

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program

2023-24

Name of Institution: University of North Florida

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Moez Limayem

Name of Unit: School of Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Dr. John Parmelee

Date of 2023-2024 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 26-29, 2023

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Oct. 16-19, 2016

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Accreditation

Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Team Chair:

Name and Title: Kristin Gilger, Professor Emerita

Organization/School: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Arizona State University

Signature




Team Member

Name and Title: Michael Cherenson, Executive Vice President

Organization/School: SCG Advertising + Public Relations

Signature

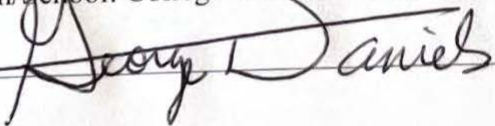


Team Member

Name and Title: George L. Daniels, Associate Professor of Journalism

Organization/School: College of Communication & Information Sciences, The University of Alabama

Signature

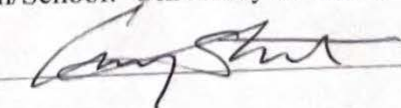


Team Member

Name and Title: Amy Struthers, Professor Emerita

Organization/School: University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communication

Signature



PART I: General information

Name of Institution: University of North Florida

Name of Unit: School of Communication

Year of Visit: 2023

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.

The University of North Florida, a member of the State University System of Florida, was created in 1965 by an enabling act of the Florida Legislature. Section 7, Article IX of the State Constitution, "establishes a State University System, which is comprised of the Board of Governors (statewide) and the individual Boards of Trustees for the various universities. The state legislature appropriates funds for the universities." The Florida Board of Governors exercises its authority pursuant to F.S. 1001.70(3), "... to support, promote and enhance the K-20 education system for postsecondary education." F.S. 1001.706 sets forth the powers and duties of the Florida Board of Governors. In Florida Board of Governors Regulation 1.001, "the powers and duties of individual University Board of Trustees are itemized. The final document attached is the Resolution on Presidential Authority, which delegates authority to the President from the University Board of Trustees (see specifically paragraph 10), which grants the President the authority to award degrees."

Constitutional Duties of the Board of Governors of the State University System: In accordance with s. 7, Art. IX of the State Constitution, "the Board of Governors of the State University System as the duty to operate, regulate, control, and be fully responsible for the management of the whole publicly funded State University System and the board, or the board's designee, has responsibility for: (a) Defining the distinctive mission of each constituent university. (b) Defining the articulation of each constituent university in conjunction with the Legislature's authority over the public schools and Florida College System institutions."

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:

The last accreditation site visit was Oct. 16-19, 2016.

5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 2017

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

The undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Communication major is primarily concerned with professional applications of communication in traditional and emerging media, strategic communication (advertising and public relations), and organizations. Within this context the mission of the School of Communication is to discover, integrate, and disseminate applied and theoretical knowledge about human and mediated communication processes and effects as they relate to individuals, groups, and society.

We are committed to high quality teaching that prepares students for lifelong learning and professional careers in communication; scholarship that advances knowledge of communication and enhances the reputation of the university, and service to the university, academic and professional communities, and to northeast Florida. To achieve our mission, students engage in learning activities inside and outside the classroom, such as participating in media internships and community-based learning, producing news programs, and creating advertising and public relations campaigns for clients. *Revisions approved by departmental faculty on Feb. 22, 2013.*

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 16

Number of weeks in a quarter:

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 6 and 12 weeks

Number of weeks in intersessions: 3 weeks

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 Communication (major concentrations in Advertising, Digital Video Production, Multimedia Journalism, Public Relations)

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

120 semester hours

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

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

No more than 6 semester hours are allowed for internship experience. Three semester hours of internship experience are required.

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.

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Person in Charge</u>
Advertising	Dr. Jae Park
Digital Video Production	Frank Goodin
Multimedia Journalism	Dr. David Deeley
Public Relations	Bobbi Doggett

13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 16,555

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.

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Fall 2023 Undergraduate Majors</u>
Advertising	140
Digital Video Production	127
Multimedia Journalism	133
Public Relations	157
Major concentration not yet selected	
Total	557

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (news writing, 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.)

Fall 2023: On Campus

Course	Enrollment
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	18
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	18
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
ADV 3101-Advertising Creative Strategy	18
ADV 4800-Advertising Campaigns (cross-listed with PUR 4800)	7
ADV 4800-Advertising Campaigns (cross-listed with PUR 4800)	8
JOU 3109-Multimedia Reporting	20
JOU 3925-Applied Journalism	18
JOU 4348-Advanced Multimedia Storytelling	10
MMC 4630-Understand. Emerging Media	12
PUR 3100-Public Relations Writing	6
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns (cross-listed with ADV 4800)	7
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns (cross-listed with ADV 4800)	5
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns	13
RTV 3260-Single Camera Video Production	20
RTV 3221-Digital Video Editing	20
RTV 3228-Multi Camera Video Production	13
RTV 4661-Advanced TV Production	20
RTV 3220C-TV Production Visual Arts TV	15
RTV 4225-Corporate Production	19

Fall 2023: Online and Hybrid

Course	Enrollment
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	20
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	18
ADV 3101-Advertising Creative Strategy	18
ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	19
ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	20
ADV 3812-Integrated Marketing Comm.	20
ADV 4404-Strategic Branding	15

JOU 3342-Multimedia Storytelling	17
MMC 3002-Social Media for Comm.	20
MMC 3002-Social Media for Comm.	20
MMC 3342-Content Creation Tools	20
MMC 4732-Social Media Management	14
PUR 3100-Public Relations Writing	19

Spring 2023: On Campus

Course	Enrollment
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	13
ADV 3101-Advertising Creative Strategy	18
ADV 4800-Advertising Campaigns (cross-listed with PUR 4800)	14
ADV 4800-Advertising Campaigns (cross-listed with PUR 4800)	14
JOU 3109-Multimedia Reporting	20
JOU 3925-Applied Journalism	17
JOU 3342-Multimedia Storytelling	14
JOU 4348-Advanced Multimedia Storytelling	19
PUR 3100-Public Relations Writing	14
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns (cross-listed with ADV 4800)	5
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns (cross-listed with ADV 4800)	5
PUR 4800-Public Relations Campaigns	16
RTV 3260-Single Camera Video Production	20
RTV 3221-Digital Video Editing	20
RTV 3228-Multi Camera Video Production	20
RTV 4661-Advanced TV Production	10
RTV 3220C-TV Production Visual Arts TV	16

Spring 2023: Online and Hybrid

Course	Enrollment
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	18
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	19
MMC 3105-Advanced Writing for the Media	20
ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	20
ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	20

ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	20
ADV 3203-Advertising Media Graphics	20
ADV 3812-Integrated Marketing Comm.	19
MMC 3002-Social Media for Comm.	20
MMC 3002-Social Media for Comm.	20
MMC 3342-Content Creation Tools	20
MMC 4732-Social Media Management	15
MMC 4732-Social Media Management	15
RTV 3601-Announcing & Performance	16

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

\$2,550,479 (OE: \$33,919 + Salaries: \$2,456,110 + Lab Fees: \$29,250 + Communication Events: \$7,500 + Professional Development: \$22,500 + Foundation: \$1,200)

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$2,357,201

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.

Dr. Berrin A. Beasley, Professor

Ms. Tricia Booker, Instructor

Dr. Sydney Brammer, Assistant Professor

Dr. Roy Christopher, Instructor

Ms. Dee A. Colvin, Associate Instructor

Dr. David J. Deeley, Associate Instructor

Ms. Roberta R. Doggett, Associate Instructor

Mr. Frank Goodin, Associate Instructor

Dr. Junga Kim, Associate Professor

Dr. Chunsik Lee, Associate Professor

Mr. Samuel C. Mathies, Associate Instructor (professional development leave, fall 2023)

Ms. Traci M. Mathies, Associate Instructor

Ms. Diane L. Matuschka, Instructor

Dr.Carolynn A. McMahan, Associate Professor

Dr. Siho Nam, Associate Professor

Dr. Jae H. Park, Associate Professor

Dr. John H. Parmelee, Professor & Director

Dr. Stephynie C. Perkins, Associate Professor

Dr. Rachel Riggs, Assistant Professor

Dr. Natalia Roman, Associate Professor

Dr. Margaret Stewart, Associate Professor

Mr. Ken Thomas, Instructor

Dr. Brian Thornton, Professor

The School has 24 faculty members, 16 of whom teach full-time in the program under review and seven others who teach part-time in the program. The 24th faculty member teaches in a separate degree program and is not listed above.

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.)

