# Report of ACEJMC Evaluation
## Professional master's/Undergraduate programs
2023– 2024

Name of Institution: University of South Carolina
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Michael D. Amiridis
Name of Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Name and Title of Administrator: Damion Waymer
Date of 2023-2024 Accrediting Visit: February 11-14, 2024

Date of the previous accrediting visit: January 29-February 1, 2017
Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation
Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation
Professional master's program: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council:
Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation
Professional master's program: Reaccreditation

## Recommendation by 2023-2024 Visiting Team:

Undergraduate program recommendation: Reaccreditation

Professional master's program recommendation: Reaccreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**
Name and Title:  Hub Brown, Dean and Professor
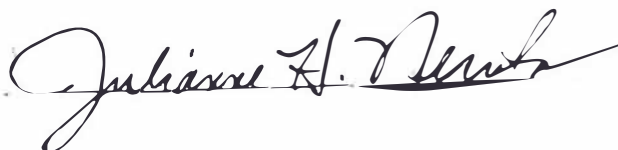Organization/School:  University of Florida

Signature _____

Name and Title:  Ford Risley, Professor
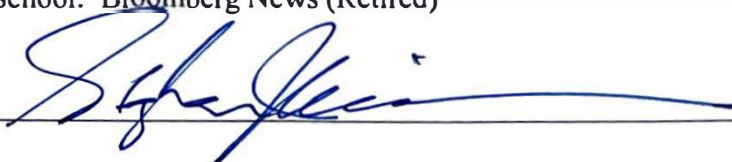Organization/School:  Pennsylvania State University

Signature _____

Name and Title:  Julianne H. Newton, Professor
Organization/School:  University of Oregon

Signature _____

Name and Title:   Steve Geimann
Organization/School:  Bloomberg News (Retired)

Signature _____

Name and Title:   Amy Struthers, Professor Emerita
Organization/School:  University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Retired)

Signature _____


Team member Rosanna Fiske, APR, Fellow PRSA, participated virtually.

# PART I: General information

**Name of Institution:** University of South Carolina

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

**Year of Visit:** 2024

**1. Check regional association by which the institution now is accredited.**
\_\_\_ Higher Learning Commission
\_\_\_ Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
\_\_\_ New England Association of Schools and Colleges
\_\_\_ Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
_X_ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
\_\_\_ Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**2. Indicate the institution's type of control; check more than one if necessary.**
\_\_\_ Private
_X_ Public
\_\_\_ Other (specify)

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

The University of South Carolina, a public agency of the State of South Carolina, was created as an institute of higher education by act of the South Carolina General Assembly, codified at Section 59-117-10 et seq. of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

**4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?**
X_ Yes
\_\_\_ No

**If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:** February 2017

**5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC?**
The unit has been continuously accredited (re-accredited) since 1954.

**6. Insert here the undergraduate mission statement and the separate mission statement for the graduate program. Statements should give the date of adoption and/or last revision.**

The mission statement of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications covers learning objectives for both the undergraduate and graduate programs and supports the missions of the College of Information and Communications and the University of South Carolina.

Mission statement: The School of Journalism and Mass Communications bridges practice and research, preparing the next generation of mass communication practitioners and scholars to communicate clearly, concisely, creatively and with integrity — ultimately advancing the communications professions in a democratic society.
*Revised in April 2017.*

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

**Number of weeks in a semester:**
Fall/Spring semesters of 15 weeks

**Number of weeks in summer sessions:**
Summer sessions ranging from one to 15 weeks.  This flexible summer course scheduling is a part of USC's *On Your Time: Summer at Carolina* program ([summer.sc.edu](summer.sc.edu)).

**Number of weeks in intersessions:**
Winter sessions run for 3 weeks in January.

## 8. Check the programs offered in journalism/mass communications:
X_  Bachelor's degree
X_  Master's degree
X_  Ph.D. degree

## 9. List the specific undergraduate and professional master's degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. *Indicate online degrees.

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communications

| | |
|---|---|
| Advertising | Public Relations |
| Broadcast Journalism | Visual Communications |
| Journalism | Master of Mass Communication |
| Mass Communications | Multimedia Journalism |
| | Strategic Communication Management (on campus/online) |

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

120 semester hours

**Credits hours required for a professional master's degree:**

36 semester hours

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

3 semester hours of credit

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

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Person in Charge |
|---|---|
| Advertising | Jeffrey Williams |
| Journalism (multimedia and broadcast) | Nina Brooks |
| Mass Communications | David Moscowitz |
| Public Relations | Kelly Davis |
| Visual Communications | Sabrina Habib |

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

As of January 1, 2023, there were 33,777 students enrolled at the University of South Carolina Columbia campus.  This number includes undergraduate and graduate students.

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

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Spring/2023 undergraduate majors |
|---|---|
| Advertising | 312 |
| Broadcast Journalism | 188 |
| Journalism (multimedia) | 129 |
| Mass Communications | 296 |
| Public Relations | 316 |
| Visual Communications | 204 |
| Total | 1445 |

**15. Give the number of graduate students enrolled on-site: Number of master's students enrolled online:**

**Onsite**
MA - 6
MMC – 33

**Online**
MMC - 21

**16. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. 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.)**

**Skills Courses**

| Course number and title | Section | Enrollment Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 001 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 002 | 20 | 18 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 003 | 19 | 19 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 004 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 005 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 006 | 19 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 007 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 008 | 19 | 19 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 009 | 19 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 010 | 18 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 011 | 20 | |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 013 | 17 | |
| Jour 291/ Writing for Mass Communication | 014 | 20 | |
| Jour 316: Toolkit for Concept Development | 001 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 316: Toolkit for Concept Development | 002 | 19 | 19 |
| Jour 316: Toolkit for Concept Development | 003 | 20 | 17 |
| Jour 316: Toolkit for Concept Development | 004 | | 20 |
| Jour 317: Toolkit for Brand Com/Creative | 001 | 16 | 20 |
| Jour 317: Toolkit for Brand Com/Creative | 002 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 317: Toolkit for Brand Com/Creative | 003 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 317: Toolkit for Brand Com/Creative | 004 | | 12 |
| Jour 346: Graphics for Visual Com | 001 | 19 | 20 |
| Jour 346: Graphics for Visual Com | 002 | 20 | 16 |
| Jour 346: Graphics for Visual Com | 003 | | 20 |
| Jour 347: Photography for Visual Com | 001 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 347: Photography for Visual Com | 002 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 347: Photography for Visual Com | 003 | | 19 |
| Jour 361L: Intro Reporting & Writing Lab | 001 | 15 | 16 |
| Jour 361L: Intro Reporting & Writing Lab | 002 | 16 | 18 |

| Course | Section | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jour 361L: Intro Reporting & Writing Lab | 003 | 16 | 18 |
| Jour 362: Editing | 001 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 392: Podcasting and Audio Production | 001 | 18 | |
| Jour 416: Creative: Strategy to Execution | 001 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 416: Creative: Strategy to Execution | 002 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 421: Media Analysis | 001 | 24 | 27 |
| Jour 421: Media Analysis | 002 | 27 | 25 |
| Jour 436: Public Relations Writing | 001 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 436: Public Relations Writing | 002 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 436: Public Relations Writing | 003 | | 20 |
| Jour 436: Public Relations Writing | 004 | | 14 |
| Jour 437: Advance Public Relations Writing | 001 | 19 | |
| Jour 437: Advance Public Relations Writing | 002 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 443: Sports Announcing | 001 | 19 | |
| Jour 444: Multimedia Sports Storytelling | 001 | 16 | 20 |
| Jour 446: Informational Graphics | 001 | 14 | 11 |
| Jour 446: Informational Graphics | 002 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 447: Video for Visual Communication | 001 | 9 | 20 |
| Jour 447: Video for Visual Communication | 002 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 448: Multimedia for Visual Com | 001 | 12 | 6 |
| Jour 448: Multimedia for Visual Com | 002 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 449: Design of Online Content | 001 | 20 | 16 |
| Jour 449: Design of Online Content | 002 | 20 | 19 |
| Jour 471: Intermediate Reporting & Producing | 001 | 17 | 15 |
| Jour 471: Intermediate Reporting & Producing | 002 | 20 | 17 |
| Jour 471: Intermediate Reporting & Producing | 003 | | 9 |
| Jour 472: Power Producing | 001 | 10 | 12 |
| Jour 517: Integrated Campaigns | 001 | 11 | 18 |
| Jour 517: Integrated Campaigns | 002 | 20 | 30 |
| Jour 531: Public Relations Campaigns | 001 | 10 | |
| Jour 531: Public Relations Campaigns | 002 | 19 | 24 |
| Jour 531: Public Relations Campaigns | 003 | 20 | 5 |
| Jour 533: Public Relations Management | 001 | 19 | |
| Jour 533: Public Relations Management | 002 | 20 | 13 |
| Jour 534: Publication Writing and Design | 001 | 18 | |
| Jour 534: Publication Writing and Design | 002 | | 20 |
| Jour 537: The Carolina Agency | 001 | 24 | 33 |
| Jour 553: Motion-Based Graphics | 001 | 14 | |
| Jour 560: Capstone Portfolio Development | 005 | 13 | |
| Jour 560: Capstone Portfolio Development | 001 | | 20 |
| Jour 560: Capstone Portfolio Development | 002 | | 12 |
| Jour 580: Advanced Reporting | 001 | 14 | 11 |
| Jour 580: Advanced Reporting | 002 | 23 | 13 |
| Jour 586: Capstone 1 Adv. Rep. Broadcasting | 001 | 23 | 13 |
| Jour 587: Capstone 1 Adv. Rep. Multimedia | 001 | 14 | 9 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jour 587: Capstone 1 Adv. Rep. Multimedia | 002 | | 2 |
| Jour 588: Capstone 2 Adv. Broadcasting Prod. | 001 | 23 | 13 |
| Jour 589: Capstone 2 Adv. Multimedia Prod. | 001 | 14 | 9 |
| Jour 589: Capstone 2 Adv. Multimedia Prod. | 002 | | 2 |
| | | | |
| Jour 590: Capstone 3 Digital Journalism | 001 | 14 | 11 |
| Jour 590: Capstone 3 Digital Journalism | 002 | 23 | 13 |
| Jour 591: Carolina Agency | 001 | 3 | 7 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 001 | 20 | |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 002 | 20 | |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 003 | 20 | |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | 004 | 20 | |

