Report of On-Site Evaluation
ACEJMC
Undergraduate program
2011–2012

Name of Institution: Southern University and A&M College
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: James Llorens, chancellor
Name of Unit: Department of Mass Communication
Name and Title of Administrator: Mahmoud A.M. Braima

Date of 2011-2012 Accrediting Visit: Jan. 22-25, 2012

If the unit is currently accredited, please provide the following information:
Date of the previous accrediting visit: Jan. 22-25, 2006
Recommendation of the 2006 accrediting team: Provisional reaccreditation
2006 decision of the Accrediting Council: Provisional reaccreditation
Recommendation of the 2008 revisit report: Reaccreditation
2008 decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2011-2012 Visiting Team: Provisional for undergraduate program; Denial for graduate program.

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair
Name and Title: Dorothy Bland, professor and journalism division director
Organization/School: Florida A&M University

Signature

Team Members
Name and Title: Rochelle Ford, associate dean for research, School of Communication
Organization/School: Howard University

Signature

Name and Title: Tom Mattesky, adjunct professor and CBS retired producer
Organization/School: Georgetown University

Signature

Name and Title: Charlie Tuggle, professor and director of the journalism program
Organization/School: University of North Carolina

Signature

Name and Title: Chuck Wanninger, freelance writer/editor and retired Gannett newspaper publisher
Organization/School:
PART I: General information

The team should insert here the updated General Information pages prepared by the unit in advance of the visit and provided in a Word document format. The pages may be copied and pasted. (DO NOT ACCEPT these pages in a PDF.)

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

___ Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
___ New England Association of Schools and Colleges
___ North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
___ Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
_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.

Southern University and A&M College is a state-supported coeducational institution offering undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. It is administered by the Board of Supervisors for the Universities and the Board of Regents (State of Louisiana)

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: 2006

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

It was first accredited by ACEJMC in 1995.

6. Attach a copy of the unit’s mission statement as well as any separate mission statement for the graduate program. Statements should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

Mission Statement
The mission of the Department of Mass Communication at Southern University and A&M College is to prepare students, through a liberal arts education and understanding of the emerging media technology, to assume successful careers and further studies in broadcasting, print journalism and public relations. The department fosters an interactive and supportive environment characterized by diversity, creativity, ethics and critical thinking in the service of democratic ideals through teaching, research and community service.

The mission statement was revised and adopted on April 21, 2011.

Mission Statement for Graduate Program

The primary mission of the Graduate Program in Mass Communication is to increase the employment potential of students and media professionals by educating and training them to be successful in life and in the professional world of mass communication.

The graduate program prepares students to live and work within the emerging, technologically driven, global communication revolution of the 21st Century, providing an interdisciplinary, multimedia approach to the study of mass communication through its core courses and special programs. Traditional liberal arts are combined with a practical, hands-on education.

In addition, the program aims to develop a sense of ethical responsibility in the practice of mass communication so that students and professionals may more fully realize their potential as individuals and as members of the community.

The Graduate Program in Mass Communication provides its students with the broadest possible spectrum of learning opportunities by using the educational and professional resources of Baton Rouge, the capital city of Louisiana. The program also focuses on the latest models and technologies of research and is dedicated to serving its students and the profession of mass communication.

The mission statement was revised and adopted on August 30, 2011.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

   Semesters of __16__ weeks
   Quarters of ________ weeks
   Summer sessions of __4 & 8___ weeks
   Intersessions of __3___ weeks

8. Check the programs offered in journalism масс communications:

   _X_ Four-year program leading to Bachelor’s degree
   __X__ Graduate work leading to Master’s degree
   ___ Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

9. Give the number of credit hours required for graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.

   One hundred and twenty semester-hours for Bachelor’s degree
   Thirty-three semester hours for Master’s degree
10. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.

Three semester hours for both undergraduate and graduate programs will count toward a degree.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sequence or Specialty</th>
<th>Person in Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>Mahmoud A. M. Braima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print News (News-Editorial)</td>
<td>Mahmoud A. M. Braima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Mahmoud A. M. Braima</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution: 6,915

13. Number of undergraduate majors in the unit, by sequence and total (if the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sequence or Specialty</th>
<th>Undergraduate majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast Journalism</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Journalism</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-majors</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Number of graduate students enrolled: 23 Students

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 211</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>News Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 211</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>News Writing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 225</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction to Radio</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 306</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Assignment Reporting</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 307</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Media Graphics</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 311</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Newscasting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 315</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV News</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fall 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 316</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public Relations Writing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 316</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public Relations Writing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 318</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV News Writing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 319</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV News Reporting</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 325</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Reporting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 343</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 343</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 406</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV News Practicum</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 523</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Digital Photojournalism</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 527</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public Relations Writing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 533</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students in each section of all skills courses for spring 2012 is tentative as this self-study report is being written. Students are still enrolling for classes and the final number of students in each section will not be determined until Jan. 17, 2012.

Spring 2012
16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2011 – 2012 academic year:

   Total expenditures July 2011 = $616,424

   Percentage increase or decrease in three years: Increase 16.8 percent

   The percentage increase came from a Title III grant continuation awarded for the amount of $88,840 for the fiscal year 2011-2012.

   Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

   Total salary expenditures = $293,197


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

   Dr. Shaniece Bickham, Assistant Professor (Resigned effective Spring 2012)
   Dr. Mahmoud A. M. Braima, Professor
   Dr. Yolanda Campbell, Assistant Professor
   Dr. Lorraine Fuller, Professor
   Mr. Michael Kabel, Associate Professor

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2011. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching Spring 2011. (If your school has its accreditation visit in Spring 2012, please provide an updated list of faculty at time of visit.)

   Mr. Naville J. Oubre, Adjunct, fall teaching Photojournalism
   Mrs. Sharon Weston-Broome, Adjunct, spring teaching African-Americans in the Media
   Mr. Darrell Roberson, Part-time, teaching television production courses
   Mr. Christopher Rogers, Adjunct, fall teaching graduate photojournalism course
* Mr. Darrell Roberson, engineer with part-time dual appointment to teach up to 3 television production-related courses.

Spring 2012 Adjunct Faculty are listed below:
Ms. Sarah Dugas, teaching 2 computer assisted reporting classes
Mr. Fred Batiste, teaching public affairs reporting
Mr. Johnny Brooks, teaching news editing

19. Schools on the semester system:
For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 65 or more semester hours in liberal arts and sciences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>80 or more semester hours outside the major</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>65 or more semester hours in liberal arts/sciences</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Schools on the quarter system:
For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 116 or more quarter hours outside the major and 94 or more quarter hours in liberal arts and sciences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>116 or more quarter hours outside the major</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>94 or more quarter hours in liberal arts/sciences</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART II — Standard I: Mission, Governance and Administration

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a mission statement and engages in strategic or long-range planning 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.

