on Instagram and 925 followers on X, formerly Twitter, during the site team visit. There were monitors observed in the TV station with social media handles, and students suggested there be scrolling content on TV monitors to strengthen the presence around campus. Students also shared the *Spartan Echo* news outlet has struggled with securing student reporters and other staff, as well as a consistent publication cycle. A story about a Saturday night basketball game was up on the website the day after the game, but a regular news edition was not expected to be published until Feb. 14 --nearly a month into the semester. Top student editors explained that they had not been paid stipends for fall 2023 work and didn't get card access from the Student Activities Office for nearly a month in the fall 2023 semester. It is important to note that the *Spartan Echo* is under the auspices of Student Services. Students involved with the *Spartan Echo* spoke highly of their faculty adviser, who also serves as the NABJ student chapter adviser. Students said there are about 20 students involved with the *Spartan Echo* and the student NABJ chapter, but when asked about BEA, students said they did not know about that organization. A previous New York City media market tour led by a senior faculty member was discontinued prior to the COVID-19 pandemic due to costs.

(e) The unit uses retention and graduation data to improve student services, such as advising, and to reduce barriers to student success.

To its credit, MCJR data shows student retention and graduation data has been substantially better than the university-wide average.

SUMMARY:

Less than 5% of students turned out for student meetings during the site team visit, so this is not a representative sample of the MCJR population. Still, those students who participated in conversations with the site team shared their enthusiasm and passion for networking and extracurricular initiatives. Again, they said there are plenty of hands-on experiences to help secure jobs and launch media careers.

Overall evaluation (compliance/noncompliance): COMPLIANCE

PART II - Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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.

Total expenditures planned for the unit in AY 2023-24 is \$1,188,663.00. This was an increase from AY 2022-23 and AY 2021-22, when expenditures totaled \$1,160,093 and \$1,153,216, respectively.

In terms of funds for basic equipment and equipment maintenance for the Unit's Media Center, expenditures have risen during the past three years from roughly \$5,913 in AY 2020-21 (a pandemic year) to \$12,962 in AY 2021-22. In AY 2022-23, the amount doubled to \$28,423, and those funds covered basic video and audio equipment resource needs. In AY 2023-24, the amount allocated to equipment and equipment maintenance was \$60,000.

But given the high cost of professional quality equipment and the required accessories for the unit's TV, Audio and Photography Studios, and the number of portable equipment that students can take out and use into the field, the aforementioned budget figures are a mere drop in the bucket in terms of equipment costs in the journalism and broadcast media worlds.

The unit's chair acknowledged that within the next 3-5 years, major expenditures will be needed to cover possible repairs or replacements to the unit's lighting grid and/or cameras in its well-equipped and maintained TV studio. The chair anticipates that funds for such major expenditures may have to come from annual Virginia State Funds and Norfolk State University Foundation Funds, as well as from donations or fundraising initiated by the MCJR department. At this time, the unit does not have any endowment accounts.

In the meantime, the TV and audio production studios, control rooms, announcing booths and editing suites will continue to be maintained by the unit's TV/video engineer and production manager.

(b) Resources provided by the institution are adequate to achieve the unit's mission and are fair in relation to those provided to other units.

The unit's current resources absolutely are adequate to achieve its mission, and they are fair in relation to those provided other units. Journalism, the mass communication mediums of television, audio and even film production, are highly dependent on specialized equipment and related software resources. While digitization has made media access more readily available, the cost of the professional quality resources is still high, and students need to have access to the resources they will encounter once they leave the university and enter the profession.

(c) The unit's facilities and information resources enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.

The unit and the university are to be commended for providing a range of media resources that mimic, if not meet, industry standards. The TV, audio and photography studios are well equipped and excellent facilities for teaching and for professional quality production use. After a \$2.5 million construction in NSU's Brown Memorial Hall was completed, the unit and its Media Center moved into its current space in 2017.

The TV studio is a four-camera operation with three Hitachi cameras outfitted with teleprompters for newscasts and host reading. The fourth camera is mounted on a professional quality crane for smooth overhead movement. The studio also contains several sets donated by local TV stations, and its control room contains the requisite switcher, audio control board, monitors, patch bays and auxiliary outboard equipment.