Fall 2023

Stephanie McLain-Araujo

Lisa Charney

Vera Jones

Dan Leveton

Allison Magish

James Price

Angela Spears

Sydney Steele

Nick Tatro

Melissa Weaver

Spring 2023

Alex Achorn

Tricia Booker

Timothy Gibbons

Melanie Lawson-Minor

Dan Leveton

Allison Magish

James Price

Angela Spears

Sydney Steele

Melissa Weaver

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

2022-23 academic year: 150

2021-22 academic year: 182

OVERVIEW

The University of North Florida is part of the Florida state university system, which includes several large universities, including the University of Florida 71 miles away. About 90 percent of its students come from Florida, with about 40 percent coming from Jacksonville.

The university recently achieved R2 (high research activity) status and has begun to place more emphasis on research and scholarship.

Journalism has been taught at UNF since 1972, and a Department of Communication has been in place since 1988. In 2019, the Department was renamed the School of Communication in recognition of its size and influence. It is one of the largest academic units within the College of Arts and Sciences.

The School is seeking re-accreditation for its B.S. in Communication, a professionally-focused degree program that seeks to prepare students for careers in journalism, public relations and advertising. In addition, it offers a B.A. in Communication Studies, which was created in 2017 to focus on interpersonal, small group and mediated communication; a M.S. in Communication Management; and four minors. Many of the faculty teach in more than one degree program.

The School first sought accreditation for the B.S. in Communication in 2017. The 2016 site team report found the School in compliance on all standards while identifying these weaknesses: a lack of domestic diversity in the faculty; inconsistent student advising; and a lack of student engagement beyond the classroom.

During this review period, the School expanded the number of concentrations available to students seeking the B.S. in Communication degree. Previously, students could choose from three options: Advertising; Multimedia Journalism and Production; and Public Relations. In 2019, the Multimedia Journalism and Production concentration was split into two concentrations: one in Multimedia Journalism and one in Digital Video Production. The former concentration is concerned with traditional news-based journalism; the second includes such interest areas as entertainment, commercials and film. The School also created a new B.A. in Communication degree, and launched a graduate program and a social media minor.

The School's overall enrollment has dropped a little more than 31% (from 815 majors to 557) during the review period, with a corresponding decline in the number of graduates. This is due in large part to a precipitous decline in the number of Public Relations majors from 350 to 157 students over the review period.

Political Climate: In May of this year, the governor of Florida signed a law banning the state's public colleges and universities from spending money on diversity, equity and inclusion programs. The law has a carve-out for programs that pursue diversity initiatives as part of their accreditation requirements.

As university officials attempt to sort out the implications of the law and how it will be applied, many faculty members said they are confused and even fearful about what they can and cannot do or say in their classes. They said they are careful to use broad definitions of diversity and to refer to it only in the context of industry standards. One faculty member said, "We're trying to find other words for DE&I. We're worried that we can't cross the line or we could lose our jobs."

Some faculty members said they are fearful that students could report them if they do cross a line, but it's not entirely clear to them where the line is. They also referred to an email sweep of faculty and staff emails searching for use of the word "diversity." University administrators confirmed that such a sweep, ordered by the governor's office, did take place, but it resulted in no actions against faculty. They said they have had no specific complaints from students about diversity teaching in classes, although they have had some parent complaints. They acknowledged "an atmosphere of concern" and a "chilling effect" across campus but are advising faculty to continue teaching as they have been, according to their subject matter expertise. A number of faculty say they are doing just that. Students who spoke with the site team confirmed that their instructors frequently introduce diversity topics in their classes, albeit in sometimes more nuanced ways.

There is considerable confusion about the effect of the law on university diversity, equity and inclusion programs and services, with the site team getting conflicting information from various administrators, faculty and students. The President of the university said they are waiting on guidance from the state Board of Governors but that, meanwhile, services are continuing. It is clear the university will be unable to use state funds for recruitment, retention or other types of programs targeted specifically at faculty or students of color. Several administrators also said recent hiring pools have been smaller, which could be the result of a reluctance on the part of some potential candidates to apply. Closer to home, the School of Communication renamed its long-standing Diversity Committee the Accreditation Compliance Committee.

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

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 School of Communication's mission is to “create and disseminate knowledge about human and mass-mediated communication processes through high-quality teaching, research, and service to the community.” The School further articulates the mission of the B.S. in Communication as being “primarily concerned with professional applications of communication in traditional and emerging media, strategic communication (advertising and public relations) and organizations.” The focus is on high-quality teaching that prepares students for lifelong learning and professional careers.

The School’s current strategic plan was adopted in 2018 and encompasses that year through 2023. It was most recently revised in 2019. The faculty has adopted a new strategic plan for 2024-2030.

While the current plan contains few specific metrics, it appears that the unit has accomplished many of its goals, including upgrading equipment, expanding the annual Media Week, growing its advisory board, creating a faculty mentorship program, and adding more student scholarships. Several goals, such as creating a new staff line for technology needs and maintaining the percentage of distance learning classes at about 30% of all classes, remain unrealized and have been incorporated into the new strategic plan. The current plan does not include enrollment goals and does not address the performance of students with regard to retention or graduation.

The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The strategic plan as well as information about ACEJMC accreditation and the School’s diversity and assessment plans are easily accessible on the School website.

Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented, plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?

The strategic plan lays out five broad goals that reflect the priorities of the School and help drive decision-making. They are:

- To become a model for undergraduate and graduate communication education at a public university with well-balanced, innovative programs and curriculum
- To further diversify the student body and faculty by demonstrating that students and faculty from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates
- Strengthen and support faculty scholarly and creative activities
- Continue and expand various transformational learning opportunities including community-engaged, service learning

- Incorporate technology more into teaching and curriculum, and School operation and governance

The plan was updated once during the review period – in 2019. Faculty members have input into the plan via a Strategic Planning Committee chaired by a faculty member. The plan also is discussed at faculty meetings and reviewed at the annual faculty retreat. The Director of the School is responsible for monitoring progress.

(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.

The School has benefited from the stable leadership of the current Director, who has been in the position since early 2013. He joined the School’s faculty in 2001 and served for 12 years as an assistant and then associate professor before being appointed Director.

Faculty members describe the Director as a democratic leader who listens to them and responds to their concerns. They applaud him for providing steady leadership through the COVID pandemic and for launching new programs, including the B.A. in Communication Studies and a new master’s program.

Both faculty and university administrators describe him as a fair, flexible, organized and compassionate leader who has kept the School on course.

The Director appears to have a good reputation on campus and among local media professionals, although the site team’s interaction with those constituencies was limited.

Characterize in depth the leadership of the unit as an agent for progress, advocate for the unit’s fields of study within the university and aggressive connector with alumni. What significant achievements can be attributed to the leader? Has the leader built partnerships within the university? Is the leader seen as a strong advocate on matters of diversity, inclusion and equity? Is faculty and student diversity improving? Do scholars and professionals work collaboratively? Is creativity in curriculum, teaching and research sought and rewarded? Is the leader driving forward the curriculum (while respecting faculty governance and required process) to keep up with a rapidly changing media world?

As noted above, the director of the School is widely respected as a steady and stable leader who has advanced the School in several ways: by obtaining the School designation for what was formerly a department, by creating the unit’s first graduate program, by launching the B.A. in Communication Studies and the Social Media minor, and by creating separate concentrations for video production and multimedia journalism. He is seen as an advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion and as someone who fosters a climate within the School that encourages faculty of different backgrounds and interests to work well together.

The Dean of the college called the School “a beacon of excellence” within the college in terms of enrollment (it’s one of the biggest programs within the college) and preparation of students as well as its connections to the professional world. But she would like to see the School become more closely integrated into the college, developing more partnerships and collaborations with other units.

She and some faculty members also expressed a desire for more innovation and forward-thinking ideas from School leadership on curricula and other matters. When referring to the future of the School, leadership and faculty typically refer to doing more or improving on what is already being done as opposed to new programs or initiatives.

“He’s very good at what he does,” one faculty member said. “But I don’t see the vision or direction on where we’re going.”

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website

The School’s information is updated on the ACEJMC website but does not include faculty-to-student classroom ratios or graduate student tuition or fees.

(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.

The School tracks enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts it on its website. It has paid attention to enrollment declines in the major under review and responded by doing more high school outreach and creating videos featuring alumni talking about how the B.S. in Communication helped them succeed in their careers. This year, the School also created a minor in Social Media that has attracted about 25 students so far. A half-dozen sections of a course in social media, open to any student at the university, fill each semester, boosting student credit hours. Those courses also serve as a recruiting tool for the major.