Evidence was provided of the unit’s mission statement and five-year strategic plan, which was last updated in the spring 2011. There is a mission statement for the undergraduate and graduate program. At Southern University and A&M College, the unit’s mission “is to prepare students, through a liberal arts education and understanding of the emerging media technology, to assume successful careers and further studies in broadcasting, print journalism and public relations. The department fosters an interactive and supportive environment characterized by diversity, creativity, ethics and critical thinking in the service of democratic ideals through teaching, research and community service.”

A solid SWOT analysis was completed and the strategic plan focuses on three key priorities:

1. Increasing opportunities for student access and success
2. Ensuring quality and accountability
3. Enhancing services to communities and the state

While the strategies are commendable, there is little mention of additional resources needed to accomplish the goals. Based on news reports and interviews during the site visit, the team learned many of the university’s faculty absorbed furloughs amounting to a 10 percent pay cut for the current fiscal year spanning July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

In light of a $10 million budget shortfall, financial exigency was approved by the Board of Regents in late 2011. The university is in the middle of a reorganization that is expected to be completed by Fall 2011, and the provost projected there would be some faculty/staff layoffs in the university announced in late February although none are expected in the unit. However, the team learned during the site visit that the program coordinator, who has a quarter century of experience with the university, would retire by the end of January 2012. Within the past year, one faculty member resigned, another retired and a third senior faculty member said he was considering retirement at the end of the 2012 spring semester.

The provost made it clear that the reorganization would result in nine colleges being pruned back to five by fall 2012. Nonetheless, she assured the team that the Department of Mass Communication would survive and be housed within the College of Education, Liberal Arts, Social Sciences and Public Policy.
(b) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.

Faculty governance issues are addressed in the 2005-2007 Faculty Handbook. A review of faculty meeting minutes showed that faculty members met regularly to address department issues, including curriculum and graduation requirements.

(c) The unit’s administration provides effective leadership within the unit and effectively represents it in dealings with university administration outside the unit and constituencies external to the university.

Administrators outside the unit said the department chair was effective. Interviews with faculty showed there were mixed views on the effectiveness of the department chair. The majority said the unit administrator was effective in dealing with very limited resources while a minority said morale was “terrible” due to budget cuts. No minutes from meetings with the unit’s Board of Advisors were provided although representatives from the board said the unit has provided interns and employees over the years.

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

The process for selecting and evaluating the department chair was clearly documented. Standardized forms are used by faculty to evaluate the department chair. However, the most recent performance appraisals provided during the site visit date back to 2010. The team was told the position of director for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has been vacant for several years, and that position is being advertised.

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

Freedom of expression is valued. The team found evidence that the unit follows the grievance procedures and students have filed grievances regarding grade issues over the years.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:** COMPLIANCE
PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of the unit.

Students in the unit often take more than 80 credit hours outside the program. This is partly because of the small faculty, whose members often teach overloads just to cover the required classes. For example, three of the four FT faculty members were teaching overloads during the site team’s visit. This makes it very difficult to offer an adequate number of electives within the unit. Another impediment is the policy of not allowing students in one concentration to take classes in another concentration. For example, print students are barred from taking broadcast classes. The genesis of this policy is unclear, and faculty members do not support it. Administrators also seem puzzled about why the policy is in place. Additionally, the unit discourages students from taking more than the 33 required hours in the unit, sending those FTEs instead to other units or other institutions.

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

Four core courses are offered each semester in all three sequences of the undergraduate program. They are Introduction to Mass Communication, Computer Assisted Reporting, News Writing and Communication Law. Two of the four core courses (soon to be five) are theoretical. Those are Communication Law and Introduction to Mass Communication. Almost all of the required classes within the concentrations are designed as skills classes. Beyond the core, each also must complete six hours of electives. Only when considering the elective classes, which are offered only infrequently because of the teaching load, does a balance between practical and theoretical begin to emerge. Many of the concepts and principles valued by ACEJMC are covered in the few theoretical classes that are a required part of the curriculum.

In the print journalism sequence, students take 15 additional credit hours with the General Assignment Reporting, Media Graphics, News Editing, Photo Journalism and Public Affairs Reporting classes. Although the Southern Digest, the student newspaper published twice weekly during the fall and spring semesters, and Ego, the magazine published four times a year, are not under the unit’s control, students said they gain valuable experience working with these news outlets.

In the broadcast journalism sequence, students take 15 additional credit hours with the TV News Production, TV News Writing, TV News Reporting, TV Newscasting and TV Practicum classes. Students said they appreciate the broadcast instruction they receive and would like more exposure beyond the campus.
The public relations sequence has five required courses that include Public Relations Practices, Media Graphics, Public Relations Writing, Public Relations Research, and Public Relations Techniques & Campaigns. These courses give the students a blend of theoretical knowledge and skills needed for an entry-level career in public relations. The students expressed that their faculty emphasize ethics, globalization and multiculturalism in their courses. The students are exposed to how to incorporate social media and other modern techniques with more traditional strategies. Students get ample opportunity to work in teams and on individual assignments. Their professors often incorporate current events into their classroom assignments where they must prepare statements and news releases responding to various issues. The students are passionate and articulate. Even those who expressed they would like to pursue other careers outside of public relations feel that they were obtaining transferable skills.

The unit plans to implement a new undergraduate curriculum effective fall 2012. The new curriculum will require students to take a Convergent Journalism class and two radio classes (Audio Production and Introduction to Radio) are being added as electives to address student demands.

(c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued. There is some evidence of material being dated, yet the great majority of students say they feel well prepared to enter the competitive media world. They certainly value the dedication of the faculty members, as well as their access to them. One faculty member was recognized for supervising a student research paper. The students themselves recognize and appreciate the attention they receive.

(d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1. Many of the sections are well below the recommended ratio. Several sections, particularly in the master’s program, enroll fewer than 10 students. With a faculty of only four full-time, the propensity toward small sections might warrant close scrutiny, particularly with so few theoretical courses to balance things out.

(e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. The unit does encourage internships, and one faculty member in particular is lauded by students for helping them arrange internships. About 20 students per semester get internships, and most are related to broadcast journalism because that is the largest sequence. However, there seems to be no difference between what is required of an undergraduate student fulfilling an internship and a graduate student doing the same. It is a shared syllabus, with no additional requirements or expectations of graduate students.

