

Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Graduate/Undergraduate programs

2014- 2015

Name of Institution: American University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Neil Kerwin, president

Name of Unit: School of Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Jeffrey Rutenbeck, dean

Date of 2014 - 2015 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 9-12, 2014

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Oct. 12-15, 2008

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Graduate program: Reaccreditation

Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Graduate program: Reaccreditation

Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation

Undergraduate program recommendation by 2014 - 2015 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Graduate program recommendation by 2014-2015 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Douglas Anderson, dean emeritus, Penn State University; senior research professor

Organization/School: Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State

Signature _____

Team Members

Name and Title: Kristin Gilger, associate dean, professional programs

Organization/School: Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State

Signature _____

Name and Title: Mike Philipps, president and CEO

Organization/School: Scripps Howard Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio

Signature _____

Name and Title: Chris Roush, senior associate dean

Organization/School: School of Journalism and Mass Communication, UNC-Chapel Hill

Signature _____

PART I: General Information

This general information section will be included in its entirety in the site team's report, and it must present the most current information available. Before the site visit, the unit should review its responses to the questions below (especially 13 – 21) and update them as necessary. The unit then should print a copy of this updated section for each team member when they arrive on campus. A digital copy in Word document format of the updated responses also must be provided to the team chair to be included in the digital team report sent to the ACEJMC office.

In addition, if any significant changes not covered in this section have occurred since the original self-study report was submitted, the unit should describe and document those changes and present this new material to the team when members arrive.

Name of Institution: American University

Name of Unit: School of Communication

Year of Visit: 2014

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

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

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

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

Fifty-Second

*Congress of the United States, At the Second Session,
Begun and held in the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia,
on Monday, the fifth day of December, eighteen hundred and ninety-two,*

AN ACT To incorporate the American University

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That John H. Vincent, John E. Andrus, James M. Buckley, Mark Hoyt, Jesse L. Hurlburt, James M. King, Charles C. McCabe, Charles H. Payne, John E. Searles, junior, John S. Huyler, of New York; Charles W. Buoy, J.A.M. Chapman, G.P. Hukill, Robert E. Pattison, Charles Scott, Mrs. Matthew Simpson of Pennsylvania; Julian S. Carr, of North Carolina; David H. Carroll, Jacob Tome, Alpheus W. Wilson, of Maryland; Charles H. Fowler, of Minnesota; William M. Springer, J.B. Hobbs, of Illinois; John P. Newman, of Nebraska; Job H. Jackson, of Delaware; Redfield Proctor, of Vermont; W.W. Smith, of Virginia; D.B. Wesson, M. Burnham, of Massachusetts; Thomas Bowman, of Missouri; and John F. Hurst, Louis E. McComas, Benjamin Charlton, Andrew B. Duvall, Matthew G. Emery, Charles C. Glover, S.S. Henkle, Benjamin F. Leighton, John E. Beall, Aldis B. Browne, Mrs. John A. Logan, H.B. Moulton, Hiram Price, Mrs. Elizabeth J. Somers, Brainard H. Warner, and S.W. Woodward of the District of Columbia, their associates and successors, two thirds of whom shall at all times be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the name The American University, with power to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, and have perpetual succession; to acquire, take by devise, bequest or otherwise, hold, purchase, encumber, and convey such real and personal estate as shall be required for the purpose of its incorporation; to make and use a common seal, and the same to alter at pleasure; to choose a board of trustees consisting of not more than fifty, of whom fifteen shall constitute a quorum to do business, and which board shall be authorized to fill any vacancies in their number, to appoint such officers and agents as the business of the corporation shall require, and to make by-laws for the accomplishment of its purposes, for the management of its property, and for the regulation of its affairs. Said corporation is hereby empowered to establish and maintain within the District of Columbia a university for the promotion of education. The said corporation shall have power to grant and confer diplomas and the usual college and university degrees, and honorary degrees, and also such other powers as may be necessary fully to carry out and execute the general purposes of the said corporation as herein appearing.

Sec. 2 That this act may be amended or repealed at any time by the Congress in its pleasure.

Charles F. Crisp (D-Ga)
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Levi P. Morton
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate

Approved February 24th, 1893
Benjamin Harrison

* * * * *

Approved by virtue of a Special Act of Congress of the United States, February 24, 1893
(27 Stat. 476).