| Online skills Courses | | Enrollment | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Course number and title** | **Section** | **Fall 2023** | **Spring 2024** |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J10 | 18 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J11 | 17 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J12 | 18 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J13 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J14 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J15 | 20 | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J16 | | 20 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | J17 | | 13 |
| Jour 291: Writing for Mass Communication | Y02 | | 12 |
| Jour 533: Public Relations Management | J10 | | 35 |

**17. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2023–2024 academic year: Give percentage increase or decrease in three years:**
**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:**

FY24 budget projection: $7,139,302 (as of 8/1/23)
% change in budget FY21 to FY22: now 6%
% change in budget FY22 to FY23: now 8%
% change in budget FY23 to FY24: now -1%

FY24 faculty salary budget remains $3,961,914
FY24 faculty fringe budget remains $1,494,165

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

| Name | Title | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Shannon Bowen | Professor | |
| Greg Brannon | Instructor | |
| Nina Brook | Instructor | |
| Andy Burns | Instructor | |
| Kenneth Campbell | Associate Professor | |
| Shirley Carter | Professor | |
| Randy Covington | Instructor | |
| Kelly Davis | Instructor | |
| Candice Edrington | Assistant Professor | |
| Jabari Evans | Assistant Professor | |
| Scott Farrand | Senior Instructor | |
| Mary Anne Fitzpatrick | Professor | |
| Russ Gottwald | Instructor | |
| August Grant | Professor | |
| Sabrina Habib | Associate Professor | |
| Kevin Hull | Associate Professor | On sabbatical |
| Jungmi Jun | Associate Professor | |
| Sei-Hill Kim | Professor | |
| Jackie Keisler | Instructor | |
| Van Kornegay | Associate Professor | |
| Jacob Long | Assistant Professor | |
| Carmen Maye | Senior Instructor | |
| Denise McGill | Associate Professor | |
| Renee McManus | Instructor | |
| Tara Mortenson | Associate Professor | |
| David Moscowitz | Senior Instructor | |
| Leigh Moscowitz | Professor | |
| Rick Peterson | Senior Instructor | |
| Jason Porter | Instructor | |
| Marcia Cook Purday | Instructor | |
| Tom Reichert | Dean/Professor | |
| Brett Robertson | Assistant Professor | |
| Eric Robinson | Associate Professor | |
| Manie Robinson | Instructor | |
| Parks Rogers | Instructor | |
| Brandon Shulleeta | Instructor | |
| Laura Smith | Senior Instructor | |
| Wesley Stevens | Assistant Professor | |
| Andrea Tanner | Professor | |
| Eileen Waddell | Instructor | |
| Damion Waymer | Director/ Professor | |
| Taylor Wen | Associate Professor | |
| Jeffrey Williams | Senior Instructor | |
| Linwan Wu | Associate Professor | |
| Anli Xiao | Assistant Professor | |

**19. 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.)**

Spring 2023
Allison Askins
Tyler Boswell
Issac Brown
Ed Chambliss
Yu Chen
Amy Coward
Covenant Ezenna
Mackenzie Hitchcock
Shudan Huang

Henri Humphries
Chris Huebner
Charles Jackson
Stephanie Martin
Renee McManus
Mark McMullen
Gavin Off
Howard Price
Bertram Rantin
Brandon Shulleeta
Taylor Smith
John Sucich
John Rogers
Larry Webster

Fall 2023
Allison Askins
Ed Chambliss
Carl Ciccarelli
Mary Click
Covenant Ezenna
Erik Collins
Amy Coward
James Henderson
Stephanie Martin
Mark McMullen
Brad Muller
Gavin Off
Bertram Rantin
Ryan Rucker
Lena Sadiwskyj
Charlene Slaughter
Taylor Smith
John Sucich
Ali Zain
John Rogers
Larry Webster

**Spring 2024**  Ertan
Agaoglu Jennifer
Aries Shelbretta
Ball Tyler
Boswell  Ed
Chambliss Erik
Collins  Amy
Coward
Covenant Ezenna
David Haan
Shamira McCray
Mark McMullen
Howard Price
Bertram Rantin
Ryan Rucker
Charlene
Slaughter
Taylor Smith
John Sucich
Robert Wertz
Larry Webster

## 20. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates.

**Undergraduate:**
**2022-23 academic year:**
        Fall 2022     83
      Spring 2023   313
   Summer 2023     31
              Total:   427

**2021-22 academic year:**
        Fall 2021    115
      Spring 2022    327
   Summer 2022      52
              Total:   494

**Master's students:**
**2022-23 academic year:**
        Fall 2022        9 (MMC only)
      Spring 2023     10 (2 MA + 8 MMC)
   Summer 2023      19 (MMC only)
              Total:      38

**2021-2022 academic year:**
        Fall 2021        3 (MMC Only)
      Spring 2022       9 (MMC Only)
   Summer 2022      17 (MMC Only)
              Total:      29

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

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications is celebrating its centennial this academic year, having been established in 1923. Back then, eight students registered for journalism classes; they chose from a curriculum of 13 courses.

A master's program was introduced between 1955 and 1965. The School was renamed the College of Journalism and Mass Communications in 1984. By then, it had grown to more than 1,100 students, 28 full-time faculty, and an annual $1.4 million budget. The Ph.D. program was established in 1994.

The start of the 21st Century brought more change to the College. In 2002, the College of Journalism and Mass Communications joined forces with the College of Library and Information Science to form the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications was renamed the School of Journalism and Mass Communications (SJMC), and the College of Library and Information Science was renamed the School of Information Science (iSchool). With these name changes came the current leadership organization: a dean for the new combined college, and directors for each School. One last name change occurred in 2015, when the present college name was adopted.

Sweeping changes covered far more than nomenclature in the College. In 2015, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications moved from an antiquated space under the USC Coliseum to a fully renovated building in the heart of campus. The College acquired two research facilities in 2019 – a Social Media Insights Lab in the SJMC, and a Biometrics/User Experience Lab in the iSchool.

As of Fall 2023, enrollment at the SJMC stood at 1,641 undergraduates, 55 master's and 17 Ph.D. students. The School has 45 full-time faculty and a budget of more than $7.14 million. The School also has more than 18,000 alumni around the globe.

The keynotes of the College and School's major changes in the last several years have been about strengthening infrastructure, integration with the larger university and expansion of opportunity for students. In 2018, the College joined university-wide efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion by appointing an Associate Dean for DEI, part of the university's establishment of a Council of Academic Diversity Officers. The next year, the College created two new associate dean positions – in research and academic affairs.

One of the current challenges to the university and the SJMC is recruitment of students in a time of declining state support. The university currently receives approximately 10 percent of its revenue from state appropriations, and has moved toward a more centralized budget approach that emphasizes growing student enrollment. The SJMC is moving to offer more incentive programs to attract students and larger elective courses for students across the University. The environment has required increased fiscal discipline, and the SJMC has responded in kind, prioritizing having the resources to support its mission and faculty/staff development.

**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's mission statement is as follows. It was revised by the faculty in 2017:

*"The School of Journalism and Mass Communications bridges practice and research, preparing the next generation of mass communication practitioners and scholars to communicate clearly, concisely, creatively and with integrity — ultimately advancing the communications professions in a democratic society."*

The strategic plan of the College of Information and Communications covers both the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Information Science and emphasizes the synergies between the two schools. It was adopted in 2020. The plan's vision statement reflects this:

*"A community that seeks to drive and empower innovation to shape the future of information and communication in a digital world."*

The plan's priorities are to 1) strengthen the academic community; 2) strengthen the College infrastructure; and 3) establish the College as an acknowledged leader in data, media and society. Specific objectives flow from the priorities, such as building diversity, equity and inclusion, providing experiential learning, promoting joint degrees, and increasing the number of international partnerships. The strategic planning effort has led to specific outcomes that have positively affected the School:

- University-sponsored cluster hires that have increased faculty diversity
- A new interdisciplinary minor in social media within the iSchool
- A new Social Media Insights Lab and a Biometrics User Experience Lab

The strategic planning process is integrated within the University's planning process as well. The University's "For South Carolina: A Path to Excellence," replacing the former "Blueprint," was also adopted in 2020.

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

The mission statement for the School can be found here:
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/about/mission.php

The College's strategic plan is here:
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/internal/for-faculty/strategic_planning.php

The School is covered under the College strategic plan and does not have one of its own.