However, further analysis would help the unit better understand enrollment shifts. While leadership largely attributes enrollment declines in the B.S. in Communication program to the creation of the B.A. degree in Communication Studies, that accounts for only a fraction of the lost enrollment. In fall 2023, the B.A. had 68 majors, while the B.S. program experienced a loss of 258 students over the review period.

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

The School has a set of Operational Procedures that specify faculty powers and functions and establish a committee structure. Each concentration has a curriculum committee made up of faculty who teach in that area. These committees act on curriculum requests within their subject matter areas and may propose changes, which are then considered by the Academic Program Committee, a committee of the whole made up of all faculty that handles curricular matters.

The faculty meet regularly – up to eight times a year – in addition to an all-day faculty retreat.

A review of faculty minutes and discussions with individual faculty members indicate the faculty is engaged in the governance of the school and fully involved in the development and oversight of educational policy and the curriculum.

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

There is a clear process for selecting and evaluating the unit's Director.

The Director is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, but the School's faculty has a significant voice in the selection process. After a term of four years, tenured and tenure-track faculty vote by secret ballot on whether to retain the Director. If the vote is negative, the Dean meets with the faculty to justify any action other than replacement of the Director.

Each spring the Director writes an annual self-evaluation. The Dean then writes an evaluation of the Director.

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

Faculty, staff and student complaints are directed to either the Director of the School, who works to resolve the issue, or to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the Dean receives a complaint, the Director is contacted to address and resolve the issue and report back to the Dean.

The university has in place appeals and complaint processes for issues ranging from grade appeals to sexual harassment. These are outlined in the UNF Faculty Handbook as well as the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The university also requires all academic departments to keep logs of student complaints. The School log, dating from fall 2017 to fall 2023, contains 46 complaints, mostly dealing with grading, deadlines and course assignments. The log includes the outcome of the complaints, all of which were dealt with internally.

School records show that during the review period, two separate complaints were filed against one faculty member for alleged plagiarism. The first resulted in a suspension without pay for a semester; the second was under investigation when the faculty member left the university. Another faculty member was suspended without pay for a semester after it was discovered that students had consumed alcohol in one of his classes.

SUMMARY:

The School has benefited from years of stable leadership under a Director who is widely respected as being efficient and collaborative. Faculty members are highly engaged in governance and curriculum matters, and there are appropriate processes in place for selecting and evaluating the Director and for handling complaints.

The School has a strategic plan and collects appropriate data, although it would benefit from more specific metrics and more extensive analyses of data, particularly with regard to enrollment, retention and graduation.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance: 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.

The B.S. in Communication requires students to earn 120 credit hours to graduate in each of the major concentrations. The unit requires a minimum of 40 of those hours to be in Communication courses. Virtually all classes in the unit are three-credit-hour courses.

All B.S. in Communication majors complete a core of seven communication classes: Media Literacy; Advanced Writing for the Media; Law and Ethics of Communication; Media Theories and Effects; Mass Communications Research; Pre-Internship (1 credit); and Internship Senior Project. Students may opt out of the Internship Senior Project course by doing a research project under the supervision of a faculty member.

In addition, students must complete a minimum of 36 general education credit hours. The state of Florida mandates 15 of those credits and UNF requires the remaining 21 credits with a goal of developing students' writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific method, and integrative learning skills.

An additional aspect of these 36 credits of general education is completion of what is referred to as "The Gordon Rule." The communications component of the rule requires students to complete six credit hours of English coursework and six credit hours of additional coursework designed to develop college-level writing skills. The computation component requires that students must complete six credit hours in mathematics course work at the level of college algebra or higher. Only one course may be selected from Elementary Statistics or Symbolic Logic.

Under the "critical thinking" category of general education, students must take three credits focused on culture and diversity, although they can take more to fulfill their six hours of critical thinking. In these courses, students examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from various points of view. They critically reflect on their own social positions or cultural backgrounds and investigate systems that produce social inequality or cultural difference.

The state of Florida also mandates that students meet a civic literacy requirement. This includes both Introduction to American Government or History Since 1877 and passing a Civic Literacy Exam.

Several courses in the B.S. in Communication major contribute to a liberal arts and science perspective. The major includes a required theory course Media Theories and Effects, as well as Mass Communications Research, Media Literacy, and Law and Ethics of Communications.

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

The curriculum offers a healthy balance among theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skill. The unit's goal is to give students up-to-date professional skills along with a deep theoretical awareness of the societal forces affecting mass media and the impact media professionals have on society.

Four of the seven required core courses in the major are theoretical/conceptual in nature while also showing the links between theory and practice. The professional skills courses are mostly found in the required classes for the four major concentrations: advertising, digital video production, multimedia journalism, and public relations.

Advertising: In addition to the core 19 credit hours required for all students in the B.S. in Communication program, students in the Advertising track/sequence are required to take an additional 21 credit hours. Fifteen of these hours, or five classes, consist of: Principles of Advertising; Advertising Creative Strategy; Advertising Media Graphics; Media Planning; and Advertising Campaigns. These five classes provide a thorough grounding in the discipline.

In addition, Advertising majors must select two courses (six credit hours) from a robust list of electives that cover a wide range of specialties in the discipline. In addition to providing deeper study of specific career paths, they are a way for the program to keep instruction current by developing and offering new courses to reflect changes in the industries and disciplines. These electives include Advertising Research Methods, Advertising Design, Strategic Branding, Principles of Public Relations, Political Advertising, Understanding Emerging Media, Social Media for Communication, Social Media Management, and Integrated Marketing Communication.

Advertising majors are required to take another four classes (12 credit hours) outside the unit: Fundamentals of Speech; Elementary Statistics for Health and Social Sciences; Professional Communication; and either Principles of Marketing or Integrated Marketing Communication.

The college also offers a study abroad program, led by an Advertising faculty member, during which students travel to France to study in Nantes for several weeks, then spend a week in Paris visiting ad agencies and landmarks.

This mix of courses offers an appropriate balance of theory and conceptual courses with skills courses.

Digital Video Production: In addition to the core 19 credit hours required for all students in the B.S. in Communication program, students in this concentration are required to take an additional 21 credit hours. Twelve of these hours, or four classes, consist of Single Camera Video Production; Digital Video Editing; Multi Camera Video Production; and Advanced TV Production. The concentration coordinator, who developed the track, told the site team how important it is for students to “not be intimidated by any form of production.” Unlike most programs, all digital video production students have instruction in two programs in the Adobe Creative Cloud -- Adobe Premiere and Adobe After Effects.

In addition, students in the Digital Video Production concentration select three courses (nine credit hours) from a list of electives offering advanced production training. These electives include courses such as Lighting for Production, Television Production/Visual Arts Television, Multimedia Graphics, and Principles of Broadcasting. Students also must take two courses (six credit hours) outside of the unit: Fundamentals of Speech; and Elementary Statistics-Health.

To achieve an appropriate balance of theory and conceptual courses with skills courses, students also may elect to take courses that include Interviewing: Theories and Methods and History of Mass

Communication. Students had very positive things to share with the site team about the way these conceptual courses, such as History of Mass Communication and Law and Ethics of Communication, are taught.

Multimedia Journalism: In this concentration, students take 21 credit hours in addition to the core 19 credit hours. Fifteen of those hours, or five classes, consist of History of Mass Communication; Multimedia Reporting, Applied Journalism; Multimedia Storytelling; and Advanced Multimedia Storytelling. The concentration coordinator shared that he believes the core provides students with a foundation for working in television newsrooms or other news outlets where textual narratives are produced. Multimedia Journalism students who had interned in newsrooms prior to the site team visit indicated they felt very prepared to do what was asked of them on the job.

Additionally, Multimedia Journalism students must select two electives (six credits) from a list that includes: Single-camera Video Production; Multi-camera Video Production; Advanced Television Production; and Interviewing. To achieve an appropriate balance of theory and conceptual courses with skills courses, the major electives include International Communication, and Interviewing: Theories and Methods. Students also must take two courses (six credit hours) outside of the unit: Fundamentals of Speech; and Elementary Statistics-Health

Public Relations: Students in the Public Relations track/sequence are required to take an additional 21 credit hours beyond the core requirement. These include five courses (15 credits) as follows: Principles of Public Relations; Public Relations Writing; Advertising Media Graphics; Public Relations Campaigns; and Public Relations Cases.

Students also must take two elective courses (six hours) from a robust list of classes that include Crisis Communication, Advertising Design; Strategic Branding, Political Advertising, Public Speaking for Professionals; Multimedia Announcing & Performance, and Social Media for Communication.

Courses required outside of the accredited unit include Fundamentals of Speech and Elementary Statistics for Health and Social Sciences. Overall, this mix of courses provides a balance of theory and conceptual courses with skills courses.