Student performance in internships is evaluated by site supervisors. Overall feedback is positive, but supervisors cite consistent problems with students’ writing ability.

**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**
(f) At least half of the required credit hours are in professional skills courses that are appropriate to professional communication careers.

The journalism curriculum is set up in such a way as to meet this requirement, but both students and faculty members have had a difficult time articulating the differences between the undergraduate and the graduate skills classes. One student in the very small graduate cohort summed it up by saying the graduate students are expected to do more and better work. Whether graduate students do more work is difficult to gauge, but a comparison of undergraduate and graduate student projects indicates that the higher quality work is coming out of the undergraduate classes.

The graduate program has three concentrations – broadcast journalism, print journalism and public relations. A total of 33 credit hours is required to complete the master’s program. All students must complete a 15-credit hour core curriculum. Within that core are Research Methods (501), Mass Communication Theory (MCOM 502) and Precision Journalism (MCOM 504), Internship (MCOM 511) and Supervised Research (MCOM 598) classes. More than half of the required credit hours are in professional skills courses. Students also must take a total of 12 credit hours in their concentration as well as six credit hours of electives within the department. All graduate students are required to take Ethics, Mass Media and Society (MCOM 503), too.

Additional skills classes offered within the graduate broadcast sequence include Advanced TV News Reporting (MCOM 530), Documentary (MCOM 533) and Media Management (MCOM 521).

Additional skills classes offered within the graduate print sequence include Newspaper Layout and Graphic Design (MCOM 520), Editorial Writing (MCOM 524) and Digital Photojournalism (MCOM 523).

While the graduate public relations program allows students to specialize in public relations, there seems to be little difference between the requirements for graduate and undergraduate students. In fact graduate students without a mass communication background may take undergraduate public relations writing (MCOM 316) course at the same time as they take the graduate level public relations writing course (MCOM 527). A review of the final projects from the master’s public relations students revealed similar level of work to what a typical undergraduate should be able to produce. Many of the master’s public relations students interviewed have strong entrepreneurial interests although no entrepreneurship courses are offered, and many wish to use their skills to promote their businesses ranging from childcare to advocacy.

Entry into the graduate program is not rigorous. Students are required to have graduated with a 2.5 GPA in their undergraduate programs, but there is no specific minimum GRE score required. Fully half of the students listed in the graduate program were undergraduates at Southern.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/non-compliance:**

COMPLIANCE
Overall evaluation (professional graduate program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE
PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

The unit has a diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects society.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:
(a) The unit has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan.

The department’s mission statement specifically mentions diversity and a supportive environment for students and staff. The department also has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population as well as a supportive climate for working and learning.

The department’s plan was approved in 2005 and was reviewed in 2011. It is based on the university’s equal opportunity policy statement and pledges equal educational opportunity for all students as well as hiring and promotion of faculty and staff without regard to factors of race, color, age, religion, sex, national origin, disability or veteran status.

The plan also pledges non-discrimination in all employment practices, and includes specific provisions addressing maternity and other leaves.

Complaints and questions are processed by the university’s administration, and specific contact information is provided to all students, staff and job applicants. The department’s non-discrimination policy and affirmative action plan is shared with all external sources, including employment agencies, involved in the recruitment of potential job applicants.

(b) The unit’s curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

One undergraduate elective, “African Americans in the Media,” specifically focuses on race. There are few mentions of diversity in other course syllabi. However, students and faculty members say discussions about race, gender and other issues involving diversity are regular components of most classes.

When pressed for specifics, one faculty member pointed to a television reporting class, which trains students to be aware of other cultures and races when reporting the news, and one student pointed to a required course in her sequence, which included discussions about race, gender and the media.

In addition to those examples, at least five other courses in which diversity issues are explored and discussed were mentioned by students and faculty.

Also, minority and women professionals regularly addresses department programs and classes about race, gender and diversity issues in the workplace.

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and supports their retention, progress and success.
Women and minorities are well-represented in the department’s administration, faculty and staff. Records provided by the department also indicate minorities dominated the applicant pools for the most recent full-time and adjunct hires.

Three of the department’s full-time faculty members are minorities, including the chairman who is African American. The full-time faculty also is balanced by gender. Two are men and two are women.

During the past three academic years, one full-time and six adjunct faculty positions have been filled. All seven applicants in the hiring pool for the full-time position were minorities. Five were females. The eventual hire was one of those female candidates, and the department employed a multi-faceted plan to assist her retention. She was assigned a mentor from the faculty’s tenured ranks and she received regular peer reviews. She also was evaluated annually and received financial support for travel and other expenses to present papers as conferences. Nonetheless, she resigned after three-and-a-half years on the job citing an unwillingness to accept a university-wide pay cut as the primary reason for her departure.

(d) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education in the region or population it serves, with special attention to recruiting under-represented groups.

Southern University and A&M College is a historically black university, and diversity is a core value. Its website says the university was founded in the 19th Century to “unlock the doors of higher education for generations of young, inquisitive African Americans.”

While still true to the mission, the university today welcomes and enrolls students of all races who come from Louisiana, numerous other states as well as foreign countries. Nonetheless, the university’s enrollment remains overwhelmingly African American. That’s true for the department as well.

More than 97 percent of the department’s undergraduate enrollment is African American. That’s down slightly from the last ACEJMC site visit six years ago, and only slightly higher than the university’s overall 96 percent African American enrollment.

The department’s self-study indicates a desire to “increase the profile of other race students,” and it is relying on university recruitment efforts to accomplish that goal.

Retention services, largely through the university’s Center for Student Success, are offered to all students. Those services include academic support such as tutoring and counseling. Students appeared satisfied with those services; some mentioned they would like more readily available information about scholarships and other financial aid information.

(e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.

The department’s policies guarantee the protection of students and employees from illegal discrimination, and there were no reports of harassment or discrimination brought
to the site team during our visit.
The department recognizes that disabilities may require special accommodations, and it has instructed faculty members to include language in their syllabi reaffirming the department’s commitments to provide those accommodations.
Discussions with students, faculty and staff indicate the department promotes an environment in which diversity and inclusiveness are valued. And, students seem well-aware of race, gender and diversity issues in the workplace.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (professional graduate program), compliance/ non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

The director of the graduate program is an African-American female, as are a majority of the full-time faculty and students. In fact, the percentage of minorities and women in the graduate program’s faculty and student ranks closely mirrors the undergraduate program. One graduate level course, “African Americans in Broadcasting and Film,” deals directly with race. While an examination of graduate course syllabi reveals little mention of diversity, graduate students say race, gender and other diversity issues regularly surface in classroom discussions and assignments.