**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 Planning Committee, made up of three faculty and three administrators, is charged with monitoring the plan and keeping it updated. Each committee member is assigned several strategic initiatives and works with the administrator to whom that initiative is assigned. The committee produces an annual strategic planning report, on the progress toward objectives and the recommendations for priority areas for the next year. The Strategic Planning Committee is also responsible for updating the plan.

**(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.**

**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?**

The administrator of the unit, Dr. Damion Waymer, was appointed director of the SJMC effective July 1, 2023. The Director oversees faculty and budgets, programs and the allocation and development of resources, among other things. He represents the School to a wide range of academic and professional constituencies. He reports to the Dean of the College, and has responsibility for implementing university policies as they relate to the School. The director has authority in matters concerning appointment, tenure and promotions, apart from matters delegated to the faculty in the Faculty Manual. He oversees resource allocation and matters related to the implementation of the educational and scholarly objectives of the School. An Associate Director of Graduate Studies and the five sequence heads report to the Director.

The Director of the unit is new to the position and to the university, having been in the job about seven months at the time of the site visit. He is already seen as a strong advocate for the faculty and for its diversity. One of the more frequent things said about him is that he listens to faculty and staff, is concerned about their well-being and works in the interest of collaborative

innovation. Although the unit has had five directors (two as interim) over the course of just over six years, the current director has made building trust and a shared vision for the School a top priority. With such turnover, along with restructuring the School as part of the College, this is understandably difficult, and has been met with varying responses across the faculty. Work towards an expanded sports curriculum is just one example of activities that have continued and grown under the current director. On campus, both the School and the College are seen as innovative and collaborative partners.

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

The information on the database is current as of Spring 2024.

**(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.**

That information can be found here:
[About the school - College of Information and Communications | University of South Carolina](#)

**On indicators (e), (f) and (g) the site team should make sure the unit operates within accepted academic norms and need only report in detail on extraordinary situations, cases or variances from policy.**
**(e) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.**

The School's Policies and Procedures manual helps ensure faculty governance. It is reviewed by a committee elected by the full-time faculty. The faculty Curriculum Committee oversees the curriculum and makes recommendations to the full faculty, which makes curriculum decisions. It is among ten committees on which faculty serve, not counting search committees and faculty senate appointments.

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

Rules adopted at the university level define the process for selecting and evaluating administrators, requiring a documented search process for non-interim appointments

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

The School's student services office handles student complaints and there are procedures for bringing complaints up the chain of command to the Dean of the College if necessary. Faculty and staff concerns are referred to the Director of the School, and then to the Dean. An ombuds office is also available to resolve disputes.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The MMC program shares the School's mission statement. The MMC Long-Range Plan, last reviewed and updated in 2017, can be found here:
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/internal/for-faculty/strategic_planning.php

Faculty expressed a concern that the rapid turnover of leadership at both the School and Graduate Studies levels has resulted in little strategic planning. The newest Associate Director of Graduate Studies, a long-time tenured faculty member, is aware of this, and along with members of the Graduate Council is urging a deep dive into what the future of the MMC program could and should be. A pause in admissions in one of the two MMC concentrations is the first step in addressing this.

**(i)      The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional graduate program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional graduate program.**

The Associate Director of Graduate Studies is charged with oversight of the graduate programs. The job description includes curriculum review, course scheduling, and recruitment for both the master's and Ph.D. programs. The School's Graduate Council assists the Associate Director in determining policy and procedures for the program. The members of the council select the chair. The council consists of the graduate faculty, two student members (one representing doctoral students and the other representing master's degree programs), and the Graduate Student Services Manager. The Director of the School appoints faculty members to the council at the beginning of each academic year. The Associate Director of Graduate Studies appoints student members in consultation with currently enrolled graduate students. The Graduate Council approves changes in the curriculum and decides the status of petitions brought forward from graduate students. The current Associate Director of Graduate Studies is an interim, appointed in August 2023, at least the fourth interim in this role since the last accreditation visit.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

Conversations with faculty revealed two thoughts with regularity. On the one hand, the team found near universal excitement about the prospects of the School. There is satisfaction with the resources available for teaching and research, excitement about the quality of the students and what they have demonstrated they're capable of, and happiness with the facilities that they utilize and occupy. There is real optimism about the potential for leadership that the Director can provide. But on the other hand, the team found concerns about College leadership and how it affects the School. To be sure, many faculty expressed confidence in the direction of the College, but a large enough number expressed concerns to make their view difficult to ignore. They point

to turnover among both the faculty and staff as indicators that negatively affect morale. The concerns of some interviewed focused mainly on the management style and decisions of the Dean of the College. A significant number of faculty said shared governance is being eroded in favor of a top-down leadership style, reflected in decisions about searches and programs that bypass faculty recommendations. The Dean, for his part, admits that he sees the need to move quickly when the circumstances call for it, and especially where there is an opportunity in a fast-changing media landscape. He disputes the assertion about erosion of shared governance, and notes that faculty input was sought and utilized in the development of the strategic plan, the School's cluster hires, and decisions about equipment among other actions. There appears to be a real opportunity for a conversation about governance and strategic planning, and about how to move the School forward in a way that addresses the concerns of all components of faculty. Across the board, the faculty of the School seek stability after years of leadership change and turnover.

(Professional Master's)

The newest Interim Associate Director of Graduate Studies, appointed in August 2023, recognizes the impact of the frequent and rapid turnover in this position. Members of the Graduate Council agreed that it was time to re-engage in some level of strategic planning. To that end, admissions to one of the MMC concentrations has been paused to provide time for discussion. In the meantime, the other MMC concentration continues to grow.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**


**Overall evaluation (professional master's program) compliance/ noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

Discussions of indicators b, c and f should describe and evaluate individual academic sequences in the unit.

**(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.**

Students must earn 48 credit hours in the School, leaving 72 credit hours outside the School to satisfy the 120 credit hours required for a baccalaureate degree at USC. To satisfy School requirements, the 72 credit hours outside the school must include either 18 credit hours in a liberal arts minor or 12 credit hours in a cognate subject related to students' major and/or career goals. The one exception is the Visual Communications sequence, which revised its curriculum with unanimous faculty approval in January 2024 and awaits university approval (see details below). The College requires an additional 0-3 credit hours in a foreign language (if needed to meet a specified level of proficiency) and 18 credit hours selected from a list of specified university courses in history, literature, social science, social and behavioral science, economics and marketing or management.

To satisfy university requirements, 31-44 credit hours of the 72 credits outside the School must be selected from a set of arts and sciences courses called the Carolina Core. Commendably, the Carolina Core seeks to meet 10 learning outcomes that resonate with ACEJMC values and competencies: written and spoken persuasive communication (6 credits); analytical reasoning (6 credits); scientific literacy (7 credits); global citizenship and multicultural understanding with a historical (3 credits) and social sciences (3 credits) focus, and an optional foreign language focus (0-6 credits, though SJMC majors are required to take 6 credits of foreign language); aesthetic and interpretive understanding (3 credits); information literacy (3 credits); and values, ethics and social responsibility (3 credits).

The SJMC's values – truth, accuracy and fairness; freedom of expression; ethical ways of thinking and acting; understand history, roles of media; and appreciate diversity – reflect the ACEJMC values and competencies,

Additionally, the School identifies 17 elective courses "that contribute to the liberal arts and social science perspective." SJMC electives cover topics such as Social Media and Society; Minorities, Women and the Mass Media; and Ethics in Public Relations and Public Policy. In recent years, as the university moved to a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget

model and emphasized enrollment growth, the School has developed popular elective courses that draw large numbers from across the university.

Given the Council's elimination of the 72-hour rule, the School has initiated a comprehensive curriculum review with the goal of giving students more flexibility in their studies. Faculty are developing social and behavioral science-focused courses that can also satisfy university general education requirements. Students express desire to focus general education requirements toward their career interests where possible.

The School has launched several innovative curricular initiatives since the 2017 accreditation review:
– A Master of Mass Communication program for undergraduates to earn both bachelor's and master's degrees in "as little as" five years.
– A pathway program through which students can earn a bachelor's degree from Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC, and a graduate degree from USC in five years.
– The donor-supported Baldwin Business and Financial Journalism Initiative and the Baldwin Business and Financial Chair in Journalism to foster business education in the School
– Increased resources to support faculty and student participation in "one of the largest study abroad programs at USC."
– Sports and social media minors and a cross-disciplinary social media minor with the iSchool, the other unit in the College of Information and Communications.
– A joint SJMC/iSchool curricular innovation committee to review existing programs and explore new paths of study, including cross-disciplinary programs.

**(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.**

All SJMC majors are required to take two core conceptual courses – Media & Society and either Law and Ethics of Mass Communications or Internet and Social Media Law – as well as one skills course – Writing for Communications, totaling nine credit hours.

Each of the six tracks/sequences requires 39 credits in addition to the nine credits of core conceptual courses required of all SJMC undergraduates. Five sequences emphasize developing skills through 18-24 credit hours of required courses appropriate to each area. Each of the five skills-based sequences also requires at least one conceptual elective among a range of 12-21 required elective credit hours. The Mass Communications track, which emphasizes conceptual courses, requires 1-2 required skills courses among 12 credit hours of electives.