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

About half of all the unit's courses are offered online, compared to about 30% in 2016. The increase is due, in part, to the pandemic, and, in part, an effort to serve non-traditional students. Seventy-five percent of the unit's students hold jobs, and 32% work off campus between 20 and 40 hours a week, in addition to going to school. Most of the online courses are asynchronous, but a handful are taught in hybrid fashion, meeting up to seven or eight times a semester in person, often to practice skills and/or use equipment.

Most Advertising and Public Relations courses include an online option, while almost all the Journalism and Production courses are offered only in person. Currently, students could complete the entire public relations or Advertising concentrations online except for the last one or two courses. This is a source of concern for some faculty, who say that students who have taken all their prerequisite courses online are less prepared for their capstones. The School's new strategic plan includes a goal to reduce the number of online courses to 30% of all courses, a move favored by college administrators, who say the

university as a whole has been slow to return to pre-pandemic levels of in-person courses, which generally offer better learning experiences for students.

Data from the Florida Department of Education indicate that B.S. in Communication graduates are either at or near the highest rate of employment compared with the communication programs at all other state universities in Florida, including several ACEJMC-accredited programs. This is an indication that the School is doing well preparing students for the profession. However, the curriculum itself has changed little since the last site team visit in 2016.

While the curriculum has not changed, unit administrators and faculty say many courses have been updated over the review period. These include adding podcasting to a capstone Multimedia Journalism course and incorporating social media teaching into several courses. One faculty member who teaches a content creation course, for example, said she updates one-third to one-half of her syllabus each semester to keep up with changing tools and platforms. In recent semesters, she has added to her classes hyper-lapse videos and a variety of transitions popular on social media.

Still, some faculty members, local internship providers and alumni who were interviewed expressed concerns about the evolution of the curriculum. One recent graduate said she would have benefited from training on specific apps and software, including social media and data analytics tools – something echoed by several faculty members. And multiple faculty members and internship providers said students would benefit from more experiential and immersive learning opportunities that lead to published work.

Several faculty members suggested that the School should begin tackling curriculum in a more holistic and strategic way – not just responding to changes in the professions but looking ahead five or 10 years. One faculty member summed it up with a hockey analogy, saying: “The program should skate to where the puck is going, not where it has been.”

(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 School’s Professional Advisory Board helps keep the curriculum current. The board members, local media professionals, provide input into the development of new courses and revision of current course offerings. For example, the board encouraged more teaching of social media and podcasting, leading to a new course, Content Creation Tools, which is part of the new social media minor. With board input, public relations and advertising courses added content on the RPF process. Members also assisted with equipment selection during the recent upgrade of the TV studio.

A number of professionals participate in the annual “Media Week” event, which brings professionals, many of them alumni, to campus to participate in panels and interact with students. The event is capped off by a Spring Internship + Job Fair and Social Media Expo Jax, a single-day interactive learning and networking experience that takes place every October. Participants include industry professionals, agencies, UNF staff, faculty, and students who exchange information, ideas, insights, and innovations in social media, digital marketing, and communication.

(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.

Class-by-class enrollment figures provided in the self-study show no class with more than 20 students. Skills course enrollments were confirmed by site team observation and spot checked with enrollment data to confirm the unit is in compliance with this requirement.

(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 hours).

Three semester hours of internship experience are required, and no more than six semester hours are allowed. Students may opt for a three-credit research project under the direction of a faculty member in lieu of an internship. The projects have clear and demanding requirements, and faculty are required to meet at least six times a semester with the student. About 10% of students, many of them who work full-time or have family obligations that make taking an internship difficult, choose the research project option.

The Pre Internship in Communication is a one-credit course required of all majors in the program under review. Students create an online ePortfolio that can be used when applying for internships and jobs, and they begin seeking internships. The course also includes lectures on finding media-based internships, branding, creating resumes and cover letters, and using the professional network site LinkedIn.

Once they have completed the pre-internship course, students are eligible to take the required Internship Senior Project, which requires 210 hours doing internship activities related to their major concentration. Internships are supervised on site by a media professional.

Prospective internship providers are vetted and must complete a comprehensive online application which has a list of specific requirements that the supervisor must sign. Supervisors evaluate their interns midway and at the end of the semester. Students also are given ongoing assignments.

The School has developed relationships with more than 100 organizations in Jacksonville and the surrounding area who accept its students as interns. Students have interned at organizations such as The American Red Cross, The Tebow Group, Jacksonville Broadcaster Association, Florida Times Union, ESPN, numerous advertising agencies and firms, most local media outlets, and government agencies. The leader at one production company interviewed by a site team member shared how the firm has on site at least one or two interns from the School each semester. At least five former interns are now employed by the company.

A number of students complete their internship credit within the school by participating in “Inside Swoop in 90.” Interns produce and promote daily 90-second news, sports, or entertainment updates as well as special segments and shows.

SUMMARY:

Overall, the school provides a balanced curriculum that prepares students for their professions. Professionals, particularly alumni, contribute valuable input into curriculum and course content decisions. The Advertising and Public Relations sequences rely heavily on online instruction, which the School has identified as an area of concern.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: 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 School has a written assessment plan that was adopted in 2017 and revised in 2019. It expires at the end of 2023, and the faculty has approved a new plan that takes effect in 2024.

The plan centers on what the School refers to as the “North Florida Nine,” which roughly match the professional values and competencies of ACEJMC, including teaching appropriate tools and technologies. These are explained in section (b).

The plan’s mission statement emphasizes hands-on learning for students, stating, “To achieve our mission, students engage in learning activities inside and outside the classroom, such as participating in media internships and community-based learning, producing news programs, and creating advertising and public relations campaigns for clients.”

The School’s Assessment Committee, consisting of the major concentration coordinators, is tasked with working with the Director to implement the plan. Members review data and suggest how the unit might respond and whether changes should be made to the plan. Information is shared with the faculty as well as the School’s Professional Advisory Board.

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

The plan is posted and easily accessible on the School’s website.

(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.)

The School’s learning outcomes are articulated in the “North Florida Nine” as follows:

1. Communicate effectively: Communicate clearly and accurately through written, oral, and mediated forms appropriate to the study of communication and professional practice.
2. Think critically: Conduct reasoned evaluation of information to assess its relevance, accuracy, purpose, and meaning.
3. Apply theory: Apply appropriate theoretical concepts of communication in academic and professionally oriented work.
4. Conduct valid research: Apply research methods appropriate to the communication professions to address relevant communication problems. Such methods include quantitative and qualitative research applied in primary and secondary research.
5. Utilize appropriate technologies: Apply the tools and technologies of the communication professions in the creation and dissemination of messages appropriate for professional practice.
6. Value freedom of expression: Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press embodied in the First Amendment and describe their importance in a democracy.
7. Embrace diversity: Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of both domestic society and the peoples and cultures of global society and of the significance and impact of mass communications in society.

8. Practice ethically: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and the relationship between ethics and law; apply ethical principles to communication professional practice.
9. Regard history: Demonstrate understanding of the history of communication media and professions and the role of key communication professionals and institutions in shaping them.

In 2012, a curriculum map was created to identify which of the North Florida Nine student learning goals are "introduced," "reinforced," and "mastered" in each course (the terms match ACEJMC's "awareness," "understanding," and "application" terminology). Syllabi for all courses state which of the goals are to be accomplished and at what level, with supporting readings and assignments. The first two entry-level required courses, Media Literacy and Advanced Writing for the Media, introduce students to all of the North Florida Nine, while other courses target specific goals.

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

The School's assessment plan includes two direct and two indirect measures. The direct measures are internship evaluations and a pre- and post-test that is given to students at the start and end of the major. The indirect measures are a graduating senior survey and a School alumni survey.

In 2016, the School was using an additional direct measure – a capstone evaluation of student projects, but that was dropped during this review period. The unit Director said the data being collected did not significantly add to what the School was learning from other measures and that the unit did not want to “drown in data.” One faculty member whose class previously participated in the capstone evaluation process added that professionals who reviewed projects were sometimes “too harsh and too subjective.”

Direct measures: Internship supervisors are asked to evaluate students based on the North Florida Nine. They also are asked to evaluate students on such things as their professional behavior and dress, dependability, problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills.

The second direct measure is an exam given to students in the first required entry-level course, Media Literacy, and in the senior-level course Internship Senior Project. It consists of a 50-question multiple choice exam that is meant to measure the degree to which learning of the North Florida Nine outcomes has increased during students' time in the school. The desired result is for the average score in the exit course to be at least 70% on each of the North Florida Nine outcomes being examined. Also, there should be a significant increase in scores from the entry-level course to the exit course.