AN ACT To incorporate the American University

Section 1.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That John H. Vincent, John E. Andrus, James M. Buckley, Mark Hoyt, Jesse L. Hurlburt, James M. King, Charles C. McCabe, Charles H. Payne, John E. Searles, junior, John S. Huyler, of New York; Charles W. Buoy, J.A.M. Chapman, G.P. Hukill, Robert E. Pattison, Charles Scott, Mrs. Matthew Simpson of Pennsylvania; Julian S. Carr, of North Carolina; David H. Carroll, Jacob Tome, Alpheus W. Wilson, of Maryland; Charles H. Fowler, of Minnesota; William M. Springer, J.B. Hobbs, of Illinois; John P. Newman, of Nebraska; Job H. Jackson, of Delaware; Redfield Proctor, of Vermont; W.W. Smith, of Virginia; D.B. Wesson, M. Burnham, of Massachusetts; Thomas Bowman, of Missouri; and John F. Hurst, Louis E. McComas, Benjamin Charlton, Andrew B. Duvall, Matthew G. Emery, Charles C. Glover, S.S. Henkle, Benjamin F. Leighton, John E. Beall, Aldis B. Browne, Mrs. John A. Logan, H.B. Moulton, Hiram Price, Mrs. Elizabeth J. Somers, Brainard H. Warner, and S.W. Woodward of the District of Columbia, their associates and successors, including individuals who are members of the United Methodist Church, including (subject to their acceptance) the Bishop of the Washington Episcopal Area and General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the name The American University, with power to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, and have perpetual succession; to acquire, take by devise, bequest or otherwise, hold, purchase, encumber, and convey such real and personal estate as shall be required for the purpose of its incorporation; to make and use a common seal, and the same to alter at pleasure; and incorporators aforesaid, their associates and successors, who shall possess the qualifications herein required, shall constitute a board of trustees, by which the business of said corporation shall be transacted, which board shall hereafter consist of not less than twenty-five or more than fifty persons, eleven of whom shall constitute a quorum to do business, and which board shall be authorized to fill any vacancies in their number, to appoint such officers and agents as the business of the corporation shall require; and to make by-laws for the accomplishments of its purposes, for the management of its property, and for the regulation of its affairs. Said corporation is hereby empowered to establish and maintain within the District of Columbia a university for the promotion of education. The said corporation shall have power to grant and confer diplomas and the usual college and university degrees, and honorary degrees, and also such other powers as may be necessary fully to carry out and execute the general purposes of the said corporation as herein appearing.

Section 2.

a. After the date of enactment of this section –

1. no person shall be elected to the board of trustees of the corporation unless the election of such person has been approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church; members of the board of trustees shall hold office until their successors are elected;

2. all property, both real and personal, of the corporation shall be held in perpetuity for educational purposes under the auspices of the United Methodist Church;

3. the board of trustees of the corporation shall not propose any amendment by the Congress to this Act unless the proposal of such amendment has been previously approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church.

b. In the case of any violation by the corporation or the board of trustees of any provisions of subsection (a) of this section, all right, title, and interest of the corporation shall vest in the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Tennessee, or its successor.

Section 3.

That this act may be amended or repealed at any time by the Congress in its pleasure.

Approved by virtue of a Special Act of Congress of the United States, February 24, 1893 (27 Stat. 476), as amended by the following Acts of Congress: March 3, 1895 (28 Stat. 1814); June 30, 1951 (65 Stat. 107); August 1, 1953 (67 Stat. 359); October 31, 1990 (104 Stat. 1160); September 9, 1996 (110 Stat. 2378).

4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?

Yes
 No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: 2008

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

1976.

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

The undergraduate and graduate programs in SOC follow the School's mission statement:

Engaging. Enterprising. Experiential. American University's School of Communication inspires leaders through excellence in teaching, research, creativity and unique real-world opportunities.

SOC's undergraduate advising mission statement is:

The School of Communication Undergraduate advising office is committed to delivering outstanding advising services to our students by utilizing the theory and practice of Appreciative Advising. Appreciative Advising is an academic advising philosophy which calls advisors to celebrate students' strengths as they help advisees achieve their life and academic goals. It is a reciprocal approach where both student and advisor benefit and learn. Appreciative Advisors build relationships with students to keep them engaged in exploring multiple avenues for meeting their needs. We are truly invested in partnering with students to achieve academic and personal success."