**(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.**

Each of six tracks requires principles, skills and at least one additional conceptual course. The School expresses pride in its curricular commitment to preparing its students for professional careers ranging from traditional paths through new digital media. As reported in the self-study, "We're visual and textual, informative and persuasive, for undergraduate and graduate students."

Facilities, equipment and software support currency across the majors.

A summary of each major follows below. In the charts, JOUR refers to courses within the School.

## Advertising

| | |
|---|---|
| Principles | 3 credit hours |
| Required Skills | 18 credit hours |
| Capstone electives | 6 credit hours |
| Conceptual course | 3 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR Electives | 9 credit hours |

The Advertising sequence provides a solid curriculum including fundamental courses in each of the many aspects of the discipline: account planning, concept development, creative executive, media planning, and integrated campaigns. However, students asked for more skills classes that could provide concentrations within the major, particularly copywriting (rather than journalism news writing or PR writing), social media, art direction, in-class instruction in the Adobe Creative Suite (rather than just being assigned to watch tutorials), and a portfolio class similar to what the Visual Communication students have. Ad majors found the law class to be lacking in relevance, focused on journalism and First Amendment-related cases, with little to no content about advertising legal issues. They found the campaigns classes and the Carolina Agency to be the most rewarding experiences. The sequence does not have an Ad Club or an AAF chapter, so students cannot compete in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC) or the Most Promising Multicultural Student (MPMS) program.

## Broadcast Journalism

| | |
|---|---|
| Principles | 3 credit hours |
| Required Skills | 15 credit hours |
| Advanced Reporting Topic | 3 credit hours |
| Professional Practice | 3 credit hours |
| Conceptual courses | 6 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR Electives | 9 credit hours |

The Broadcast Journalism sequence requires the Principles of Journalism and Writing for Mass Communications course, an Introductory Reporting and Writing course with a lab, and an Intermediate Reporting and Production course. The major offers three capstones – advanced reporting courses for broadcast/online journalism, broadcast and online production, and a third

capstone in digital journalism. Electives include courses in advanced reporting, professional practice directed electives, and conceptual directed electives. A concentration in Sports Media is available with topics such as sports journalism, live television sports production, gender, sexuality and sports media, and more.

## Journalism

| | |
|---|---|
| Principles | 3 credit hours |
| Required Skills | 15 credit hours |
| Advanced Reporting Topic | 3 credit hours |
| Professional Practice | 3 credit hours |
| Conceptual courses | 6 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR electives | 9 credit hours |

The Journalism sequence requires the Principles of Journalism course; two introductory reporting and writing courses, one of which is a lab; an intermediate reporting and production class; and three capstone courses covering multi-platform reporting, editing and design for multimedia and use of digital media. Electives required in the sequence include advanced reporting and professional practice in either editing, reporting or management, with an additional 15 credit hours from within the program, with two concept or lecture courses and any three other classes. The courses reflect current trends in the profession. The capstones require students to use their skills to master the numerous story formats demanded by news organizations.

## Mass Communications

| | |
|---|---|
| Principles courses | 9 credit hours |
| Conceptual courses | 9 credit hours |
| Required Skills | 3-6 credit hours |
| Required Capstone | 3 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR electives | 12 credit hours |

Students in the Mass Communications sequence must take courses that achieve the range of values and competencies. As a conceptual major, students are required to take fewer skills courses and more theoretical/conceptual courses that include History and Philosophy of the Mass Media, Theories of Mass Communication, Freedom, Responsibility and Ethics of the Mass Media, Mass Media Criticism and Public Opinion and Persuasion. Students are required to take 12 elective credits of their choice; at least 3 hours and no more than 6 hours of skills courses.

## Public Relations

| | |
|---|---|
| Required Skills | 9 credit hours |
| Principles + Research | 9 credit hours |
| Additional Writing courses | 6 credit hours |
| Work Experience course | 3 credit hours |
| JOUR Conceptual course | 3 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR electives | 9 credit hours |

The Public Relations sequence provides a solid foundation of principles and writing/editing, but also features flexibility with a variety of course options that allows students to somewhat "customize" their program, according to students who were interviewed. "I felt like I was in charge of my education," one student said. Sports, social media, analytics, and event planning were among the electives available to fill out the PR major. The sequence has a PRSSA chapter and a team for the national Bateman competition.

**<u>Visual Communications</u>**

| | |
|---|---|
| Required Skills | 24 credit hours |
| Vis Comm Topics elective | 3 credit hours |
| JOUR Conceptual course | 3 credit hours |
| Additional JOUR electives | 9 credit hours |

Visual Communications sequence awaits university approval of its SJMC faculty-approved new curriculum for full implementation in Fall 2025. The new core specifies required courses in graphics, video, photography, immersive media, UI/UX and Advanced Graphics. In lieu of the currently required cognate or minor, VisCom students will be able to select concentrations in storytelling, sports, camera, interactive, graphics, advertising and experiential learning. The goal is to stay nimble, to fill technology gaps with electives and to allow students to specialize.bAlthough the overall curricular focus is solid and current (the sequence head reports that faculty "pivot constantly" to address the fast pace of change in visual media), both faculty and students would like course content and materials to be more up to date. Students suggested a mid-level sophomore- or junior-level portfolio "check-in" ahead of their intense senior-level capstone course would help them improve portfolio pieces and personal identities as they work through the program and to begin thinking in a more timely way about what is needed to be competitive in the job market. They also would like more opportunities to earn drone and software certifications.

**(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 offers grants for faculty to participate in professional seminars and workshops. An annual School-sponsored trip to Austin, TX's South By Southwest festival helps faculty stay up to date with technological and marketing innovations. Professionals review student capstone portfolios as part of the School's assessment of the curriculum. Hearst Foundation funds support visits by leading professionals to engage with faculty and students. Faculty are active with professional organizations.

**(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 on online, should not exceed 20-1.**

Required course enrollments ranged from 12 to 225 students in Spring 2024. Typically, classes with 80 students or more receive graduate student teaching assistance.

Of 174 sections listed as skills courses, six sections exceeded the 20-1 ratio: Media Analysis (24 and 27), The Carolina Agency (24), Advanced Reporting (23) Capstone 1 Advanced Reporting Broadcasting (23), Capstone 2 Advanced Reporting Broadcasting (23), and Capstone 3 Digital Journalism (23). Higher enrollments were needed due to lack of faculty to teach additional sections and in order to move students toward timely graduation.

**(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).**

**When students take courses for internship credit at appropriate professional organizations, the unit must show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.**

**Students may take up to nine semester credits (or their equivalent) at professional media outlets owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.**

SJMC strongly encourages but does not require students to complete internships. An academic adviser or program supervisor must approve a student's preparation before they are allowed to register for an internship. School rules, expectations, and monitoring policies ensure appropriate learning experiences. Internship supervisors complete a final evaluation of interns' workplace skills and to what extent interns demonstrate mastery of the Schools six academic goals. The School allows up to three internship credits counted toward a bachelor's degree.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(g) At least half of the required credit hours are in either professional skills courses or integrate theory and skills appropriate to professional communication careers.**

The professional Master's of Mass Communication (MMC) program consists of 36 credit hours, 15 of which are required courses. These courses include elements of theory but are identified by the graduate council as primarily skills classes. Additional classes are determined based on the area of concentration students select. All MMC students also complete a three-credit hour practicum to complete the program. There are two possible concentrations within the MMC: Strategic Communication Management and Multimedia Journalism.

**Strategic Communication Management Concentration required courses:**
· JOUR 701: Research Methods in Mass Communication

- JOUR 705: Strategic Communications Principles
- JOUR 706: Media Law
- JOUR 762: Issues in Mass Communication Management
- JOUR 777: Practicum in Mass Communications Management

Examples of electives for this concentration (five are required) include:

- JOUR 516: Advanced Creative
- JOUR 517: Integrated Campaigns
- JOUR 521: Interactive Communication Strategies
- JOUR 531: Public Relations Campaigns
- JOUR 533: Public Relations Management
- JOUR 709: Fundamentals of Data and Digital Communications
- JOUR 710: Organizational Communication
- JOUR 715: Strategic Communications Strategies
- JOUR 725: Strategic Communications Campaigns
- MGMT 718: Management of Human Resources
- MKTG 701: Marketing Management
- MKTG 705: Marketing Communications

**Multimedia Journalism Concentration required courses:**

- JOUR 701: Research Methods in Mass Communication
- JOUR 706: Media Law
- JOUR 750: Foundations of Multimedia Journalism
- JOUR 762: Issues in Mass Communication Management
- JOUR 777: Practicum in Mass Communications Management

Examples of additional skills Courses in Multimedia Journalism:

- JOUR 580: Advanced Reporting Topics
- JOUR 586: Capstone I – Advanced Reporting – Broadcast and Online Journalism
- JOUR 587: Capstone I – Advanced Reporting – Multimedia Journalism
- JOUR 588: Capstone II – Advanced Broadcast and Online Journalism Production
- JOUR 589: Capstone II – Advanced Multimedia Journalism Production
- JOUR 590: Capstone III – Digital Journalism
- JOUR 777: Practicum in Mass Communications Management

**(h) Instruction and curricular requirements for professional graduate students are more advanced and rigorous than for undergraduate students, including courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students.**

While at the undergraduate level the emphasis is on preparing students for entry-level positions, the MMC program is focused on the management aspects of media industries. Graduate students reported challenging and rigorous courses. They noted that courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students included additional requirements for the graduate students, which can include doctoral as well as master's students. Syllabi confirm that faculty distinguish graduate student expectations from undergraduate, such as requiring additional certifications in software

tools, taking leadership positions in team projects, completing a special project related to the class, developing a white paper, or writing and submitting a book review to an academic journal.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

The SJMC offers students a range of majors a solid curriculum to follow their interests in preparing for careers in journalism, media and mass communication.