The pre-test is given to the incoming cohort every other year, while the post-test was given once a year during this review period. The School recently decided to start administering the post-test every semester in order to gather more data.

Indirect measures: Alumni of the School are asked to fill out a survey asking them how well they learned the skills and competencies outlined in the North Florida Nine. The survey was distributed via the School's alumni Facebook group three times during the review period. The number of responses in the most recent survey was 114, which was an increase over the 72 respondents to the 2020 survey and the 82 in 2017.

The other indirect measure, the graduating student survey, was administered by the university in each of the last five years. Response rates varied from as few as 48 graduates in 2017 to as many as 142 in 2020. Similar to the alumni survey, students are asked to report their level of agreement regarding the degree to which they learned the outcomes in the North Florida Nine.

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

The self-study lists the internship evaluations and the alumni survey as evidence of professional involvement in the assessment process. While it's evident that most alumni are professionals, counting the survey as professional engagement, the site team believes, falls somewhat below the intent of ACEJMC's professional engagement criteria.

However, the School does effectively utilize its Professional Advisory Board, regularly seeking advice and guidance on curricula, technology, recruitment and other matters.

(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.

The self-study includes data collected for all four measures used in the assessment plan.

Data for the pre- and post-test, called the North Florida Nine Test, were collected in the spring semesters of 2018, 2020 and 2022. While scores for all learning outcomes met the desired 70% threshold in the first two years, they failed to meet the desired threshold for four of the North Florida Nine in the most recent survey in 2022. The School responded by expanding the teaching of ethics in several courses. A lecture on ethical decision making, based on materials from the Poynter Institute, was added to the required Law and Ethics of Communication course and to an exam given in the course. More teaching of the PRSA code of ethics as well as exam questions related to the code were added to the Principles of PR course. An ethics-related assignment was added to two video production courses.

The School did not directly address the other measures that fell below the threshold (communicating effectively, thinking critically and valuing freedom of expression). The biggest problem, they concluded, was that students were failing to take the test seriously. As a result, faculty decided to begin emphasizing to students the importance of the exam and offering extra credit for students who score 85% or higher.

Data from the School's other direct assessment measure, internship evaluations, showed consistently positive scores. No curriculum changes were made based on these data.

The unit attributes at least half a dozen changes in course content to feedback from alumni surveys. These include more teaching of probability and non-probability sampling, sample size, confidence level and margin of error in the required Mass Communication Research course; additional material on persuasion theories, crisis theories and public opinion research in PR courses; and more emphasis on diversity learning in several required and elective courses. In addition, a recent upgrade of the School's TV studio was, in part, a response to alumni survey responses on how well they learned to "utilize appropriate technologies" while in school.

Seniors gave the School consistently high marks – in the mid to high 90s range – in the graduating senior exit survey, except in the latest survey conducted in 2022 when scores dropped fairly significantly (between three and 14 percentage points) on thinking critically, research, technologies, freedom of expression, diversity, ethics and history. The Dean of the college noted that the drop may be related to the fact that the 2022 graduating cohort was particularly affected by the pandemic. The School reported making no curricular changes based on the exit survey.

SUMMARY:

The School meets the requirements that ACEJMC has set for assessment. It has an assessment plan, it collects and analyzes data, and there is some evidence that it has made changes based on what it learns. Learning outcomes reflect ACEJMC values and competencies and are clearly articulated in syllabi and course assignments.

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 has a written diversity plan that was first adopted in 2013, with revisions in 2017 and again in 2019. The plan expires at the end of this year, and faculty have voted to approve a new plan, developed by the School's Diversity Committee, to take effect in 2024.

The current plan includes the following broad definition of diversity:

"The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. Functionally, it means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing and appreciating our individual differences as well as our similarities. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. Our functional definition of diversity is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual." Bush, L. L. (2008). Strategic diversity plan 2008-2012. College of the Mainland, Texas City, TX.

The current plan has a "Strategies and Tactics" section, but lacks specific performance indicators and, in most cases, a specific timeline for achievement of goals. However, a number of the goals outlined in the current plan appear to have been met, at least in part. These include increased teaching of diversity in courses, increased diversity of full-time and part-time faculty, and increased diversity of guest speakers.

Faculty meeting minutes as well as conversations with faculty confirm that the School's plan and diversity in general are discussed both annually at the faculty retreat and several other times during the year, including in meetings with the unit's Professional Advisory Board. These discussions include reports and updates from the Diversity Committee and focus on what progress has been made, what changes are needed in the plan, and what professionals are experiencing in the work world. Faculty members also review the results of diversity questions on the graduating student exit survey and prepare an annual report.

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

The plan is available and easily accessible on the unit's website.

(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.

It is clear that the unit has thought carefully about developing culturally proficient communicators and has worked to increase diversity-related content in many classes. A course grid produced by the unit shows where culturally proficient communication is taught and at what level – i.e. where it is introduced, where it is reinforced, and where it should be mastered. The unit also provided a detailed description of the kind of diversity instruction in classes ranging from Media Literacy to Advanced Writing and from Law & Ethics of Mass Communication to Mass Communications Research. A review of syllabi for those classes confirms that content.

Students interviewed by site team members affirmed that diversity comes up frequently in classes, that they feel comfortable and supported in discussions about diversity, and that they are encouraged to incorporate diversity into their stories and other assignments.

(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 report from the 2017 site team noted domestic diversity of the faculty as a weakness. Since then, the unit has added one full-time faculty member and four part-time faculty members who represent historically, domestically marginalized demographics.

The School filled six full-time faculty positions during this review period, hiring four white females, one white male and one Black male. Advertisements were placed in a variety of outlets, including Insight into Diversity and Academic Careers Online Diversity Package. Six out of 30 minority applicants were finalists, but none were offered positions.

The hiring of the full-time faculty member of color during this review period improved the School's domestic diversity from 4.1% in 2015-2016 to 8.6% currently. Sixty-nine percent of the current full-time faculty is white and about 21% is international. (There are five international faculty members, four from South Korea and one from Ukraine). Thus, while domestic diversity has improved, it still lags behind international diversity and the makeup of the student population. There are, for example, no Latino/Hispanic faculty members and no faculty members who speak Spanish, although Latino/Hispanic students make up the largest contingent of students of color (about 17%). The proportion of women on the faculty has dropped since the last site team report, but the faculty is in balance, with about half female and half male members.

There are currently no open positions, and no new searches are planned.

The Dean did note that the School's faculty domestic diversity numbers are better than in other programs within the college, and faculty of color reported feeling supported within the unit.

Part-time faculty records reflect the unit's efforts to diversify within that category of appointment: from two African American part-time faculty in 2017 to seven in 2022. About half are women.

To encourage retention of faculty, faculty members are paired up for advice and support through a faculty mentorship program.

(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 School's student body is more diverse now than at the time of the previous site-team visit. The self-study notes a 15% increase in minority representation among B.S. in Communication students during the past six years.

However, the School's student population remains slightly less diverse than the institution as a whole and not nearly as diverse as its geographic service area with regard to Black students. Fewer than 10% of the School's students are Black, compared to 12% in the institution and a service area that is 20% Black.

That situation is reversed with regard to Hispanic/Latino students, with the School having slightly more Hispanic/Latino students than the institution and significantly more than in its service area. Asian and other minority groups are represented in the student population in percentages that reflect the institution and the service area.

The unit has worked to diversify the student population through participation in general recruiting events, such as the Florida Scholastic Press Association convention, as well as an annual scholastic journalism workshop that doubles as an open house for the program and the campuswide UNF open houses ("Explore UNF"). The School also hosts "Media Week" each fall for prospective students, with some activities focused specifically on diversity.

The School offers five scholarships, including two new ones created during this review period, to "help students from many backgrounds."

The School reports that student retention and graduation rates have improved over the review period, exceeding the rates for the college as a whole. Data shows that minority graduation and retention rates rose consistently from 2017 to 2022, and, in several instances, exceeded the rates for the School as a whole.

However, those rates took a big drop in the 2022-2023 graduating class. The four-year graduation rate for students graduating that year was 54.17% for students of color and 74.32% for all students in the major. The retention rate was 62.5% for students of color compared to 78.38% for all students in the major. The School attributes the decline, at least in part, to the effects of Covid for this smaller-than-usual cohort.

Over the review period, the School took several steps to retain students and keep them on track toward graduation. It created a Student Ambassador program that employs a diverse group of students to visit classes, interact with their peers and work with the Diversity Committee on new initiatives. A Student Ambassador participating in a meeting with the site team enthusiastically confirmed the activities of the group.