Likewise, the audio production suite is equipped with a 24-Channel Studer Vista Mixing board with necessary auxiliary equipment.

The one major downside is the building is closed on the weekend, and outside of class times, students only have access to the studios between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. As student and faculty scholarly productions increase, the unit may need to revisit and make provisions for longer access hours and possible weekend production time slots.

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

Students and faculty can check out, on an overnight or weekend basis, equipment that includes 18 cameras (including 12 Panasonic Camcorders and six 4K cameras); 12 Canon EOS Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) cameras; 16 wireless microphones and 10 wired mics; and all of the necessary accessories, including headphones, tripods, batteries, lens, camera monitors and lights, and the professional digital audio recorders necessary for professional quality production and instruction.

A full-time TV/video systems engineer, along with a full-time (and MCJR adjunct lecturer) production manager, assist students and faculty in their use of the facilities and equipment.

SUMMARY:

With the current state of its acquired, installed and portable equipment and accessories, along with its experienced engineering and production staff members, the MCJR is in great shape in terms of facilities and resources. It is encouraged to continue pursuing strategic plans for future equipment purchases and replacement.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II - Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni, and actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.

The department has a three-prong approach to staying in touch with its alums: digital/social media (Twitter/X, YouTube, Instagram), in-person interaction, and university publications, including the website. There's also the MCJR News & Notes video newsletter. The program touts its Homecoming Reunion and MCJR Week as ways to interact with alums and to keep students engaged. Homecoming Reunion is part of the Homecoming Week football game festivities, and this event is regularly listed on the university's calendar. The unit works with the Alumni Affairs Office to help get the alumni database updated. This leads to mentorships, and has helped with bonding between alums and students and staff, according to a department official.

One alum working in broadcasting said, "The strengths of this program are the fact that there are so many hands-on opportunities for students to learn and understand various aspects of media, from the radio station, Hot 91.1, working with channel 47 in all aspects of production, using the equipment for podcasts, the *Spartan Echo* and more... In terms of improvement, I would like to see more courses for broadcast talent available for students who aspire to be broadcast journalists like me."

Mass Communications and Journalism Week started in 2005 and was patterned after the school's communications conference, which was a mainstay in the 1980s. As part of MCJR Week, the department brings in professionals - national and international - to engage with students and staff. This includes panel discussions, as well as a luncheon. Professionals engage with students through skills-building sessions that also are open to the university community. Interaction with outside professionals allows professors to become "current" with today's media trends. MCJR Week, which includes a career fair, has become an event for the entire campus, in that everything is open to the public - and free. They include: investigative (print/broadcast) and TV reporters, as well as speakers from *The Virginian Pilot* (in different specialties), *The Athletic*, *Boston Globe* and *Ebony/Jet*. The department also has had professionals in to talk about podcasting, public relations, book publishing, radio, entrepreneurship, music, and video production. Those speakers have been ethnically diverse, too: Black, Latino, Native American and white. A concern raised by two students during the on-site visit was that they offered suggestions on MCJR Week speakers, but were told to stay in their lane.

Students each semester also get a chance to direct a "Beyond NSU" show, where alums are invited back to tell their story. The class is taught in TV Production. Each student has to produce an episode, up to 10 minutes long. The media manager/video production director finds the guests for the students. (One suggestion: Ask students to find the guests themselves.) Guests are invited into the unit's TV studio, where a host will conduct the interview and a student (along with other classmates) will direct the segment. (One other suggestion: have aspiring on-air student talent do the sit-down interviews.)

Production House is an on-campus internship program with seven interns and one graduate fellow. This is an outstanding program, and funding comes from the university and not out of the MCJR budget. The internships/fellow (grad student) are employed by Production House for two consecutive semesters. The interns get a \$4,000 stipend per semester; the fellow receives \$6,500 per semester.

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

The unit has an advisory board that helps guide the department, including on ethics and communicating on issues of public consequence and meets at least twice a year. That board includes four alums, including a graduate student working on his doctorate who is an adjunct professor at the school.

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

Faculty is highly involved in the community. The professor who advises the student NABJ chapter said those students do a lot for veterans. They do community cleanups, and work with the Veterans House, which helps homeless vets. One professor, who came from the broadcast discipline, does consulting and dabbles in AI, as well as media engagement and representation (diversity). He pushed for and was approved to teach a highly popular social media class. Students said they are thankful for the experience, as they learn about the things you can, cannot and should not post on social media, from a legal perspective.