Overall, with a few exceptions, syllabi include clear learning objectives and are well structured. Sections of the same course sometimes have different objectives. References to issues of diversity, ethics and international/global perspectives are spotty in learning objectives. Although the 2017 site team reported similar observations about diversity, assessment maps indicate improvement. The School has implemented a special topics course in diversity, and a new requirement that all SJMC students take a diversity-related course becomes effective in 2024. Although the Carolina Core requires courses in global citizenship and multicultural understanding, as well as one course focused on ethics, the SJMC curriculum does not specify how all students learn how to address ethical issues and international/global perspectives as they prepare for careers in media and communication. SJMC's required Law and Ethics course focuses almost entirely on law. Although the School has a strong study abroad program, not all students are able to participate, and global perspectives are rarely stated in learning objectives.

(Professional Master's)

The growing MMC program has a defined curriculum for each of the two concentrations, a Graduate Council that reviews applications, an admissions process that allows students to start in the fall, spring or summer, and offerings both on campus and online that allow students to progress and successfully complete master's degrees at their own pace.

However, like other aspects of the School, the MMC program is experiencing the impact of rapid turnover in leadership positions. There have been at least four Interim Associate Directors of Graduate Studies during the review cycle (perhaps five – faculty have lost track), with the current person in place just since August.

Students currently enrolled in the program, however, were extremely enthusiastic about their experiences and the depth and rigor of their learning. Students felt valued and challenged.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program) compliance/ noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

*The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another.*

**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 an active program for assessing student learning outcomes. It is led by a three-member committee that collects, analyzes and reports data in two-year cycles. Since the last self-study, the committee has revised the plan to better assess what students are learning. Sequence heads review the results with faculty members and use the data to determine changes to the curriculum.

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

The assessment plan is on the website, but it is difficult to find.

**(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 has six learning outcomes for students. They were established in 2008 to incorporate ACEJMC's Core Value and Competencies as well as the Carolinian Creed, the university's student honor code.

*Learning Outcome 1 – Research and Writing*
*Demonstrate the ability to conduct research, gather information, write clearly and correctly and present relevant news or persuasive information at a professional level.*

*Learning Outcome 2 – Critical Thinking*
*Think critically, creatively, and independently; evaluate his or her own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness.*

*Learning Outcome 3 – Cultural Competency*
*Understand the history of journalism and mass communications, the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications, and the role of journalism and mass communications in society.*

*Learning Outcome 4 – Law and Ethics*
*Understand the ethical concepts, legal implications, considerations and practices that guide the mass media professions.*

*Learning Outcome 5 – Technology*
*Demonstrate the ability to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the production, editing and presentation of visual, aural, textual or other media content.*

*Learning Outcome 6 – Numeracy*
*Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions.*

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

The program uses five direct measures and five indirect measures to assess student learning:

Direct Measures

Knowledge Test #1: Students in the Mass Media & Society course take a test during the first week of the semester and again during the last week examining their knowledge about journalism and mass communication history, the role of journalism and diversity in the media.

Knowledge Test #2: Students in the introductory writing course, Writing for Mass Communications, completed a diagnostic exam on sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and word usage during the first week of the semester and the last week. This measure was replaced with a new assessment where students are prompted to write an Inverted Pyramid-style story. Instructors give the test in the first week of the class then again during mid-term.

Knowledge Test #3: Students in the Law & Ethics in Mass Communications course take a test during the first week of the course and again during the last week examining their knowledge about legal and ethical principles.

Internship Evaluations: Internship supervisors are asked to evaluate the ability of students to demonstrate core values and competencies in the workplace. Each learning outcome is measured separately.

Capstone Project / Portfolio Evaluations: Using a shared rubric, industry professionals evaluate content generated in capstone courses, examining final projects and/or professional portfolios for professional standards in their respective fields. During the 2022/2023 academic year, an additional learning outcome was added to the rubric to assess the student's ability to integrate gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in relation to mass communications.

Indirect Measures

Graduating Senior Surveys: graduating seniors complete a survey about a range of topics, including their impressions about coursework, faculty knowledge in key subject areas, course relevancy, the integration of diversity and diverse cultures, and their preparation/readiness for

entry-level careers in their field.

Course Evaluations: Students have the opportunity to evaluate every course in which they are enrolled. Students are asked to provide feedback on the quality of instruction and course content.

Industry Professionals Feedback: Faculty solicit feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum from alumni, industry leaders, and awards show judges and former students.

Evaluation of Course Learning Objectives: The school's curriculum committee oversees and tracks how learning outcomes are incorporated in courses and ensures that learning outcomes are required in all syllabi.

Retention and Graduation Rates: The school collects and reports student retention and graduation data annually. The information is reported in their annual report on the website.

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

Professionals assess the performance of students during internships and their ability to demonstrate core values and competencies. Professionals use a shared rubric to evaluate student work in capstone projects and portfolios.

**(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 School uses assessment data to improve the curriculum and instruction, although not at a level expected from a comprehensive assessment program. Among the reported changes made were:

- Concerned about low scores by Public Relations students regarding legal and ethical concepts, the faculty embedded ethical principles in courses across the curriculum. The faculty also created a new elective course, Ethics in Public Relations and Public Policy.
- Concerned that student learning was unequal due to variations in reading materials, three faculty members co-authored a new, online textbook designed specifically to assist instructors in JOUR 291 to include more data analytics concepts.
- Concerned about student writing that is below expectation on capstone projects and based in part on this data, faculty are providing more instruction and reducing the number of daily stories students are expected to complete so they pay closer attention to detail, particularly Associated Press news style and editing for clarity.
- To keep students up to date on professional expectations for work in their field, faculty in the Visual Communication sequence have incorporated more branding/strategy concepts in three courses. To improve knowledge about diversity, faculty now expose students in the Multimedia for Visual Communications course to a broader array of work from a more diverse group of photographers and filmmakers.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**The unit's professional master's program has a written assessment plan, posted to its website; collects and reports data from its assessment activities; and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

The School has a written assessment plan for the MMC program with five learning outcomes: professional competency in a specialized area of integrated communications or journalism; demonstrated effective writing skills; thorough understanding of research; thorough understanding of management; and thorough understanding of mass media law.

Learning is measured by a four-hour comprehensive exam that students must complete successfully. Students are asked to respond to broad comprehensive questions in four core areas. Students are graded on a "clear pass," "remediation required" or "fail" scale.

Students must also arrange and complete a three-credit-hour practicum course experience where they work at least 300 hours in a professional setting. Each student must designate a supervisor within the organization who will serve as a mentor and evaluator. The supervisor completes evaluation of their professional competency. Each student is required to produce a final practicum project report answering specific questions about the practicum experience.

The School reports the assessment data from the comprehensive exam and practicum. However, there was no evidence in the self-study of the data being used to improve the curriculum and instruction.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)
The School has an assessment program that uses multiple direct and indirect measures. The program is comprehensive and generates useful data. However, while the data are used to improve curriculum and instruction, closing the loop is not done at the level expected of a comprehensive program.

(Professional Master's)
The School has an assessment program for the MMC program. As with the undergraduate program, it generates useful data. However, there is minor evidence it is used to improve the curriculum and instruction.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program) compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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 SJMC Diversity Plan can be found here:
https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/about/diversity_and_inclusiveness.php

The plan has three overarching goals:

1. Diverse: Improving the relative racial/ethnic and gender representation of students, faculty and staff.
2. Equitable: Ensure equitable access for all SJMC students, staff and faculty across key measures of success.
3. Inclusive: Create, promote, support and assess a campus culture/climate that embodies the Carolinian Creed and makes everyone feel that they are affirmed and valued.

Objectives and key performance indicators emerge from the goals and target specific actions and indicators, with clear timelines. The plan was adopted in 2022, is integrated with the strategic diversity plans of both the College and the university, and replaces previous components of the university's strategic plan.

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

The plan is on the website in the "About the School" section.

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

The SJMC's course mapping indicates that nearly all skills and topical classes contain content that helps students gain awareness of issues surrounding communication across cultures. Just under a fourth of the courses go beyond awareness to application of principles in culturally proficient communications. Selected courses focus on global issues. SJMC is planning a School-wide required course on diversity in mass communication, but already offers specialized courses on topics such as Gender, Sexuality, and Sports Media. A course in Minorities, Women, and

Media has been offered to students across the university, and was approved in 2022-2023 as one of the foundational courses for the Mass Communications major. Courses are audited to determine the amount and nature of content in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, syllabi contain statements aimed at underscoring the School's commitment to open discussion, and the inclusion of diverse identities and viewpoints. One such statement is the Carolinian Creed:

> *"The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Choosing to join the community obligates each member to the Carolinian Creed. Academic dialogue and civil discourse are the cornerstone of the educational system and crucial to individual growth. Students are encouraged to practice personal and academic integrity, respect the rights and dignity of all persons, respect the rights and property of others, discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions, and demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development."*

The following statement is also included:

> *"This course fosters understanding of issues and perspectives in the context of domestic and global concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and gender identity, and mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society. The course also fosters a climate that is free of harassment and all forms of discrimination, accommodates physical ability needs, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity. Students with special accommodation needs should register with the Student Disabilities Resource Center. Students should also notify the professor of technology accessibility needs."*

Students have the opportunity to advance their cultural proficiency skill sets through co-curricular and study abroad activities. Professionally oriented groups such as the School's PRSSA Bateman Team and the student chapters of organizations such as the National Association of Black Journalists advance diversity through their projects. Over the past six years, SJMC students have embarked on study abroad experiences in such places as Barcelona, Havana and Malawi.