The School also launched a professional mentorship program for students, but it relies largely on student initiative, and participation has been low. To encourage more students, an assignment was recently added to the 1-credit pre-internship course for students to contact a potential mentor. The School also

created videos featuring diverse alumni talking about their careers, and it improved communication regarding course offerings and registration. The campus-wide College Success Program identifies students who are struggling and engages advisers to work with these students more closely.

(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.

As noted above, there is considerable anxiety and confusion on campus about the new Florida law restricting public universities from using state funds for diversity efforts. However, faculty, administrators and students all described the School as a welcoming and inclusive place, and there were no recorded reports of harassment or discrimination during the review period. Several students of color did note they were often the only person of color in their classes at UNF, and another student expressed deep concern about what will happen to the campus LGBTQ Center as a result of the new state law.

There are no student clubs or extracurricular activities aimed specifically at students of color.

Several student projects have focused on diversity topics, including a highly visible student report, “Uncovering Jax,” that dug deeply into the hidden Black history of Jacksonville. The project, a collaboration between the School, the Jacksonville Florida Times-Union and other community partners, resulted in a series of short documentaries that were published on a dedicated website as well as the websites of the Florida Times-Union and Visit Jacksonville’s Black Heritage Trail. The documentaries also were screened at a schoolwide event.

The School’s Director makes himself visible and available to deal with any issues or complaints, including discrimination or harassment. The School’s weekly e-newsletter includes a reminder of the process for submitting complaints.

Classrooms and facilities are accessible, and students who contact UNF’s Student Accessibility Services are able to arrange appropriate accommodations with instructors. Last year, the faculty received training from an accessibility expert at UNF.

The School’s weekly e-newsletter for students includes profiles of students and alumni from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the “Careers in Communications” portion of the School’s website features diverse alumni.

Guest speakers add to the diversity of the student experience. Examples include diversity specialist Selena Webster-Bass; anchors Melanie Lawson of WJXT-TV in Jacksonville and Tiffany Salameh of ABC57 in Indianapolis; and Ken Amaro, consumer reporter for First Coast News.

Finally, the School administers a survey once every two years to seniors in capstone classes, asking for their views on the School’s diversity efforts. While results are generally strong, students of color are less satisfied than students as a whole. Results from the last three survey years is below:

Diversity Survey of Undergraduate Seniors in the B.S. in Communication

Percent of applicable responses of students who “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following:

	2018 (n=32)	2020 (n=43)	2022 (n=36)
The School of Communication has a diverse student body.	41%	73% (all) 52% (minority)	61% (all) 65% (minority)
The School of Communication focuses enough time in class to discussing diversity issues.	63%	52% (gender) 55% (minority)	57% (gender) 52% (minority)
The School of Communication is doing enough at retaining a diverse student body.	48%	84% (gender) 50% (minority)	68% (gender) 54% (minority)
The School of Communication has an inclusive atmosphere that embraces diversity.	81%	97% (gender) 83% (minority)	86% (gender) 76% (minority)

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.

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

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

SCHOOLS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES should adjust the response and listing below to best represent the racial/ethnic/socio economic groups of the area's population.

Do not count any individual in more than one group.

Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Full-time faculty

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	1	4.3	1	4.3
White	10	43	6	26
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more races	0	0	0	0
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	2	8.6	3	13

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

Group	Female	% of total faculty	Male	% of total faculty
Black/African-American	3	23	1	7.6
White	5	38.4	4	30.7
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more races	0	0	0	0
Other race	0	0	0	0
International (any race)	0	0	0	0

SUMMARY:

The unit has had modest success in diversifying its faculty, but domestic diversity still falls short of international diversity and below the numbers represented by students and the service area. The diversity of the student body has grown during the review period although it remains slightly less diverse than the institution as a whole and not nearly as diverse as its geographic service area with regard to Black students. The School has a welcoming and inclusive climate and is working hard to navigate a difficult and uncertain political environment. Diversity is built into courses across the curriculum.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Full-time tenured, tenure-track and fixed-term faculty taught the vast majority – up to 97% – of core and required courses for the three years before the site visit. Faculty are actively engaged in curricular decisions, as evidenced by faculty meeting minutes and articulated by virtually every faculty member interviewed.

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

Faculty CVs and interviews confirm a highly qualified group that works to keep expertise current by taking advantage of funding for professional development and by conducting research in the areas they teach, such as social media and content creation. The combined professional experience of the faculty totals 143 years.

They are active in a number of professional scholarly associations, including the AEJMC, the International Communication Association, the Florida Communication Association, the Broadcast Educators Association, and the National Communications Association.

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

All tenure-track faculty have access to \$1,500 per year to use for professional development, primarily to attend academic conferences to present research. An additional \$200 per year is available for activities to enhance teaching, which can include updating technical skills. The School also has used its operating budget to provide limited financial support for faculty research on a case-by-case basis. Non-tenure track faculty can request unused funds from these pools. Nineteen of the 23 full-time faculty have taken advantage of this support during the review cycle.

A mentoring program matches new faculty with senior faculty, a program that a pre-tenure new hire described as effective and supportive.

Sabbaticals for tenured faculty and professional development leaves for non-tenure track faculty are available. Two faculty members have taken advantage of this in the past two years.

Faculty voiced some concerns about teaching loads, given the relatively new R2 designation for the institution. The Dean indicated that UNF is considering differential workloads to address this concern.

The School's promotion and tenure documents are clear and detailed, with decisions made based on university-wide standards spelled out in the UNF-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Director provides an annual appraisal to tenure-earning faculty members on their progress toward tenure, and all faculty complete a self-report annually that is submitted to the Director.

(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.

Scholarly productivity in the unit has increased since the last site visit: the self-study lists a total of 244 scholarship, research, creative and professional activities, compared to 195 in 2016-17. Much of the output consists of books, book chapters, journal articles and conference papers. Research topics include the impact of the pandemic on strategic branding, the effects of technology on communication and society, brand activism, and mediated deception in social media.

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

The site team had limited interaction with other constituencies on campus, but the School appears to have the respect of university administrators and colleagues in other departments for the quality of its students and faculty.

The Dean of the college indicated that the average number of publications produced by the School is low by college standards and expressed a desire for the School to step up its scholarly activity. She also would like to see the School provide more general education courses that would extend its expertise to other parts of the university.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Total: (21)
		Full Professors (3)	Associate Professors (8)	Assistant Professors (1)	Other Faculty** (9)	
Awards and Honors	1	1				1
Grants Received Internal	2		2			2
Grants Received External	1		2			2
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored						
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored						
Books Edited	2	2				2
Book Chapters	16	8	9		1	18
Monographs						
Articles in Refereed Journals	32	11	46	3	1	61
Refereed Conference Papers	64	15	67	4		86
Invited Academic Papers					1	
Encyclopedia Entries						
Book Reviews	2	1	1			2
Articles in Non-refereed Publications						
Juried Creative Works	4				4	4
Non-juried Creative Works	120				120	120
Other (please specify)						
Total	244	38	127	7	127	298

*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.

SUMMARY:

Faculty teach the vast majority of courses and are clearly committed to student success. They are active in a variety of professional associations and take advantage of training opportunities to ensure they remain up to date in their areas of expertise. Promotion and tenure guidelines are clear. The faculty is extremely collegial across concentrations and interest areas. Scholarly and creative output has increased during this review period, but expectations also are rising.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

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 last site team in 2016 cited inconsistent advising as a weakness, citing student uncertainty about their paths toward graduation.

Currently, academic advising begins for incoming students in the spring semester of their senior year of high school. During freshman orientation, students meet with their designated professional adviser in the university's First Year Advising office. These advisers support students during their freshman and sophomore years. After students have earned 30 credit hours, they are advised by one of the two academic advisers assigned by the university to work with Communications students.

Located in a centralized advising center outside of the School, both of the academic advisers have been on the job for less than a year. While the advisers were initially to be dedicated to communication students, they have since taken on advising English majors as well. This means that each has an advising load of at least 350 majors. Both academic advisers said they feel they need to strengthen their rapport with communication students. Advisers communicate with students both in-person through scheduled appointments and via email.

Students also can track their progress through online tools such as the Osprey Map, which provides sample schedules for each term in the four concentrations. They also use another online tool, Degree Works, which provides personalized course sequencing. The CANVAS website provides additional information about courses offered, registration deadlines and other relevant campus resources. Additionally, the School employs its e-newsletter to offer students timely information about specific courses and registration details.

Since the last site team report, the School has worked to integrate advisers into the unit, including inviting them to faculty meetings, with some apparent effect: Data from the graduating student exit survey over the past three years show that 90% or more of the B.S. in Communication students either "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that their adviser is helpful and at least 94% "strongly agree" or "agree" their adviser was "available and accessible when I had questions."