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

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

**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

(a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.
The criteria for selecting full and part-time staff are dictated by university policies and procedures. As with most committee work in the unit, search committees are committees of the whole. All part-time faculty are selected by the chair. All tenure track faculty are
evaluated yearly by the chair and must perform to a certain level to remain on tenure track.

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

Full-time faculty members have primary responsibility for teaching, but the unit has had to rely increasingly on the engineer (who holds an MA in Mass Communication from Southern) to help teach classes. He typically carries a 2/3 teaching load. In the past, the unit has used adjunct instructors sparingly, but the reality of a faculty of four has forced the unit to rely a bit more on adjuncts. Four part-time faculty were teaching five classes during the semester when the site team visited.

There are not enough bodies to teach all of the required courses every semester, and certainly not enough to teach both the required courses and a reasonable number of electives.

Another issue related to the small faculty size is that they teach four and often five sections per semester. The department chair is teaching four courses this semester, but he said only one course involved a teach-out and that’s supervising a graduate project course in lieu of a thesis. Based on a review of faculty minutes, the unit has not considered consolidating the sequences from three to two.

This consolidation, along with changing the elective policy mentioned above, might give the unit much greater flexibility to teach all the courses the students need as part of a well-rounded experience. There is a demand from students for at least one radio course, and much demand from broadcast students for a TV newscast that is seen beyond the walls of their classroom, but in a zero-sum game adding courses is problematic. The chair recognized the need to “determine which electives we can stick with.”

The budget difficulties are hard to ignore. For instance, the line for full-time teacher salaries has dropped from $408,764 in 2008 to $390,277 in 2009 to $289,978 in 2010 – a decrease of 29 percent. The total for the current academic year would be even lower, when the factor of furloughs is considered. There are now just four full-time faculty members – and one of those indicates he will retire soon.

Though there is a campus-wide policy of not replacing faculty lost by attrition, it appears the unit could be exempt from that. The department head indicated he might be able to hire three additional professors once the campus reorganization (described below) is complete.

The entire university faces critical issues. Last October, the university’s board declared a financial emergency after months of debating the issue. The declaration of the emergency, called financial exigency, was made despite opposition from some faculty, students and alumni. The president has suggested that 90 percent of the faculty take furloughs and the exigency decision gives university administrators more leeway to
demand furloughs, terminate tenured faculty members and to even terminate academic programs.

In December 2011, the university’s Board of Supervisors approved a reorganization that could lead to nearly 90 faculty and staff terminations. It is unclear how the latest news affects the department, though the department head said he did not expect further reductions in staffing.

The university’s economic issues are compounded by lost revenues from its declining enrollment – down from 10,000 students to 6,915.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th># OF FACULTY</th>
<th># OF STUDENTS</th>
<th># OF SECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>7 FULL TIME, ONE ADJUNCT TEACHING ONE SECTION, ENGINEER TEACHING ONE SECTION</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7 FULL TIME, ONE ADJUNCT TEACHING ONE SECTION, ENGINEER TEACHING THREE SECTIONS</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4 FULL TIME, 4 ADJUNCTS TEACHING 5 SECTIONS, ENGINEER TEACHING 3 SECTIONS</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Credentials of the unit’s faculty represent a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise kept current through faculty development opportunities, relationships with professional and scholarly associations, and appropriate supplementation of part-time and visiting faculty.

Three of the four full-time faculty members hold the terminal degree. The fourth (and the engineer, with a substantial teaching load) has an MA. Collectively, the faculty members have an adequate amount of professional experience to teach the skills classes.
(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.
The primary evaluation method is student evaluations.

(e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.
The dean and the provost recognize that the unit is an important part of the overall university mission.

**For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:**
**Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

(a) Full-time faculty meet the university’s requirements for graduate faculty and teach the majority of the professional graduate courses.
The unit meets these requirements.

(b) The unit regularly evaluates graduate instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.
The chair evaluates each faculty member yearly, and all full-time faculty members have at least two courses evaluated by students.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program), compliance/non-compliance:**
While faculty credentials are solid, teaching loads are heavy and there are certainly not enough people to teach both the required courses and a reasonable number of electives. Full-time faculty has been cut from seven to four from the last site visit six years while undergraduate enrollment has grown from 162 students to 189 students or 17 percent among the three sequences (broadcast journalism, print journalism and public relations).

**NON-COMPLIANCE**
Overall evaluation (graduate program)
While faculty credentials are solid, there are clearly not enough people to teach all of the required courses and a reasonable number of electives. According to the department chair, graduate enrollment peaked at 50 about six years ago and was reported at 23 students in the self-study.

NON-COMPLIANCE
PART II — Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit requires its faculty to conduct research and produce creative productions. This requirement is outlined in the faculty handbook and the expectations vary according to rank and appointment with graduate faculty being expected to do more. The unit has been supportive of faculty in their effort to present research particularly at regional and national conferences, particularly BEA. Travel funds are available to faculty to present research at conferences. However, the university has not consistently provided financial support for faculty research projects beyond faculty start-up grants. The university has a grants office, but the department’s faculty members have not been engaged with that office much. Yet the university administration has plans for a much more robust grants office to support faculty and interdisciplinary research efforts that could be supported by external funds.

Before the financial difficulties became so severe, the university provided awards to faculty for their research efforts (J. K. Haines Awards) and held an awards gala to recognize their scholarly achievements. The university continues to host an annual research symposium that a few graduate faculty members in mass communication have participated in; however the graduate director has not. While the chancellor does report research and creative achievements of faculty in his report to the Board of Supervisors, little other publicity is given to faculty who conduct ongoing research. For example the chair’s ongoing research and advocacy efforts to end genocide in the Sudan and other areas of the world have not been supported or publicized by the university despite the international recognition he has received. Also, the video project completed by some of the graduate students under the direction of faculty seems to be under the radar of the university, yet has been well received by the community of Baton Rouge.

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

The unit clearly identifies the expectations for research, creative activity and professional activity in its appointments, promotion and tenure documents. At the time of the visit none of the faculty members were on tenure track appointments. The one temporary professor who has the support of the chair to become a tenure track assistant professor said that she understands the criteria and is trying to structure her research and professional activity to meet the hiring criteria. One of the professors who was promoted between this site visit and the previous accreditation visit said that the criteria to be promoted to full professor were clearly outlined in the faculty handbook and that she felt supported. She also said that since she was promoted the university has implemented a strong retention and support program for faculty on the tenure track to help them meet the tenure and promotion criteria by developing a research plan and demonstrating progress
on that plan. She is a member of the College of Arts and Humanities Retention Committee and finds this system to be supportive of the tenure track faculty enabling them to collect research materials and have it reviewed throughout the faculty member’s tenure track path.