**(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 College helped to establish the university's Teaching Toward Inclusive Excellence Program, within the USC Center for Teaching Excellence. Within the program, workshops and other

sessions focus on building awareness of the importance of cultural competence, diversity, equity and inclusion, and civil discourse among other areas. The sessions are regularly attended by SJMC faculty, staff and students, and at times led by them. Faculty, staff and graduate students in the School have won grants to support their work in advancing inclusive excellence pedagogy. In 2018, the Dean of the College appointed an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and in 2021, a diversity cluster hire search added three new Black assistant professors.

**(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.**

Enrollment is managed centrally at USC, but the College and the School undertake efforts to reach out to prospective underrepresented students who may have interests in studying journalism and mass communication. In 2022, the College launched the Careers in Information and Communications Roadshow, reaching out to local communities to attract and recruit underrepresented high school students. The School continues to work with state student press associations and high school advisers. The College has its own undergraduate student recruiter who works with both schools and the university's admissions office to augment efforts to increase enrollment. Since 2017, underrepresented student enrollment has increased from 10 percent of the student population to 15 percent. The overall university enrollment is at 19 percent underrepresented students. The School's increase, while noteworthy, is smaller than they had hoped, as it worked its way through a post-pandemic decline in enrollment.

A variety of support services are utilized to enhance retention from matriculation through graduation. Those include scholarships and other financial aid support, career services, professional networking, portfolio review, and other career services, grants to facilitate study abroad and study away, job fairs, and career development workshops.

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

The unit has taken steps to create and enhance a supportive culture, in line with Goal 3 of the SJMC Plan for Diversity–Inclusiveness. The process starts with new faculty orientation and mentoring. New faculty and graduate students are encouraged to participate in the Teaching Toward Inclusive Excellence Certificate program. Courses, training and events for all faculty, staff, and students have been devoted to promoting belonging and elements that contribute to it, such as civil discourse, inclusion and justice. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Research Symposium has been held since 2018, presenting faculty and student research on DEI-related topics. The name was changed to the Inclusive Excellence Research Symposium in 2023. A biennial Media & Civil Rights History Symposium brings SJMC students together with students from a variety of HBCU's to share research and hear from speakers on the topic.

The College regularly surveys the faculty, staff and student community on issues related to the

climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The latest climate survey, conducted in Fall 2022, gave the College high marks for support of a culture of diversity and inclusiveness. A survey of graduating seniors that year revealed that participants overwhelmingly felt that the program fostered an understanding of diversity, valued diversity and inclusion in all its forms, and had a climate free of harassment and discrimination. Faculty surveyed agreed (86%) that the unit is "supportive of fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness."

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

**Academic year: 2022 – 2023 Full-time faculty**

| Group | Female | % of total faculty | Male | % of total faculty |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black/African American | 4 | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| White | 13 | 29 | 17 | 38 |
| American Indian/Alaskan native | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino (any race) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Two or more races | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other race | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| International (any race) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| Group | Female | % of total faculty | Male | % of total faculty |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black/African American | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| White | 4 | 33 | 7 | 58 |
| 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 students (any race) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Full-time Faculty Recruitment**
Searches for full-time faculty members conducted by the unit within the past three years.

| Academic Years | 2020 – 2021 | 2021 – 2022 | 2022 - 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Openings | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Total applicants in hiring pool | 141 | 10 | 40 |
| Females in hiring pool | 80 | 4 | 11 |
| Female finalists considered | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Offers made to females | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Offers accepted by females | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Minorities in hiring pool | 84 | 2 | 14 |
| Minority finalists considered | 3 | 1 | 2 |

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**Provide a brief discussion of Indicators (a) through (d) as they apply to the professional master's program.**

The professional master's program, the admission policies of which the unit controls, has had success in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups. Overall, 50 percent of the SJMC graduate student population is underrepresented, and 33 percent is Black. That compares with a state population of 34 percent underrepresented and 25 percent Black. Sixty-six percent of the graduate student enrollment is female. Recruitment is a feature of the program, with events such as the Inclusive Excellence Graduate Program Open House attracting students from HBCUs.

The unit attributes the growth in diversity-related numbers to several factors. USC and HBCU Claflin University participate in a 4+1 Dual Degree Pathway program that has amounted to an opportunity for the SJMC. Students in the program earn a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from Claflin, and one year towards a Master of Mass Communication degree in the SJMC – an undergraduate and graduate degree in five years. Other programs, like the university's Rising Star Fellowship, have helped students of diverse backgrounds through the program. In addition, faculty mentoring, support programs both in the School and the university, and opportunities to network with scholars and professionals help with retention of graduate students.

Courses across the curriculum bring content related to diversity, equity and inclusion to graduate students in the School. Specialized courses such as Public Relations Management and Crisis Communications contain content that discuss diversity in the field of public relations. Material related to diverse story ideas and sources is shared in the graduate course Foundations of Multimedia Journalism. Courses in Health Communications touch on issues such as health disparities and institutional responses. Other courses, such as Teaching Media, International

Mass Communications, and Issues in Mass Communication Management, bring discussions of diversity into classrooms in an effort to strengthen cultural proficiency among students.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

The work on behalf of newly badged inclusive excellence certificate is getting through to students, who report that there are discussions of issues around diversity and inclusion in many classes. Some of those conversations seemed to reveal some elementary understandings, such as how to describe a person of color in a news story, as opposed to issues such as how to understand the perspectives of such groups. But there are active conversations in this area, as well as evidence of advanced discussions in upper-level courses. Faculty say students are filling up the more advanced courses and are thirsty for the information. Faculty are participating in opportunities to bolster their cultural competence. Outside of all of this, and not mentioned in the self-study, is the political environment in the state of South Carolina, and the prospect of new laws designed to strip universities of all activities related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Faculty and administrators are already busy thinking of how the measures to come will affect their work to make the makeup of faculty, staff and students reflective of the actual population of the state.

(Professional Master's)

The professional master's program utilizes opportunities to grow enrollment of underrepresented groups, and the numbers show that they are having success. Some of those numbers are outpacing the population of the area the unit serves. Outreach to HBCUs for potential graduate students, through open houses and other direct action, is helping to diversify that student body. Programs such as the 4+1 Dual Degree Pathway Program, said to be the first of any such program on the USC campus, also make a difference.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program) compliance/ noncompliance:**

**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 faculty oversee and implement the undergraduate and graduate curricula, research/creative activity and service: 7 assistant professors, 11 tenured associate professors, 9 tenured full professors (four are administrators), 18 non-tenure track instructors or senior instructors, for a total of 45 full-time faculty. Nine part-time faculty teach at least one course in Spring 2024. Full-time faculty taught more than 80 percent of core and required courses in 2021-23.

**(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.**

All research faculty, who make up 56 percent of the faculty, hold a Ph.D., publish in top journalism and communication venues, and are active in professional organizations. Professional tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty make up 43 percent of the School's faculty and are active in local, national and international venues.

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

Per long-time policies, SJMC faculty may obtain tenure via either a traditional academic track or a professional track. Faculty express concern about a trend to hire professionally experienced faculty into non-tenure-track lines. Although instructor-line faculty are valued and respected, faculty want to strengthen the professional tenure-line track and consider it essential to fulfilling the School's professional values.

Guidelines for pre- and post-tenure review and tenure and promotion were revised and approved in 2019. Policies are available online. All faculty submit a one-page summary of their previous year's teaching, service and research/creative activity for review by the director. The director rates their reports and student evaluations, shares his report with each faculty member, and shares reports with the dean as one basis for merit raises if the budget allows.

The SJMC offers funds for faculty development grants to participate in workshops and seminars or purchase equipment. New tenure-track faculty receive funding to support research and professional development. Internal college grants support faculty projects integrating work across both the SJMC and the iSchool.

**(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.**

The report of faculty scholarship, research, creative and professional activities documents a high-level of productivity across all faculty ranks and classifications. Faculty express pride that the level of productivity has increased since the last accreditation review.

| Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities | Individuals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Full Professors (9) | Associate Professors (11) | Assistant Professors (7) | Other Faculty** (16) | Totals (41) |
| Awards and Honors | 16 | 67 | 14 | 64 | 161 |
| Grants Received Internal | 12 | 40 | 5 | 6 | 63 |
| Grants Received External | 9 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 31 |
| Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Books Edited | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Book Chapters | 32 | 15 | 7 | 2 | 56 |
| Monographs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Articles in Refereed Journals | 78 | 160 | 27 | 2 | 267 |
| Refereed Conference Papers | 73 | 180 | 51 | 4 | 308 |
| Invited Academic Papers | 20 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 30 |
| Encyclopedia Entries | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Book Reviews | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Articles in Non- refereed Publications | 24 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 43 |
| Juried Creative Works | 0 | 49 | 1 | 16 | 66 |
| Non-juried Creative Works | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 9 |
| Other (please specify) | 4 | 31 | 11 | 201 | 247 |

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

University faculty, administrators and staff express high respect for the long-tradition of SJMC's high quality scholarship, creative/professional work, teaching and service contributions.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(f) Faculty members teaching in the graduate program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at that university.**

Faculty members teaching in the graduate program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at USC. This includes 21 tenured and tenure-leading faculty members and an additional three instructors who have terminal degrees, extensive experience in their professions, and have been approved for Graduate Faculty Status by the Graduate School of the University of South Carolina. In the three years prior to this review, graduate faculty taught 80 percent of the master's classes.