Additionally, staffers are involved with 200+ Black Men Scholarship, the MacArthur Foundation, World Journalism Education Congress, and Journal of Media Literacy Education. Professors also speak across the country and abroad to promote the university brand. Outside of MCJR Week, sessions - like Re-Imaging Representatives of People of Color, Black Female journalists' struggles to get ahead, and dangers to women's mental health - have been offered by professors, and led by professionals. Native American Heritage Month also is promoted.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The school is active with local high schools, including a project on podcasting during summer camp. That initiative plays a part in helping to recruit the next generation of students. The school is visible in the community as well as on campus, through college tours and tours of the MCJR Media Center and radio station. The school partners with Newport News Public Schools to offer juniors and seniors college-level media courses. Some of those courses include TV Production and Electronic Field Production. Students are taught by professors and supervised by the school district. The school also recently started teaching a class on podcasting. Locally, the student NABJ chapter has worked with Booker T. Washington High School, as mentors and through media labs.

SUMMARY:

The department is hitting the key spots:

- Alumni engagement;
- Community engagement;
- Student involvement/interaction;
- Professional mentorship;
- Scholastic journalism/high schools.

Overall, the school is doing many things the right way. It has alums engaged in the program, including a recent graduate who is a sports reporter for TNT. She often comes back to share with students how she got where she got... It has a variety of outside speakers coming in. It has mentoring programs, thanks to at least three highly regarded professors. The student NABJ chapter is very active on campus as well as in the community. The students are exploring ways to get students to NABJ's national convention in Chicago for summer 2024.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS

- Dedicated faculty and staff
- State-of-the-art, modern, beautiful facility shared with eight other departments in the College of Liberal Arts
- Enthusiastic students who speak of the "family" atmosphere among faculty, staff and students
- Recent curriculum upgrades to include courses such as social media, podcasting, media career prep plus artificial intelligence and media

CHALLENGES or WEAKNESSES

- Declining enrollment
- Imbalance in faculty with part-time faculty far exceeding full-time faculty
- Lack of externally-focused internships

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

N/A

3) In the case of a recommendation for accreditation or reaccreditation, with standard(s) not in compliance, list the deficiencies that need to be addressed before the next site team evaluation.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

Significant deficiencies cited in the 2017 site team report were "incomplete assessment practices, procedures and results," retention as well as "tensions between 4/4 teaching loads and university research expectations."

To address previous concerns about assessment processes, the university has used the Taskstream system since 2018 and creates reports using Watermark to track progress. As outlined in the self-study, University Administrative Policy #39-01, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, now requires all degree offerings to be assessed annually to address student learning and other improvements. During the site-team visit, we received documentation of the annual assessment plan dating to 2018. Curriculum changes have been made as documented in the curriculum standard with four new courses launched as a result of assessment processes. The unit has a rolling three-year assessment of two courses per year,

and exit surveys with graduating students have been added in May and December of each year. Still, the unit is encouraged to better document assessment discussions during faculty meeting minutes going forward.

As for retention, documentation provided by the unit shows the unit is performing better than the university as a whole, and a change in the student advising process with two full-time advisers has helped tremendously since the last site team visit.

The issue of tensions between the 4/4 teaching load and university research expectations has not been resolved. However, the Faculty Senate has been vocal about the need for change, and it is important to note that a new university president was hired just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the provost was hired in 2020. The senior administration has engaged consultants to start addressing the teaching load issue, and several faculty/dean searches are underway at this time.

7) The self-study is the heart of the accreditation 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.

Unfortunately, the team received the self-study the same month that the site visit took place.

This was the first self-study that this team reviewed in which the department chair reported using artificial intelligence to summarize parts of the executive summary and some policies. It appears much of the faculty was not involved in preparing the self-study, and that was a missed collaborative opportunity. Parts of the self-study were incomplete and required additional time spent interviewing various people on campus. PowerPoints do not capture discussion during faculty meetings. There was some confusion about what an assessment plan is, and that was clarified with documentation during the site-team visit.