Yet the one assistant professor who resigned before the site visit did not have any refereed journal articles published before she left the university.

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

The unit does explain the criteria and accepts both professional and traditional scholarship and contributions in a diverse area of specializations. However, graduate faculty are expected to publish and present more traditional research.

(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.

There were a small number of referred conference papers, but no evidence of publication post conference. One faculty member won a top professional research paper award from the Louisiana Communication Association and has presented research at International Communication Association twice. Two others have presented their research at BEA; one faculty member received a second place research paper award from BEA’s Multicultural Division. Most of the creative productions listed in the self study were non juried but were published in local news outlets including The Advocate, Louisiana Data News Weekly, and the Nola Beez.

For example, one former professor worked at The Advocate for 19 years as a reporter. However, the two faculty members who published these articles have both voluntarily left the university. The other tenured associate professor and the one temporary assistant professor have not completed any professional, creative or research activities beyond completion of the assistant professor’s dissertation in the spring of 2012.

The professional activity presented by one of the professors has received international attention including being a consultant/advisor for a study on Justice in Darfur and a panelist at the United Nations’ Human Rights Council in Switzerland, resulting in interviews on Voice of America.

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

The research mission statement for the university states that "The University is committed to a broad program of research, both basic and applied, and creative work to stimulate the faculty and students in quest for knowledge and to aid society in resolving its scientific, technological, socioeconomic, and cultural problems." Likewise the university has the vision that its research efforts would result in:

an increased number of publications in refereed journals
greater and more significant opportunities for its graduate and undergraduate
students to participate in scholarly activities and research with their professors and building nationally reputable and competitive academic departments, colleges, schools, and centers.

However, no evidence exists of faculty members publishing in refereed journals since 2006. Three of the five faculty members included in the self-study had presented refereed research conferences papers and only one faculty member who is no longer at Southern has presented anywhere beyond BEA. No evidence exists of collaborating with other units that would build a national reputation for the unit or the university.

The faculty teaching workload is extremely high with all of the full-time faculty teaching a four-course load each semester and most teaching overloads each semester. Also, given heavy advising responsibilities, the administration and the faculty admit that they have little time for research and creative productivity.

However, the students expressed that their faculty emphasize the importance of research and say they are required to do extensive research in their courses. The two faculty members who left the university recently had reputations of being strong scholars/professionals who contributed to research culture. Yet the graduate and undergraduate students are not aware of the opportunities to present their research on campus or of the availability of travel funds to present their research at conferences beyond BEA.

The university administrators believe that once the university restructuring is complete that a greater amount of support for faculty research and innovative measure to recognize their efforts will be implemented. The faculty members are hopeful that the morale surrounding the research culture will improve when the furloughs are lifted in June 2012 and hiring of new faculty to replace the losses occurs in by fall 2012.

**Undergraduate – NON-COMPLIANCE**

While the graduate students are required to complete research assignments and a few are invited to present their research at BEA, the graduate faculty themselves have not demonstrated their striving to meet the university’s vision of increased number of refereed journal articles. The lack of evidence in the self-study and during the site visit of productivity that would result in refereed journal articles is problematic. Furthermore even when the departmental faculty was larger in the years between the last ACEJMC visit and this site team visit, no graduate faculty members published refereed journal articles. Only one graduate faculty member was completing professional mass communication non-juried activity, and she has left the university.

**Graduate – NON-COMPLIANCE**
PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Faculty and/or professional advising staff ensure that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising. When a student enters the program, he or she receives a handbook that outlines the basic policies and procedures of the department – admission and retention requirements, class requirements, curriculum rules, advising, internship procedures etc.

A Program Coordinator watches over the progress of all undergraduate students – using a checklist of course requirements for each learning area. The issue here is that the site team learned that the Program Coordinator will retire by the end of January 2012. She will be very difficult to replace because she has 25 years of institutional knowledge and has been the key factor in keeping students on track toward meeting graduation requirements. A number of students said she is “irreplaceable.”
If her staff position is not filled – or filled adequately -- this area of student services may be in jeopardy.

All students are assigned to a faculty member for guidance and to help students keep up with the checklist. All faculty members get a copy of a master list of student-advisor matches and that is also posted on bulletin boards. Faculty members are charged with the responsibility for seeing that students are on track to meet graduation requirements.

Students were unanimous in their praise for the way faculty members handle the advising process, citing professors’ long office hours and a willingness to help with both academic and professional advising.

The 23 graduate students are advised by the graduate director and the chair of the department.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

As noted above, students are enthusiastic in their praise about long hours of the faculty members and their willingness to be accessible to students.

Faculty members are required to maintain a minimum of eight hours a week for office hours – or two hours per course. Faculty members are also available by appointment. Some students said faculty members often email them and that some faculty members provide cell-phone numbers.

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

The department maintains bulletin boards to keep students informed of internship/employment opportunities, department activities and calendar reminders.

According to the self-study, the department has a program of regular meetings in 4th, 8th and 12th week of the semester, designed to help students keep apprised of activities and unit information.

(d) The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.

The department has no direct control over campus media, but students have the opportunity to work on the student newspaper (The Southern Digest) and the closed circuit television station (SUTV75). The university also has an online radio station housed in the department that provides students with the opportunity to produce live programming.

All three campus media make full use of department students. There is some discussion about whether a stronger tie between the department and the campus media might be beneficial. A prime example of a missed opportunity is that the television practicum
students produce new stories that could be aired on SUV75 or streamed to the Southern Digest website, but instead are sent only to the classroom. There are other opportunities for online distribution outlets such as YouTube.

The newspaper, for instance, comes out twice a week – probably not sufficient to be the standard for campus communication. And the students managing the Digest are also responsible for maintaining the website, but there is little evidence that that is being done – most stories posted are six-to-eight weeks old. There could be other opportunities to assist with the university’s primary website.

Professional student organizations are active on campus – Southern Broadcasting Association, Public Relations Student Society of America, and Broadcast Education Association. The student chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists has been inactive, but there appears to be an effort to have a presence at the NABJ Convention in New Orleans in June.

(e) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success.

The unit monitors graduation rates – which now stand at 28 percent for undergraduate students and 73 percent for graduate students. The Department applies university-wide rules for probation and readmission.

For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has appropriate admissions and retention policies for the professional graduate program.