**(g) Graduate faculty oversee the curricula and course quality for professional master's courses.**

The graduate faculty and in particular the Graduate Council oversee the curricula and course quality.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

SJMC faculty reflect strong professional, creative and research preparation and experience, providing undergraduates high-quality teaching and mentoring. Students across the majors praise and value faculty members' dedication to hands-on learning of skills and one-on-one mentoring toward mastery of the School's learning objectives.

Faculty express concern that the tenure-line professional track lacks support at high levels of university administration. They consider the track to be essential for maintaining attention to

professional practice and outreach by faculty who can be given time for grants and creative/professional work.

Faculty also express concern about the need for more faculty, especially at senior tenure-track levels, to fairly distribute teaching and service responsibilities and for more resources to meet growing demand for the School's majors and minors. Retirements and attrition reduced faculty without the immediate replacement of same-rank lines.

Overall, SJMC faculty are to be lauded for their dedication to continuing the School's mission and reputation for excellence during a time of multiple leadership shifts and momentous change in journalism and media. The faculty are a strength of the School.

(Professional Master's)

The 24 faculty members who constitute the graduate faculty of the School oversee the curriculum and do the majority of the teaching in the master's program.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program) compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program) compliance/ noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(a) The unit and institution ensure that students are aware of graduation requirements.**

In order to graduate, students must meet the requirements of the university's Academic Bulletin. The bulletin is fully online. QR codes to important sections of the bulletin are given to students at orientation. Advisers use DegreeWorks, the university's online degree audit system, to work with students in monitoring progress toward degree requirements.

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

Advising at the university is centralized. Advisers are hired through the University Advising Center and assigned to a home college. The College has six advisers and each carries a caseload of about 275 students. They are supervised by the Undergraduate Services Manager, who also advises a smaller number of students.

Advisers work with students for all four class years. Previously, students were assigned an adviser for their first two years and then handed off to a new adviser for their remaining years. Incoming first-year and transfer students are assigned an adviser after completing the new student orientation.

Students are required to meet with an adviser once a semester; advisers are available for additional meetings as needed. Advisers are available in person and online. First-year students are required to meet in person, provided their health permits.

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

The School sends "SJMC News" to students weekly via email. It contains information about School and university events, internship and career opportunities, and reminders about graduation deadlines.

The building has monitors with information about campus events and graduation deadlines. Faculty also remind students in classes or send announcements about events that may be of interest.

**(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.**

<u>Student Media</u>

A variety of student media – known collectively as the Garnet Media Group – provide students the opportunity to get experience in news, advertising sales, marketing and graphic design. The Garnet Media Group's student-run media organizations include:

- *The Daily Gamecock*, the university's student newspaper, publishes digitally Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters. The staff also produces three news magazines during the semesters.
- *Garnet & Black*, the student magazine, is published in print once a semester and online during the semester.
- Student Gamecock Television, the student-run television station, provides news, sports, entertainment, short films, and sketch comedy. Content is posted on the station's website and two YouTube channels.
- WUSC-FM, the student-run radio station, broadcasts 24 hours a day at 90.5 FM and is streamed online.

<u>School-Sponsored Media</u>

The Carolina Agency is a student-run firm that provides strategic communication service for clients both paid and pro bono. The agency is taught as a class and organized into three departments: accounts, research/insights and creative. Students may also earn course credit by serving as agency directors or department heads in the companion course, Carolina Agency Management Training.

*InterCom* is the school's twice-yearly alumni magazine, produced by students in the Publication Writing and Design course. The course involves reporting, designing and preparing a magazine for publication.

CreateAthon@USC is an annual 24-hour-marathon that provides pro bono advertising, marketing and communications solutions to nonprofit organizations in the North America and Europe. Launched in 2002, the program has served more than 1,300 nonprofit organizations with marketing projects valued at more than $16.7 million.

<u>Student-Run Organizations</u>

The School has several student-run chapters of professional organizations. They include the Public Relations Society of America, and the National Association of Black Journalists.

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

The School's retention and graduation rates have remained steady and in some cases outstanding. The freshman-sophomore cohort retention rate was 78.6 percent in 2013 and 78.37 percent in 2021. The four-year graduation rate was 71.05 in 2013 and 71.18 percent in 2018. The School is one of the top two at the university for retention rate, and it boasts the highest four-year graduation rate of any at the university.

**Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

**(f) The unit has appropriate admissions and retention policies for the professional master's program.**

The retention rate for the face-to-face master's program was 93 percent in 2017 and 95 percent in 2022. The retention rate for the online master's degree (started in 2020) was 100 percent in 2020 and 75 percent in 2022.

The two-year graduation rate for the face-to-face master's program was 87 percent in 2017 and 95 percent in 2022. The two-year graduation rate for the online master's program (started in 2020) was 50 percent in 2020 and 65 percent in 2022.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

Student services is a strength of the School. Students report academic advising is outstanding and say they received helpful guidance in working toward graduation. The school provides a wide array of first-rate extra-curricular media and opportunities. The retention and graduation rates at all levels are excellent.

(Professional Master's)

Graduate students report academic advising is outstanding. The retention and graduation rates are excellent.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

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

The School in 2015 moved into a renovated three-story, 54,000-square-foot building in the heart of the campus after spending almost a half century in the inadequate Carolina Coliseum, the basketball stadium. The new building has two research facilities, a social media insights lab housed in the SJMC and a biometrics and user experience lab in the iSchool.

The building, described as "spectacular" by the previous team, remains appropriate for teaching in the School, with ample desktop computers, work stations and production areas for students, and two broadcast studios for a daily student newscast. Faculty offices are sprinkled on all three floors, often tucked into alcoves.

A decade after the renovation, the building is showing some signs of wear.

**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 budget is $7.2 million for the 2022-23 academic year, a 7.5 percent rise from the previous year and 12.6 percent higher than 2020-21. Salaries for full-time faculty account for 53 percent of the budget. Expenditures for part time teaching fell 43 percent since 2020-21.

The university uses a revenue-centered budget process, which gives the College tuition, appropriations and other funding. In return, the College is charged for infrastructure, libraries, student services, human resources and other items. In response, the School has crafted programs to offer larger, elective courses that have wider appeal to majors outside the unit. The campus-wide curriculum includes two courses from the College, both in the iSchool.

Faculty committees play a role in several areas of budget planning and expenditures.

**(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 current SJMC budget is 17 percent of total expenditures for the College, which ranked eighth among 12 other units on the campus. In the 2016-17 visit, the College ranked ninth.

The School said resources are stretched but adequate. Public money is supplemented by fundraising that supports faculty and student travel, scholarships, supplies, faculty development and technology. A major pressing issue arose during the visit, when a day of steady rain led to leaks in the ceiling of a third-floor classroom. The Director said similar breaches had occurred at least four times since his mid-2023 arrival.

Most fundraising for the School is handled by the College development office, which has collected $4.8 million since fiscal year 2016. Most went to the new SJMC building, academic scholarships, faculty and student support programs.

A fundraising drive led to the naming of more than three dozen offices, classrooms and suites, such as the Time Warner Cable TV Lab and the *Orangeburg Times & Democrat* master's suite. Metal plaques on the wall identify the donor. The remaining spaces can be named for $1.55 million.

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

The self-study noted a "recurring need" to repair and replace aging equipment, but no mention is made of specific critical deficiencies. The Director said more camera equipment is required for Visual Communications students and gear will be needed for students in the expanding sports media course. The annual $80,000 cost of software from Adobe for student use is set to decline to be more in-line with student use.

After moving to the new building, the School created the Social Media Insights Lab to monitor and learn what drives social media conversations. The lab's clients include public relations agency Chernoff Newman, Nephron Pharmaceuticals, USC Central Communications and USC Athletics. The lab is a small profit center for the College. It's also used by graduate students for research.

Public relations and advertising students have access to the College's Biometrics and User Experience Lab research facility, which lets faculty, students, partners and industry professionals examine psychophysiological responses to content and other user experiences. The lab is in the iSchool building, a seven-minute walk away.

Student groups, including the Ad Team, has used the lab to prepare for the National Student Advertising Competition. Graduate students use the lab to conduct their dissertation research and independent study projects. Faculty inside the School and beyond the College use the labs for cross-disciplinary team research projects.

**(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 School has 10 classrooms of various sizes, five computer labs that each seat from 20 to 24 students and an auditorium for 150. Four classrooms accommodate 20 to 25 students, three have seats for 25 to 40 and three classrooms have space for 40 to 50.