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Semesters of 15 weeks

Summer sessions of 6 to 7 weeks

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

- Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree
- Graduate work leading to Master's degree
- Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

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

- BA in Communication: Journalism
- BA in Communication: Public Relations and Strategic Communication (formerly BA in Communication: Public Communication)
- MA in Journalism and Public Affairs
- MA in Interactive Journalism
- MA Strategic Communication

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

Bachelor's degrees require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours for graduation.
Master's degrees require a minimum of 30 semester credit hours for graduation.

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

Undergraduate Journalism students may earn a maximum of three credit hours for an internship. Public Relations and Strategic Communication students may earn up to six hours after curricular changes implementing ACEJMC revisions were approved. Journalism is expected to consider raising the allowable number of internship credits to six when it does its curriculum revision. Graduate students in Journalism as well as Strategic Communication may earn a maximum of three credit hours for an internship.

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

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Person in Charge |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| MA in Journalism & Public Affairs: Broadcast | John Watson |
| MA in Journalism & Public Affairs: Investigative | John Watson |
| MA in Journalism & Public Affairs: International | John Watson |
| MA in Interactive Journalism | Amy Eisman |
| MA in Media Entrepreneurship | Amy Eisman |
| BA in Communication: Public Relations & Strategic Communication | Pallavi Kumar |
| MA Strategic Communication | Pallavi Kumar |
| MA Professional Strategic Communication (Weekend) | Dina Martinez |

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

Undergraduates: 6,403 Graduate: 3,281 Washington College of Law: 1,179

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the unit, by sequence and total (if the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total): (As of Sept. 17, 2014)

| Name of Sequence or Specialty | Undergraduate majors |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| BA in Journalism: Print | 77 |
| BA in Journalism: Broadcast | 60 |
| Journalism Intended | 93 |
| BA in Public Relations & Strategic Communication (Including BA in Public Communication)** | 313 |
| PR & Strat Comm and/or PC Intended | 67 |
| Undecided | 59 |
| Total | 669 |

***BA in Public Communication underwent a curriculum revision and name change (BA in Public Relations and Strategic Communication) effective for fall 2014. Current students will be given the option of continuing under the BA in Public Communication or switching to the BA in Public Relations & Strategic Communication.*

15. Number of graduate students enrolled: (As of Sept. 17, 2014)

180 (Journalism and Strategic Communication)

390 (All SOC graduate programs)

| | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| MA in Strategic Communication | 132 |
| (Weekday Program) | 44) |
| (Weekend Program) | 30) |
| (Online Program) | 58)* Not accredited |
| MA in Journalism and Public Affairs | 48 |
| (Broadcast) | 15) |
| (Investigative) | 10) |
| (International) | 3) |
| (Interactive Journalism Weekend Program) | 20) |

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

See attached at end of Introduction

17. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2014 – 2015 academic year: \$11.24 million (includes all SOC units)

Percentage increase or decrease in three years: Increased 9.08 percent from FY12-13; 7.76 percent from FY13 to FY14; and 4.72 percent from FY14 to FY15

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$3,027,340 (Journalism and Public Communication only)

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.

Journalism and Public Communication Faculty AY2014-15

- Bernardini, Dario, Professorial Lecturer
- Borum Chattoo, Caty – Executive-in-Residence
- Brown, Carolyn – Assistant Professor (Family leave fall 2014)
- Bryant, Terry – Professorial Lecturer
- Chuang, Angie – Assistant Professor (Sabbatical fall 2014)
- Donald, David – Data Journalist in Residence
- Doshi, Priya -- Instructor
- Fahy, Declan – Assistant Professor
- Graf, Joseph – Assistant Professor
- Hall, Jane – Associate Professor
- Hoare, Corinne – Instructor
- Kumar, Pallavi – Assistant Professor
- Lawrence, Christine – Assistant Professor
- Lewis, Charles – Professor
- Lih, Andrew – Associate Professor
- Martinez, Dina – Professorial Lecturer
- McKay, Pilar – Professorial Lecturer
- Melillo Farrill, Wendy – Assistant Professor
- Olmsted, Jill – Associate Professor
- O'Rourke, Molly – Executive in Residence
- Page, Janis – Professorial Lecturer
- Parrell, Christy -- Instructor
- Perri, Lynne – Journalist-in-Residence
- Puglisi, Gemma – Assistant Professor
- Simpson, Chris – Professor
- Stack, Richard – Associate Professor
- Steinhorn, Leonard – Professor
- Streitmatter, Rodger – Professor (Sabbatical fall 2014)
- Sullivan, John – Investigative Journalist-in-Residence