Prospective students for the graduate department must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 – a reduction from recent years. Once admitted, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA. The graduation rate for grad students is 73 percent, based on two-year attendance. Records are maintained by the Graduate Director.
PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

This unit faces budget difficulties, many tied to issues facing the university as a whole. In the 2006 accreditation, the major deficiency was the quality of the equipment students were being asked to use. That has been corrected, and the department now has enough cameras and computers to meet the needs of the students.

The biggest financial issue now is staffing, where the department is operating with just four full-time faculty members.

The self-study provided little detail for budgeting and expenditures, indicating that most decisions are made at the university level. Although the self-study says that allocation of resources for the unit is based on a long-range plan and is addressed in the budget planning assessment process for the university, it would appear that simply meeting the day-to-day demands makes it difficult to focus on big issues for the future.

The total department budget has also dropped by nearly 20 percent between 2008 and 2010, though actual support available looks better than that because of a Title III resource grant. The budget line for travel is $1,861 – hardly enough to provide faculty members with the outreach necessary, though faculty members say they can usually find money for legitimate conference and meeting travel via other university sources.

In recent years, the unit received $734,294 in Title III money, which was used on facility
renovations, equipment, supplies, software and professional development – according to the self-study. That activity was detailed on an “activity budget,” the only supplemental information provided for this standard.

The Title III money has helped provide students with technology equipment – now 35 digital cameras, 20 high-definition and 15 standard-definition – plus 65 iMac computers. The upgrades in technology allowed faculty to overhaul curriculum -- particularly in broadcasting.

The self-study details a seven-step budgeting process that includes reviews by deans, an office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research, the Provost and the Vice Chancellor. Funding recommendations then come from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, Finance and Administration and ultimately to the Office of the Chancellor. Final decisions come from the Chancellor’s Executive Committee.

The self-study says that faculty members meet and work with academic chairs to discuss department goals and objectives. Some operating expenses such as basic office supplies, etc. are paid directly by the university – and not in the department’s budget.

Finally, the department has had little success in putting together an effective alumni program, so there is almost no “outside money” coming in to address scholarships and other needs. The department chair did provide evidence that six mass communication students are on full Honors College Mass Communication scholarships which may include tuition, room-and-board and a laptop computer.

(b) The resources that the institution provides are fair in relation to those provided other units.

Given the extreme university-wide financial difficulties, it is difficult to determine whether the mass communication unit is treated fairly within the institution’s larger framework.

Top administration officials said they recognize the value of the department and its students, but the entire university is looking at a reorganization that will likely prompt new changes. For example, the mass communication department will continue to operate within a college that will include education, social studies and liberal arts. The administration understands that this department has technology needs that exceed those of some other departments on campus.

On the other hand, most technology needs have already been addressed with recent Title III money – so there is little likelihood of securing more money in that area. The unit has begun to collect lab fees, which are being banked to address maintenance costs in the future.

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

The mass communication unit operates in W.W. Stewart Hall – built in the 1950s and starting to show its age. The building houses classrooms, offices and five computer labs for the department.
In addition, there is a radio studio and a television studio – both recently upgraded. Elsewhere on campus, there is a campus TV station – but the department does not administer any of the campus media.

In the past four years, equipment has been upgraded and the self-study reports that it receives adequate funds for renewal and maintenance of equipment. The department receives assistance from the university’s Technology and Network Services. One faculty member expressed the need to develop an annual operating and maintenance budget to service computer needs, and there is a plan in place to use lab fees for this purpose. Classrooms are satisfactory.

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

Faculty and students alike appreciate that the department’s equipment is up-to-date. Paid for with a Title III grant, the equipment in place now is excellent – both the computers and the broadcast cameras and editing stations.

The department’s five labs are connected to the department and university networks and students can access their own individual accounts across campus. There is just one lab dedicated to print and public relations – it has 16 iMac computers and the necessary software to meet the needs of these sequences.

The other four labs are designed more for the electronic media – one for broadcast, one a digital video editing lab, one audio lab and one lab for digital photojournalism. Computers all have necessary production software such as QuarkXPress, Final Cut Pro, Creative Suite 4, EZNews and others. All computer labs/classrooms have access to the Internet.

Faculty and staff members have desktop Apple computers, Internet access and specialized software to meet their needs.

Students report no issues in getting access to the labs and equipment during the day, but the main labs close about 5 p.m. Broadcast students indicated that this affected their ability to edit projects in a timely manner. In Fall 2011, fees for using the labs and camera equipment were instituted, apparently without many complaints from students. It is the intention of the department to bank the student fees in order to provide for future maintenance and repair needs.

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

Students rely on the John B. Cade Library, which is about a quarter-mile from Stewart Hall. The library has a seating capacity of 1,400 and 154,400 square feet of floorspace. It houses more than one million volumes, 57,000 electronic books and 2,000 journal subscriptions. Annual expenditures for mass communications materials at the library have ranged from $500 to $2,000.

Library personnel are trying to bring additional technology and sophistication to the process – noting some success with grants but little support from gifts and endowments. The library has access to 11 newspapers, though some are just available in their online
versions.

About 40 library employees keep the facility open 93 hours a week. Students say they use the library frequently, and it serves their needs for academic databases and other information.

The department also has a small reading room, which houses some journalism materials – many of which are more than a decade old. The *Baton Rouge Advocate* is the only newspaper now delivered to the department.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program)**

COMPLIANCE

**Overall evaluation (graduate program)**

COMPLIANCE
PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.

Poor alumni records were cited as a concern in the last site team report. In the six years since that report, the department has taken some steps to partially address that issue.

However, outreach to alumni is still loosely organized and, by the department’s own admission, contact information for its graduates is largely incomplete. For example, the department’s self-study said it “tries to publish a newsletter each semester” to share with alumni. In reality, a newsletter has not been published or distributed since 2004. Additionally, the department’s chairman admits 90 percent of those newsletters mailed in 2004 were returned as undeliverable.

Since the last site visit, records of the department’s graduates have been consolidated and are now kept in the department’s main office, and a database has been established to house what contact information for graduates the department has collected. The department also is using social media to find and engage its alumni. However, those efforts still are in the formative stages.

Facebook pages have been created for the department and also for a planned alumni association, although no timetable has been established for the creation of that alumni association. Additionally, a faculty committee has been formed to search for other approaches to help alumni develop a meaningful relationship with the department. An initial recommendation from that committee was the establishment of an alumni board. Invitations to join that alumni board were mailed to prospective members in October of 2011, but the board has yet to meet.