The Advertising, Public Relations, Journalism and Visual Communications sequences each have

specialized areas, such as a newsroom, photo studio, advertising/public relations lab and space for the student-run the Carolina Agency.

Senior Broadcast/online and Multimedia Journalism students in capstone courses use a converged newsroom adjacent to the control room and studio. Each of the 40 workspaces has a computer equipped with software typical in a professional newsroom. The newsroom has a camera that can be operated from the control room.

Advertising or Public Relations students take courses in regular classrooms and labs. They share designated space that can be divided with a movable wall. The Bateman and advertising competition teams work in this space.

Visual Communications classes are taught in the computer labs. The Visual Communications sequence has a dedicated photography studio.

All gear is maintained and checked out from an equipment room. Inventory includes:
- 50 Panasonic electronic news-gathering video cameras
- 50 Canon cameras in mix of SLRs and mirrorless cameras
- 20 Canon 70 – 200mm zoom lenses
- Three location lighting kits
- Eight drones for aerial photography
- Zoom, wide angle and macro camera lenses
- A LiveU remote video transmitter for field broadcasts
- Field audio recording equipment

Each full-time faculty member has an office with cable connections, flat-screen TVs and a desktop computer linked to a networked printer with email and internet access. Adjunct instructors share second-floor offices while doctoral and master's students have workspace on the third floor.

The hiring this year of as many as seven new faculty, both instructors and tenure-track, will add to the space constraints in a building that, while renovated within the last decade, is still decades old.

Campus media - *The Daily Gamecock* newspaper, Garnet & Black magazine, Student Gamecock Television, and WUSC-FM radio - are independent and in the Office of Student Media. Faculty members and staff serve in advisory roles to each of the four organizations.


**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

The move to the new building almost a decade ago gave the School a major boost, providing new equipment and more attractive space. Over time, features such as the two high-tech labs have been added to keep the program on the cutting edge of the industries.

(Professional Master's)
Faculty and administrative staff are adequate to support the MMC program. In addition to having access to classrooms and technology, graduate students have offices, study and research areas and seminar rooms.

The Social Media Insights Lab, in the SJMC, and the Biometrics and User Experience Lab, in the iSchool, are used extensively by graduate students and faculty. The social media lab has a manager and a coordinator; the biometric facility is staffed by a doctoral student and operated and supervised by a faculty member who receives course release time.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

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

The School remains in contact with alumni, professionals and professional organizations, supports outreach to high School students through the scholastic program housed in the School and hosts lectures and conferences that attract audiences and attendees from across the state. Covid-19 left a significant gap in programming that is only now starting to resume.

**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.**

Distinguished alumni visit campus, with funding provided by the Hearst Fund and the Bucheit Lecture Series, to engage with students and faculty. Recent speakers included former White House photographer Pete Souza and Isabelle Khurshudyan, Ukraine bureau chief for *The Washington Post*. During the site visit, the School was promoting a Feb. 28 talk by iconic *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward, now 80.

An annual ceremony for the Distinguished Alumni Award and Outstanding Young Alumni Award offers a venue for professionals to visit campus. In fall 2022, honorees were Win McNamee ('85) of Getty Images and Josh Dawsey ('12) of *The Washington Post,* both part of teams that won Pulitzer Prizes for coverage of the 2021 storming of the U.S. Capitol.

A majority of the board of the American Advertising Federation of the Midlands are SJMC alumni. Visual Communications alumni critique capstone courses and advise students on getting a job. In addition, alumni critique portfolios and demo reels.

The College has a Dean's Leadership Council with more than two dozen professionals representing journalism and mass communications and other industries.

Alumni services are at the College level. A coordinator works for both SJMC and the iSchool and organizes the Alumni Council with graduates from both schools. The group met regularly from 2005 to 2019, until Covid-19 forced suspension of the meetings. Virtual meetings were held in fall 2022 and spring 2023.

The College publishes an alumni magazine, InterCom, with the goal of appearing twice a year in fall and spring. Since spring-summer 2020, *InterCom* has appeared just five times. It is written and produced by upper-level SJMC students in Publication Writing and Design.

**(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 issues of public consequence and concern.**

The School has three ongoing lecture series:

- The Buchheit Family Lecture, created in 2000, supports an annual speaker - a leader in professional and mass communications - to share ideas and experiences with students, faculty and the public. Recent speakers include a *New York Times* reporter, a Getty Images photographer and a former White House official photographer.

- A gift from alumnus Kenneth Baldwin, a former executive at Landmark Communications, supports initiatives such as the Baldwin Business and Financial lecture series. Speakers in 2018 and 2019 included a Wall Street Journal reporter and Bloomberg News manager. The lectures haven't been held in more than five years.

- The SJMC's Research Roundtable is a monthly series sponsored by the graduate program that focuses on research and professional scholarship. Speakers are from Boston University, Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication in Georgia and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of and Mass Communications.

Faculty members join organizations such as the South Carolina Press Association, Society of Professional Journalists, South Carolina Broadcasters Association, the Columbia Ad Club, the National Press Photographers Association, International Association of Business Communicators and Public Relations Society of America.

The faculty are leaders and provide advice and counsel. Faculty also are judges for these organizations' annual competitions of professional work.

**(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 self-study showed the staging of conferences was interrupted during Covid-19. Those events have been resurrected in the past two years.

In 2023, SJMC-sponsored events with the university to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop, hosted a Broadcast Education Association On-Location hands-on training session, hosted the biennial joint Inclusive Excellence Research Symposium and the Media & Civil Rights History Symposium.

In 2022, the campus chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America hosted the Southeast District Conference with keynote speakers from the White House Press Office and Bank of America and the American Society of Media Photographers held a statewide workshop on campus.

No listings were included in the self-study for 2019-2021, during the Covid outbreak.

A listing of faculty contributions showed unanimous participation from the professors, associate and assistant professors with contributions by some of the unit's instructors, who aren't required to do service.

**(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.**

The School has supported scholastic journalism for four decades by hosting conventions and conferences, offering scholarship opportunities and staging newspapers, magazine and yearbook competitions.

The School provides an office and staff for the South Carolina Scholastic Press Association and the 15-state Southern Interscholastic Press Association. The majority of staff salaries are from the SJMC budget, with other expenses covered by convention, conference and workshop registration fees and cash from contest entry and professional evaluation fees. The faculty and staff act as judges, instructors, keynote speakers, legal resources and technical assistants.

The state group holds two day-long conferences a year - in fall and spring - for about 1,200 students and advisers with educational sessions and an awards program.

The regional association has an annual convention in March with five competitions - one for broadcast anchor, three for teams in broadcast, newspaper and yearbook production and one review writing - and a Quiz Bowl.

**SUMMARY:**

(Undergraduate)

An already stretched faculty has found time to participate in service projects with professional organizations.

(Professional Master's)

Some students in the program said they are working on projects for clients, such as nonprofit groups in Columbia, the state capital.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/noncompliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART III: Summary by site visit team
## of the undergraduate program
(A separate summary is required of the professional master's program)

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

Strengths:

- A very hands-on curriculum that challenges students to create content and make decisions in real time
- Advising that is universally praised by undergraduate and graduate students alike
- A faculty that genuinely cares about the students and is dedicated to their success
- Strengthened diversity through faculty cluster hires, new course offerings, an emphasis on a conducive environment and recruiting at the graduate level
- A collaborative, innovative new director committed to building trust and shared governance
- A strong commitment to scholastic journalism
- A modern, state-of-the-art facility

Weaknesses:

- Many faculty sense a lack of commitment to shared governance at the College level
- Turnover among leadership, faculty and staff has affected strategic planning, curriculum, workload and overall morale
- A lack of requirements across the School for ethics or global perspectives
- A need to better close the loop in an otherwise rigorous assessment program

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

The previous site visit team noted four deficiencies, and the unit disclosed the following actions:

1. Faculty of color is 21 percent of the total, but there are only three African Americans and one mixed-race individual.

   Since the last accreditation visit, the SJMC has increased the percentage of faculty of color to 33 percent. African American faculty now number eight, or 18 percent, of the total.

2. Students report satisfaction with diversity being a part of instruction across the curriculum, but syllabi were light to negligent on this content.

   There has been some growth and improvement in courses to include cultural competency and cultural proficiency learning outcomes, and activities that focus on diversity and inclusiveness. Incoming students will be required to take a diversity-related course.

3. A temporary blip in the assessment program has slowed curricular change in response to measures.

   A faculty member is assigned to track assessment of learning outcomes and to create assessment measures. Regular assessment measures include pre- and post-tests, and the results are shared with the faculty. Progress has been made in curricular change, but more is needed.

4. Strategic Planning needs more specificity, and tangible goals and metrics.

   The College of Information and Communications, over the course of nine months in 2019, developed a strategic plan for 2020-2025. The plan has specific goals, objectives and metrics for both the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Information Science. The College also has a committee tasked with overseeing the progress of both schools toward their goals and objectives.

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

The study was well-organized and complete, but at times was long on generalities and short on details.

**PART III: Summary by site visit team
of the professional master's program**

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

Strengths:

- A dedicated Graduate Student Service
- Recruitment from HBCUs, small colleges and institutions abroad

Weaknesses:

- A need to distinguish between undergraduate and graduate courses.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

Deficiency: New strategies needed to compete with growing number of online programs.

The unit launched a new online program in 2021, with tracks in Strategic Communications and Multimedia Journalism.

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

See above.