- Susca, Margot – Professorial Lecturer
- Talan, Scott – Assistant Professor
- Watson, John – Associate Professor
- Weissman, Paula – Professorial Lecturer
- Zaharna, Rhonda – Associate Professor

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

Fall 2014

- Adams, Christopher
- Albergo, Paul
- Albert, Christopher
- Babb, Andrew
- Benedetto, Richard
- Bhaskar, Rajul
- Edwards, Windsor
- Gassman, Mara
- Glassman, Matthew
- Gordemer, Barry
- Hatch, Joshua
- Hayes, Darrell
- Haynes, Gillie
- Hecox, Douglas
- Ivancin, Maria
- Kamber, Victor
- Kirk, Beverly
- Kubiske, Daniel
- Lawrence, Jill
- Lehrman, Robert
- Markus, Donald
- Mathur, Vandana
- Memmott, Carol
- Mistry, Rajul
- Patterson, Jeremiah
- Piacente, Steven
- Rasicot, Julie
- Roberts, Robert
- Sauer, Jennifer
- Schaffer, Jan
- Simon, Cecilia

- Snyder, Joni
- Walker, Danna
- Wolvin, Andrew
- Zarek, Corinna
- Zongker, Brett
- Zuckerman Stone, Andrea

Spring 2014

- Adams, Christopher
 - Archambault, Peggy
 - Babb, Andrew
 - Beaman, William
 - Benedetto, Richard
 - Bhaskar, Rajul
 - Carey, Curtis
 - Davidson, Thomas
 - Doshi, Priya
 - Edwards, Windsor
 - Geisler, Meredith
 - Glassman, Matthew
 - Gomez, Maryann
 - Haynes, Gillie
 - Hecox, Douglass
 - Kamber, Victor
 - Kennedy, Thomas
 - Konowe, Adam
 - Kosseff, Jeffrey
 - LaFauce, Anthony
 - Lehrman, Robert
 - Markus, Donald
 - Mathur, Vandana
 - McDonald, Mark
 - Nussbaum, Jeffrey
 - Patterson, Jeremiah
 - Piacente, Steven
 - Prah, Pamela
 - Rozansky, Genevieve
 - Sauer, Jennifer
 - Tenney, Judith
 - Ward, Scott
 - Zizos, Chryssa
-

20. Schools on the semester system:

For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.

72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications

| Year | Total Graduates | Number | Percent |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|---------|
| AY2013-2014 | 132 | 132 | 100 |
| AY2012-2013 | 140 | 140 | 100 |

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

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

OVERVIEW

The School of Communication was not established until 1993, but the roots run deep at American University for the teaching of journalism. The institution graduated its first journalism student in 1929, and it has offered media-related courses since then. American's Journalism and Public Communication programs were first accredited in 1976, but according to the self-study, "it is only in the last 30 years that Communication has emerged as a stand-alone unit with a distinctive mix of undergraduate and graduate degrees."

The School is among the most comprehensive of the country's mass communication programs, with 55 full-time faculty members, some 950 undergraduates spread across four majors (Journalism; Public Relations and Strategic Communication; Communications Studies; and Film and Media Arts); and 370 graduate students.

Undergraduate baccalaureate programs in Journalism, along with Public Relations and Strategic Communication (which, until fall 2014, was labeled Public Communication) are within the scope of this ACEJMC review. Also within the scope of the review are the M.A. programs in Strategic Communication, Journalism and Public Affairs, and Interactive Journalism.

The School enrolls 669 students in Journalism and in its Public Relations and Strategic Communication programs. It also enrolls 180 students in its master's programs in Strategic Communication and in Journalism and Public Affairs.

Of the 55 full-time faculty in the School, 33 are members of the divisions in Journalism and in Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

A private institution chartered by Congress and established in 1893, American University includes six stand-alone units in addition to Communication: the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of International Service, the School of Professional and Extended Studies, the School of Public Affairs, the Kogod School of Business and the Washington College of Law.

American enrolls 6,403 undergraduates; 3,281 graduate students; and 1,179 law students. The self-study notes that American "describes its student population as representing a microcosm of global diversity," attracting students from throughout the United States and more than 100 countries.