However, during the site team visit, students were extremely vocal about their continued dissatisfaction with advising. They complained about how long it takes to get advising appointments or to get answers from their advisers. They said advisers lack sufficient knowledge about courses and degree requirements. Several seniors said they had to delay graduation by one or two semesters because they were given inaccurate information about the courses they needed to graduate. Some faculty also expressed concerns about advising.

At least part of the problem may be attributed to a high rate of turnover in the advising office. University administrators indicated that salaries have recently been raised in an effort to reduce turnover.

Additionally, the School's advisers were previously housed in the Communication building, where students could easily access them and advisers could interact regularly with faculty and administrators. However, the university moved the advising staff into a nearby building about a year and a half ago in an effort to encourage collaboration and communication among the staff serving different colleges.

Concerned that the move could create a disconnect between the School and advising staff and make it less convenient for students to seek advising, School leadership is monitoring the situation and may request that advisers be moved back in-house.

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

Career advising begins when communication majors meet with designated Career Service staff during orientation prior to the start of their first semester. The staff provide a variety of career services, programs and resources designed to help students transition from academic coursework to the world of work.

Faculty also are active in providing students with career advice and assisting with job searches. For more than a decade, the school has sponsored an internship and job fair that attracts about 50 communication-based companies each year to come to campus and interact with students. Students also get career advice in the required one-credit Pre-Internship for Communication course.

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

To keep students informed of policies, activities and requirements, the School sends out a weekly e-mail, "Comm Connect," that includes announcements about internships, job opportunities and upcoming events. The site team reviewed all editions of the newsletter for 2023, which were archived on the College's web site. They include information ranging from details about communication clubs to introduction of new academic advisers and from announcements about study abroad opportunities to timelines for summer, fall and spring semester registration.

(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.

The School's faculty advise three student clubs in journalism and production, advertising and public relations. The last site team in 2016 cited the lack of co-curricular opportunities as a weakness. The current site team found even fewer such opportunities, with one less student club.

The three current student clubs are still struggling to recover pre-pandemic membership and participation. According to the students participating in small group meetings with the site team, the Multimedia Club is doing relatively well, attracting 15 to 20 students to monthly meetings. The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and the Advertising Club have met with less success.

The School has worked to encourage club involvement with an outdoor tenting event early in the semester during which faculty and student ambassadors hand out literature about clubs and encourage them to sign up. An administrator suggested involvement in student organizations could be incentivized by integrating club participation into classes.

The challenge is to interest students, many of whom live and work off campus. Only about 20% of students live on campus. About 75% work and about a third work 20 to 40 hours a week, according to university data.

The site team noted that there are no student organizations focused on issues related to racial minority groups or that cater to minority student needs (i.e. National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists). One faculty member explained that since the pandemic, students of

color have been less inclined to participate in minority organizations. Students told the site team that the Black Student Union and Latin Student Organization on campus are still active, despite recent efforts to cut state funding for groups catering minority students.

Students also can participate in Spinnaker Media, which has four independent student-operated media outlets (Spinnaker newspaper, Spinnaker Online, Spinnaker Radio, and Spinnaker TV), which operate out of the Student Union building. Administratively, Spinnaker Media reports to the English Department rather than the Communications School, an arrangement that many find perplexing.

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

The required retention and graduation data have been linked to the School's website. In addition, the School evaluates advisers through its graduating senior survey. Findings are reviewed periodically by faculty to ensure appropriate attention is given to any potential barriers to student success.

SUMMARY:

Despite efforts to improve advising, which was cited as a weakness by the 2016 site team, advising remains a challenge for the School. Even though graduating seniors surveyed said they were largely pleased with the helpfulness of their advisers, current students and faculty shared a number of concerns about high turnover, difficulty in scheduling appointments and delayed graduation due to insufficient or inaccurate advising. Participation in the handful of student clubs is relatively weak.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: NON-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.

The School's operating budget of about \$2.7 million has increased slightly in each of the last three years. It has grown by about 19 percent since the 2015-2016 self-study year, despite declining enrollment.

Salary expenses account for the vast majority of expenditures. The School spent more than \$50,000 in operational funds over the past three three years on technology, much of which was used to renovate the TV studio. The college contributed an additional \$41,000 for the project. These expenditures align with the School's strategic planning goal to upgrade technology.

(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 School relies on four sources of revenue: the operating expense budget described above; student lab fees; the departmental foundation account; and a departmental events account.

Operating funds are allocated by the college each year using a formula that takes into account student credit hours, the number of faculty, and how expensive it is to educate students in the major. In addition, the college provides funds to be used for accreditation and professional development.

Requests for additional funds for capital and equipment needs may be made through the Dean's office. In 2019, the School was awarded \$41,000 to upgrade the TV studio. Additional money for the upgrade came from student lab fees, which apply to technology-intensive courses. The proceeds go into an equipment reserve fund to be used for equipment and software used by students. Some of the revenue is set aside in a separate account to be used for supplies, such as paper, ink and other consumables, that benefit instruction.

The School's Foundation account, made up of donations from private sources, is very small. It is used to pay for such items as food for the annual faculty retreat. According to the Director, the UNF Foundation does not raise funds at the school or department levels and the School does not actively pursue grants or gifts. Resources are described as being generally adequate for day-to-day operations, and the School has received university support when needed.

The Communication Events Fund consists of fees paid by participants in the school's events, such as the annual Social Media Expo Jax. The money supports school events as well as school needs that cannot be funded by other sources.

School leadership and faculty believe the unit is treated fairly in terms of budgetary support from the college. According to the self-study, it ranks 8th out of the 15 departments within the college in funding support.

The self-study does suggest one desired budgetary change: The School would like the flexibility to roll over funds from one fiscal year to the next, both to avoid having to give money back to and to avoid the last-minute scramble that ensues to spend any extra money before it is lost.

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

The School is housed in a two-story building that is part of a complex of Arts & Sciences buildings. Classrooms and video production facilities are on the first floor, and offices and a conference room are on the second floor. All full-time faculty have private offices, and adjunct faculty share a small office. In addition, there are four staff offices, and one PRSSA office.

The facility includes three computer labs, one classroom, one speech lab, one editing lab, one audio booth/podcasting studio that also is used for video interviews, and one leasing equipment room. The editing lab and two of the three computer labs are equipped with Mac computers; the remaining lab is equipped with PC computers.

The building also houses a TV studio, control room and engineering rack room. According to the self-study, the School has invested more than \$100,000 during the last three years to upgrade the studio. Decades-old technology and equipment were replaced with new cameras, lights, monitors, teleprompters, a TriCaster system that allows for virtual sets, and live-streaming capabilities for remote broadcasts on-location. The studio now houses three high-definition studio cameras, up-to-date studio and accent lighting, a news desk and a green screen, among other items.

Students can broadcast directly to Spinnaker Media, the student media operation administered by the English department and housed elsewhere on campus, through a fiber optic transmission line. School of Communication students also use UNF Athletics' facilities and equipment for class assignments for ESPN+.

The 2016 site team report noted that there are limited common areas within the building, discouraging student interaction (although there are a number of outdoor gathering spots) and that some students complained about limited access to the building. The building hours then – and now – are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays during which time students have access to computer labs, the TV studio and edit bays. For night and weekend work, students are referred to the UNF library, which has a version of Adobe on its computers. The School has experimented with open labs outside regular office hours, but attendance reportedly was low. Students interviewed by the site team expressed no concerns about building hours.

(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

The university supplies and maintains the School's computer labs and computers for faculty and staff. The Adobe suite is installed on all lab computers as well as those in the TV studio and other broadcast areas. Computers are replaced every five years, meaning about 20% are replaced annually.

Students have access to a wide range of cameras they can check out for course assignments. This ranges from low-end DSLR fixed-lens cameras to iPhone SEs, and from Handycams to industry-standard ENG cameras. Students have access to Go Pro-type cameras, lav and shotgun mics, tripods, portable green screens and lights, and camera stabilizers. Other kits are designed for students creating audio content.

The School also has a supply of iPhones for students who don't have them or prefer not to use their own for assignments.

Students can check out equipment for 48 hours at a time during the week and from Friday to Monday.

Faculty and students indicated they are satisfied with the quality and availability of equipment, although a number expressed the need for additional access to apps and software, including social media and data analytics tools. They now rely primarily on free versions.

SUMMARY:

The School's financial resources have grown slowly over time, despite declining enrollment, and appear to be adequate for its needs and aspirations. The School is treated fairly by the college in terms of resource allocations, and the college has been supportive when special needs arise.

The physical facilities and equipment, especially with a substantial upgrade of the TV studio, are more than adequate.

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.

School of Communication alumni regularly interact with faculty and students, and the School solicits their input on curricular and other school matters.