While the formation of an alumni association and an alumni board are still in the planning stages, students and faculty say an informal alumni network is active and engaged. A graduate who is a reporter for a Baton Rouge television station organized workshops and recruited speakers for the department’s 2011 Spring Conference. Another alumnus, who is the mayor of Baton Rouge, is included in a recruitment video for the department. Students say alumni regularly review and critique course work and assist in identifying internships.

Several members of the department’s advisory council also are alumni. The advisory council is comprised of local media professionals who meet with faculty and staff to review issues involving the department. The council’s most recent meeting was in October of 2011. However, one council member criticized the frequency of the group’s meetings, adding “we only seem to get together when accreditation comes around.” He added the advisory council needs to meet on an “on-going basis” if the department expects to benefit from the expertise of council members. Revisiting the frequency of advisory board meetings is something the department may want to consider.

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

Faculty members belong to organizations, which promote high standards of professional practice, most notably the National Association of Black Journalists, the Public Relations Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists.

The promotion of professional ethics also is a key component of the department’s programs. Ethical responsibility was a recurring theme echoed by students.

The department provides no continuing education or other outreach programs for working professionals.

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

The department is well-represented within the ranks of the Broadcast Education Association (BEA). The department’s chairman and another faculty member have played prominent roles in recent BEA national conventions as paper presenters, session organizers and moderators. The pair also has been active in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

The university is supportive of the department’s academic and professional development pursuits, and it provides funds to cover travel and other expenses to conventions and workshops. There are numerous examples of faculty members benefiting from that policy. Similar financial support is provided to students.

(d) The unit contributes to its communities through service projects, internship and job placements, and faculty involvement in civic activities related to journalism and mass communication.

Faculty and students have used the department’s facilities and their media skills to assist two recent public service efforts within the Baton Rouge community.

Documentaries were produced in 2010 and 2011 in conjunction with advocacy groups for the homeless and poor. The documentaries were filmed, written and edited by students under the direction of a faculty member who served as executive director. In a letter to the department, the executive director for the Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless said the documentary about the homeless has helped immensely in educating the public about “the realities of homelessness.” He described the students involved in the project as having a “great commitment” to their work and added they “displayed the highest professional standards.”

Beyond the documentaries, the department has not allocated resources to sustain an organized and planned program of public service activities. That was a concern noted during the last site visit, and there is little evidence to indicate the department has addressed that concern. Given the fact the university is located in Louisiana’s state
capital, there could be additional opportunities to relate to state government and public policy issues.

Individual faculty members are involved in public service activities, including the department chairman who serves as president of Darfur Association of USA, and as a board member of United to End Genocide and Voices for Sudan. He is a frequent speaker about genocide and has appeared in television and radio news broadcasts as an advocate for human rights.

The professor who handles internships reported about 20 students a semester get internships – ranging from the Jay Leno Show to the local newspaper. There are additional opportunities to track and celebrate those successes.

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

The department conducted a workshop in 2007 for middle school students interested in careers in broadcasting, but it has not conducted a similar session since. In a letter thanking the department for the workshop, an assistant principal wrote that “students enjoyed the endeavor” and she expressed an interest in participating in similar programs in the future.

Similar workshops for middle school students were reviewed positively in the last site team report as well. The department may want to consider sponsoring additional workshops in the future.

**Overall evaluation (undergraduate program),**

**COMPLIANCE**

**Overall evaluation (graduate program), compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

The graduate program has become the department’s primary vehicle for public service outreach in the Baton Rouge community. The 2010 documentary about homelessness and a similar effort about hunger a year later were class projects of the graduate program’s documentary course. A workshop for middle school students also was staffed largely by graduate program students and coordinated by the graduate program’s director. Graduate program faculty members are active in Association for Education in Mass Communications activities, and students and faculty actively participate in Broadcast Education Association events. There could be additional opportunities for graduate students to gain valuable professional exposure and experience in organizations such as NABJ and AEJMC.

There appear to be no differences in internship opportunities between graduate and undergraduate students.
PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The department clearly defines the goals for learning that students must achieve on an undergraduate level in a detailed written assessment plan. This plan was originally drafted in 2004 and implemented and then revised in 2011 to update it according to ACEJMC’s distinction between global and domestic diversity issues. These values and competencies are listed in a matrix that identifies courses where students should obtain these values and competencies at a level of awareness, understanding or application. However, some of the syllabi for courses do not clearly identify the values and competencies as course learning outcomes as stated in the assessment plan report from 2006-2011 and in the 2011 revised plan. The students in all sequences seemed to be aware of the ACEJMC values and competencies although they did not label them as such.

Furthermore, rubrics for measuring each of the values and competencies have been developed to measure student achievement of these competencies. These rubrics have been used in three terms in 2011 to analyze learning outcomes through LiveText, an online assessment tool that allows reviewers (faculty) to measure the level of achievement on learning outcomes (values and competencies) based on an assignment selected from each course.

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

The unit has a thoughtful new assessment plan that clearly outlines multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning. The unit’s 2004 plan was executed collecting data from indirect methods including exit interviews and course evaluations and direct measures including internship supervisor evaluations and comprehensive exams. In 2010, the unit began to update its plan and voted on a revised plan in 2011 that coincides with the unit’s strategic plan also adopted in 2011. The 2011 assessment plan introduces one major direct measure called LiveText.

The university purchased this assessment software to have faculty assess general university requirements and other discipline specific learning outcomes such as ACEJMC’s. Units upload their learning outcomes associated with each course rubrics associated with learning outcome specifically relevant to a required course assignment. Students complete that specific assignment at the end of the semester and upload the document or project into the LiveText system. Faculty then assess the assignment using the rubric. The LiveText program collects the student data and faculty assessment of their work, completes a data analysis and generates a report providing statistics regarding students performing at three levels (exceptional, average and below average).

In 2010, the unit began to input the ACEJMC values and competencies into LiveText. In the spring, summer and fall of 2011, the unit assessed all undergraduate courses offered
in the department. The unit will collect LiveText data again in spring and summer of 2012; then in fall 2012, the departmental faculty will analyze the data for all of the ACEJMC values and competencies and make recommendations to improve the curriculum based on the results, thus making an attempt to “close the loop.”

(c) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to gain feedback for improving curriculum and instruction.

The unit has made strides incorporating alumni feedback into improving its curriculum and instruction. Alumni participate in the unit’s career days and give presentations to students and critique resumes and portfolios. Informal feedback is used to assist faculty in improving instruction and advising. However, no formal surveys, interviews or other techniques have been used in its assessment plan.