The self-study notes that the "School sees itself as a laboratory for the new communication services, strategies and professional roles emerging in the digital environment. The Journalism program has long focused on public affairs, tapping into the people, knowledge and institutions of Washington, D.C. The Public Communication program has focused on strategic communication for the nonprofit, political and government sectors."

The undergraduate and graduate programs in the School follow the same mission statement: "Engaging. Enterprising. Experiential. American University's School of Communication inspires leaders through excellence in teaching, research, creativity and unique real-world opportunities."

Commendably, the School takes pride in its service to students. Its undergraduate advising mission statement reads in part: “The School of Communication undergraduate advising office is committed to delivering outstanding advising services to our students by utilizing the theory and practice of Appreciative Advising. Appreciative Advising is an academic advising philosophy which calls advisors to celebrate students’ strengths as they help advisees achieve their life and academic goals. It is a reciprocal approach where both student and advisor benefit and learn. Advisors build relationships with students to keep them engaged in exploring multiple avenues for meeting their needs.”

The School notes in its self-study that it “is the only professionally oriented school in Washington, D.C., that brings together Journalism, Public Communication, Communication Studies, and Film and Media Arts with an international perspective and a focus on emerging media. The School’s curricular programs are based on the foundations of traditional skills and values, with an emphasis on rigor and academic excellence, and dedicated to keeping pace with technology and techniques of its professionals.”

The School is justifiably proud of its newly renovated 55,000-square-foot McKinley Building.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a)The unit has a written 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.

The School maps with the university’s strategic plan, as it notes in its self-study, “to bring SOC in better alignment with the University’s strategic direction.” The School’s high-level goals: integrate and elevate its professional and scholarly strengths; increase visibility and impact of faculty, staff and student work; amplify and extend its public-purpose work by engaging with pressing questions of the day; deepen and expand its involvement with high-level partners; develop, assess and refine its signature learning experiences; create next-generation media, communication and engagement applications; pursue meaningful lifelong engagement with alumni and friends; continuously evaluate its performance against benchmark units and institutions; operate and govern itself collaboratively and with streamlined efficiency; attract and retain top talent—students, faculty, staff, partners, funders and friends; and generate additional means of financial support via revenue-generating programs and new relationships. The self-study notes that its recent planning and goals have “included such vital initiatives as completing construction of the School’s new home in the McKinley Building, focusing on online programs, and strengthening the School’s professional links with partners such as The Washington Post, Discovery Communications, the Smithsonian Institution and the Newseum.” Specific goals for the Journalism and Public Relations and Strategic Communication divisions align with those of the university and include: epitomize the scholar-teacher ideal; provide an unsurpassed undergraduate education and experience; demonstrate distinction in graduate, professional and legal studies; engage the great ideas and issues of our time through research, centers and institutes; reflect and value diversity; bring the world to American University and American University to the world; act on [the institution’s] values through social responsibility and service; encourage innovations and high performance; and win recognition and distinction. The School’s relatively new dean, now in his third year, is known for emphasizing planning. Clearly, the School takes long-range planning seriously and works to plan in tandem and in sync with the university. The university’s central administration clearly supports the School — by its words, actions and funds.

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

Faculty members play an active and appropriate role in governance. The self-study notes: “By joint agreement of the Faculty Senate and the trustees, the university has adopted a ‘Tripartite Principle’ affecting University organization and governance in academic affairs,” with defined roles of shared responsibility for faculty, students and administrators at various levels. Manuals and handbooks clearly address procedures. The School’s faculty met monthly in 2013-2014. In addition, the faculties in Journalism and in Public Communication also met at least once each month. Minutes of the meetings are distributed on the School’s blog, which also provides a platform for comments on issues. The School’s division directors meet monthly with the dean, the associate dean for academic administration and the associate dean for faculty affairs. A logical range of committees is in place, including curriculum, diversity, merit and nominations.