Many of the participants in school events, such as the annual Media Week, the spring Internship + Job Fair and Social Media Expo Jax. Some also are involved as members of the School's Professional Advisory Board.

School faculty engages with professional practitioners through their involvement in a wide range of professional and civic associations and by inviting guest speakers to their classes. During the past three years, media professionals have taken part in around 200 class visits, panel presentations, and lunches with students.

(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 professional service activities include conducting peer reviews of manuscripts and journals and serving in leadership roles on professional advisory boards and as panelists and presenters at gatherings of national and local professional organizations. They also serve in leadership roles and as judges and volunteers for community committees, task forces and boards.

The university supports tenure-track faculty with \$1,500 per year to use for professional development, including travel to academic conferences to present research and conferences on teaching. Faculty who are not tenure-track can access the funds to attend teaching conferences when there is money left over at the end of the fiscal year. There is usually money left over for this purpose. In addition, all full-time faculty have \$200 per year to further their professional development in terms of teaching.

(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.

The School contributes to its communities in a number of ways.

The "Uncovering Jax" project about the Black heritage of Jacksonville emphasized the often little-known contributions of African Americans to the city. Panels and workshops on social media, digital marketing, and communication are attended by industry professionals, agencies, UNF staff, faculty, and students.

Many area nonprofit organizations have had public relations and advertising campaigns created for them by students in the capstone course for the Advertising and Public Relations major concentrations. For example, capstone Advertising and Public Relations courses have community-based transformational learning components, which help maintain UNF's Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Community-based learning components in courses include activities that directly involve students in organizations that help those in need in the community. Students spend time with organizations and apply skills learned in their communication courses to assist with the organizations' communication needs.

Working with UNF's College of Computing, Engineering and Construction, a section of Public Relations Campaigns created a campaign to encourage diversity in the STEM field, and students in the Digital Video Production concentration created videos for the campaign.

Every semester, Applied Journalism students work with Project Cold Case, a national organization based in Jacksonville that brings attention to crime victims. Students do profiles of unsolved homicide victims, which Project Cold Case spotlights.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The School faculty participate annually in the statewide Florida Scholastic Press Association convention. Faculty give presentations to the high school students on various aspects of journalism, production and public relations.

In addition, since 2015, the School has hosted an annual scholastic journalism workshop on campus for high school students in northeast Florida. More than 30 public and private high schools around the Jacksonville area that have a dedicated journalism, film, or language arts program and adviser are invited to participate. The workshops include tips on reporting, research, storytelling, videography, non-linear editing, graphic design, social media and public relations. Public and private high schools that have participated include Atlantic Coast High School, Columbia High School, Englewood High School, Frank H. Peterson High School, Nease High School, Providence School of Jacksonville, and Stanton College Preparatory School.

Several faculty members serve on the boards of communication programs at local high schools.

SUMMARY:

The School and its faculty make considerable efforts to advance journalism, advertising and public relations and to fulfill their obligations to the local community, alumni and the public at large.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- A faculty that is collegial in every way and committed to student success
- Stable leadership and support from college administration
- Strong professional connections, including an active professional advisory board
- Resilient student learners who juggle work and studies
- A willingness on the part of faculty and unit leadership to try new things, such as the social media minor

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent advising over two accreditation cycles
- Continued difficulty in growing domestic diversity among the faculty
- Declining student enrollment
- Heavy reliance on online courses in two of the four concentrations

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

Standard 6: Student Services

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.

The sole deficiency is inconsistent advising over two accreditation cycles. The unit will need to work with the university to improve the availability and consistency of advising to ensure that students are on course to timely graduation. Ideally, the two advisers assigned to the unit would advise solely Communications students, lessening their advising loads and adding to their connectivity with students and subject matter expertise.

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

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

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.

7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process. Often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the site visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.

The self-study was clear and relatively concise. The unit's leadership was quick to provide additional information and context prior to and during the visit.



Jan. 22, 2024

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
2101 Knight Hall, 7765 Alumni Drive
College Park, MD 20742

Dear Accrediting Committee and Council:

I am writing in response to the ACEJMC site team visit report. We at UNF thank the site visitors for their hard work, and we are pleased that the site visit team recommends reaccreditation. The response below is meant to provide context to the site team's finding of noncompliance with Standard 6 (Student Services), which they note on page 45 of their report is based on the "sole deficiency" of "inconsistent advising."

Student Perceptions of Advising

As the site visit report notes on page 37, more than 90% in our graduating seniors survey said their advisor was helpful and available. However, in their discussions with the accreditation team, some students noted their frustration with the high rate of advisor turnover. This cohort of students attended UNF pre- and post-COVID. And, beginning in Spring 2021, commensurate with many other departments on campus, Advising experienced a high degree of turnover. Turnover in advising is particularly problematic given the time needed to fully train a new advisor to be able to manage their own caseload independently. For this reason, School of Communication students, as well as many other majors, worked with several different advisors during this time and this was, understandably, a source of frustration. UNF has taken several measures to stabilize that turnover. These include:

- Hired a new COAS Advising Director in September 2022.
- Hired and assigned the two current full-time professional advisors dedicated to the School of Communication in March and May 2023.
- Raised advisor salaries across the board in Summer 2023.
 - Entry level salary base was raised by 10% in July 2023.
 - All advisors received two consecutive years of 5% raises, plus one-time \$4,000 bump to base salary in August 2023.
- Revamped new advisor onboarding, training and professional development in September 2023 to improve morale and retention; continued assessment and improvement of advisor training.
- All Advising lines filled as of January 1, 2024.

In December 2023, UNF also carefully reviewed advising histories of all students who volunteered to participate in discussions with the accreditation team to determine whether there had been advising errors leading to students being off-track for graduation. The review revealed

that despite the frequent change in advisors for these students, advisors were consistent, timely, and responsive to student questions and needs and all students were on track to graduate early or on time.

Recent Improvements to Advising

According to a recent Chronicle of Higher Education report on *The Future of Advising* (McMurtrie & Supiano, 2022), studies demonstrate that the average caseload for advisors of undergraduate students ranges from 200 to 400 students. The two School of Communication advisors advise 350 students each, which is within the normal range. In addition, a number of recent improvements have been directed towards making advisor caseloads more manageable. These include:

- Implemented Degree Works in January 2023. Degree Works is a dynamic tool that enables students and advisors to track progress to graduation and reduce negative impact of course/major changes.
- Implemented Advising Dashboard in February 2023. The dashboard provides each advisor access to comprehensive information for their specific caseload in one location. The dashboard is sortable by meaningful data points to facilitate proactive and efficient caseload management.
- Established central Processing Team in April 2023. This team has absorbed administrative duties previously performed by advisors, enabling advisors to focus on student support and engagement.
- Launch of Slate student success portal. In January 2024, a new student success portal began providing students with a personalized, user-friendly interface where they can connect with academic support resources including their engaging with their academic advisor, tutoring centers, career counselors, coaching, and more. This portal also enhances faculty and advisors' ability to provide seamless, coordinated support to their students through its academic alerts and case management features, and a Student360 data dashboard.

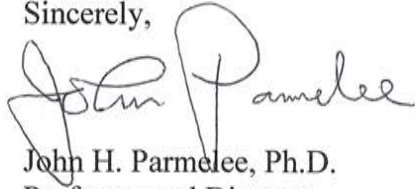
Planned Improvements to Advising in 2024

We are working on ways to further increase engagement and integration of the School of Communication advisors with Communication students to enhance student professional development, curricular options in the major, and experiences that prepare students for career pathways in communications. During the Spring 2024 semester, the School of Communication faculty will examine ways to reduce pre-requisites and create a list of recommended minors, which our advisors can use when offering advice. Also, our advisors will begin in February to introduce themselves to students in our entry course to the major (MMC 1004-Media Literacy), and we will arrange days for the advisors to do short visits to our building to meet students. Also, the Director of the School of Communication is now tasked with offering our advisors refresher sessions several times a year to keep them up to date on our policies and curriculum.

Finally, the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences will provide resources to fund faculty course buyouts so that Communication faculty can further advise students in the areas of internships, professional development, alignment of minor selection, career pathways in the field, and general mentorship of School of Communication students. This faculty advising is intended to

complement the curricular academic advising provided by the two designated academic advisors for the School of Communication that includes regular degree evaluation and keeping students on track to graduation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John H. Parmelee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

John H. Parmelee, Ph.D.
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Dr. Kaveri Subrahmanyam, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences
Dr. Natasha Christie, Associate Dean for Student Learning, College of Arts & Sciences
Chadwick Lockley, UNF Director for Academic Programs and Accreditation