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

The unit does collect assessment data from internship supervisors who are journalism and mass communication professionals. This data is collected each semester and should be presented in the fall of each year. This supervisor assessment data and analysis from 2007-2010 was available for the site team to review and a brief summary was included in the self-study stating that the students needed to improve their writing.

Additionally, the unit does include journalism and mass communication professionals in evaluating the student work in the broadcast sequence. Neither print nor the public relations students receive formal feedback in their classes on their work consistently from professionals in their disciplines. Informally, through PRSSA and through departmental sponsored career days, the students do receive feedback on their portfolios and resumes from journalism and mass communication professionals. Unfortunately, the unit has not produced a formal assessment report based on this professional feedback in the broadcast courses or from portfolio reviews at student career events.

e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and uses the data to improve curriculum and instruction.

While not reported in detail in the self-study and its appendices, the unit has collected data from all of its indirect and direct assessment measures. Some of the data collection is more informal than other measures. Nevertheless, the findings from the data collection have served as the foundation to make curricular changes between the last site visit and this site visit.

Most significantly from the exit interviews, the assessment data led to an investment in technology. From the data collected from the comprehensive exams and from the internship supervisor evaluations, several approaches to improving writing have been implemented from requiring a grammar course from the English Department, to incorporating more extensive grammar reviews and quizzes in the departmental News Writing courses. Evidence from faculty meeting minutes demonstrates the faculty has monitored the effectiveness of those two writing interventions in attempt to address the weakness identified through its assessment.

When the departmental students had difficulty registering for the grammar class, the faculty began to incorporate more grammar into its courses and removed the requirement.
Additionally the faculty realized that the departmental comprehensive exams needed to be updated to better reflect the ACEJMC values and competencies and changes to the departmental curriculum, so they completed a revision of the exams in 2011. They also made recommendations on how to help the students prepare for the exams, thus another example of closing the loop.

Compliance

**For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:**

(a) The unit defines the goals for learning that professional graduate students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council. Through the department’s LiveText software assessment tool, the unit identified in 2011 values and competencies for its graduate courses to match ACEJMC’s. However, these are not clearly described in any other documentation for the graduate program. Syllabi for graduate courses do not clearly identify the values and competencies as course learning outcomes.

(b) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess graduate student learning and uses collected data to improve curriculum and instruction.

The unit does not have a written assessment plan specifically for the graduate program, but it does require students to complete a project that should demonstrate the ACEJMC values and competencies and to complete an exit interview with the chair of the department. These two assessment techniques qualify as direct and indirect measures.

However, the site team did not detect any departmental analysis of student learning or student performance regarding these capstone projects. The exit interview data shared with the team did not relate specifically to the graduate program. A few quotes from graduate student exit interviews in 2007 and 2008 were included in the self-study assessment appendix. However evidence of how these quotes informed changes to curriculum was not evident. Furthermore, according to faculty meeting minutes and an interview with the chair, the departmental graduate faculty members have discussed instituting a graduate comprehensive exam similar to the undergraduate comprehensive exam that the university requires; however, the graduate faculty members have not had the time to devote to developing one.

Although there have been some changes to the curriculum to improve instruction and learning, the unit did not present evidence linking curricular changes to the assessment of the graduate program.

In 2011, the unit began to assess, using the LiveText, students’ acquiring the ACEJMC values and competencies introduced in graduate courses. However analysis of the findings will not be completed until August 2012. Then the graduate faculty will set assessment goals and make curricular recommendations.
PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

STRENGTHS
- Energetic and engaged students
- Compassionate and dedicated faculty/staff
- Modern equipment
- Strong appreciation for ethics and diversity

WEAKNESSES
- Heavy teaching loads for faculty
- Lack of personnel to meet growing undergraduate student population
- Lack of refereed and peer-reviewed publications by faculty or creative works
- Restrictive curriculum
- Lack of structure and organization for consistent alumni outreach
- Assessment evidence light on implementation and analysis
Lack of community outreach
Fundraising goals and strategies are unclear

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

Undergraduate
   Standard 4 - Faculty
   Standard 5 – Scholarship

Graduate
   Standard 4 - Faculty
   Standard 5 – Scholarship
   Standard 9 - Assessment

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

The unit is expected to
   • Address the lack of full-time faculty who do refereed journal research or juried creative work and meet the university’s vision before the fall 2012 semester.
   • Document and increase research productivity and juried professional work.
   • Reconsider the human resource allocation considering faculty size regarding allowable guidelines per the university and ACEJMC standards, i.e. – faculty/student enrollment in skills and non-skills classes.
   • Strengthen graduate assessment plan and increase focus on implementation and analysis of results.

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

Deficiencies that must be corrected in the undergraduate program are summarized below:

   • Address the lack of full-time faculty issue to meet growing undergraduate student population by fall 2012 semester.
   • Productivity in research and creative activity must be documented.

Deficiencies that must be corrected in the graduate program are summarized below:

   • Address the lack of full-time faculty to adequately handle student population.
   • Productivity in research and creative activity must be documented.
   • Graduate assessment plan must be strengthened to provide stronger evidence of implementation and analysis of results for meaningful change.

5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to that recommendation.
The team recommends denial of accreditation for the graduate program because of non-compliance on three standards related to faculty, research and assessment as documented above.

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.

In the 2006 site visit, the unit was found in non-compliance on the following two standards:

**Standard 7 – Resources**

The unit is commended for substantially improving the broadcast and computer equipment made available to students. For example, the mass communication department has added 65 iMacs in the labs and 35 video cameras for students to use.

**Standard 9 - Assessment**

The department chair has taken the lead in utilizing LiveText to document assessment efforts, and one of the outcomes are major curriculum changes to be rolled out starting in the fall 2012. The curriculum changes will include adding a convergent journalism course to the core for all mass communication students.

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 self-study was a challenging read. The university is facing some major financial challenges. However, the self-study failed to provide adequate background information about the widespread scope of the university’s financial condition that has affected the unit’s faculty. There was no mention of the SACS investigation on nepotism or plans for university reorganization prior to the team’s arrival on campus. The team learned of the financial exigency and the SACS investigation from media sources.

The organization of the appendices made it difficult to support the assessment narrative in some cases. For example, the assessment summary on internship feedback reads, “The feedback from the professionals who supervise those students seem to reflect positively on the students’ professional presentations.” This passage would be more useful with sample size, types of internships, dates, etc. It appears there was some double counting for Title III resource grant with regard to faculty credit for service and research. For example, supervising student media is considered service, not research at most mass communication programs.

Faculty minutes reflect the team often talks about planning with good intentions. The challenge ahead is implementing changes in curriculum and addressing human resource needs to meet the growing undergraduate population needs.