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

The chief administrative officer of the School is its dean, who reports to the university’s provost. The dean, as noted above, is in his third year. He is the third dean since the School’s formation in 1993. The previous dean, who was appointed in 2001 and who led the School through two successful ACEJMC reviews, returned to the faculty in 2012. The dean appoints the associate dean for academic administration, the associate dean for operations and strategic initiatives, the associate dean for faculty affairs, and the assistant dean for technology and budget. Other direct reports to the dean: the senior director of strategic partnerships and initiatives, the senior manager of Web and marketing communication and the office’s chief of staff. The dean also works closely with the director of development, who reports directly to the central Office of Development. The School’s division directors are elected by their respective faculties with the approval of the dean. The dean enjoys the support of the faculty and the central administration. Common descriptors of the dean: energetic, inclusive, accessible, honest, forward-looking, creative, reflective, astute, technologically savvy, respectful of diverse viewpoints and a good ambassador for the School — on campus and externally. The central administration expressed great confidence in him, with one administrator noting that the dean “likes to push the boundaries.” Faculty generally had good things to say about the administrative team within the School, with the associate dean for academic administration earning special praise from many for her deft day-to-day handling of School matters.

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

The dean is evaluated annually by the provost, based on performance against stated goals. The self-study provided this paragraph from the provost’s 2013-2014 review of the dean: “You have had a terrific year. You have effectively wooed external constituencies, built or expanded strategic partners, raised the visibility of the School and its fundraising, provided a thoughtful dialogue about the future direction of the field, managed the details associated with the construction of a magnificent new facility in a season of uncooperative weather, successfully graduated your first doctoral students, and provided leadership on School and university-wide initiatives.” Associate and assistant deans are evaluated annually. Division directors also are reviewed annually through the faculty merit process.

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

Procedures for the timely resolution of complaints and concerns are clearly outlined. The steps are well defined and followed by the School.

SUMMARY: Shared governance is alive and well in the School, as is long-range planning. The dean is respected by the faculty, staff and central administration. The leadership team is viewed positively. A positive sense of “community” is evident at the School, with virtually all regarding morale as good. Faculty and students clearly enjoy working and studying in the well-appointed McKinley Building.

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

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

The School of Communication operates 13 different graduate programs. Three of the programs are under review in this visit – the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs, the M.A. in Interactive Journalism and the M.A. in Strategic Communication. Each is directed by a separate faculty member, and each of these programs appears strong academically.

However, the M.A. in Strategic Communication has seen a decline in the total number of students entering this year to 38, down from 50 in 2013. The administration of that program attributes this to increased competition in the Washington, D.C. market, particularly an unaccredited program at Georgetown University, as well as to the School’s addition of its fully online M.A. program in Strategic Communication, which has enrolled some 60 students in three intakes, but is not within the scope of this review. The M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs has enrolled 26 students in the current class, while the M.A. in Interactive Journalism has also seen a slight decline in enrollment to 24. The administration is determining its future strategy.

There is no separate written mission statement or written strategic/long-range plan for the master’s programs. The dean, however, explains that the School has been working hard the past two years to align the programs with the overarching strategic goals of the university, which is the practice at the institution. School-based strategic planning will follow from this year’s foundation-laying discussions on what it is calling “SOC 2030 Guideposts.”

So while the School does not have a separate written plan or mission statement for its master’s programs, it is clearly thinking about the vision and direction of these programs.

(g) The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional master’s program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional master’s program.

The School administers its professional master’s programs in a way that is constantly looking at the curriculum of them. In meetings with the master’s program directors and faculty, several examples came up about how the faculty is directing changes in the professional master’s programs.

For example, the M.A. in Strategic Communication changed its name from the M.A. in Public Communication several years ago to better reflect what was being taught. This name change was implemented by faculty vote. A fully online program was begun in January 2013, joining the School's longtime part-time weekend M.A. program. The faculty is considering melding the online programs with the residential programs to give the students more options in terms of class choices. In the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs program, the curriculum has been changed in recent years to place more emphasis on digital skills, and there is an attempt to ensure that all students are skilled in at least two delivery platforms.

SUMMARY: The School's M.A. programs are well run. Some of them are under new administration within the past year, but the administrators appear to have innovative ideas on how to move them forward. The School is examining ways to reverse the decline in enrollment in some of its programs. It also has been proactive in developing online M.A. programs, as well as strengthening weekend programs that have been offered for two decades.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/ non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School is 100 percent in compliance with the 72-hour rule for the two academic years preceding the site visit.

A bachelor's degree at AU requires a minimum of 120 semester hours for graduation. The School of Communication requires a minimum of 36 hours and a maximum of 40 for the B.A. in Communication-Journalism and requires 48 hours for the B.A. in Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

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

The curriculum is professionally strong, with an emphasis on skills training.

Writing is at the core of the program. Students must successfully complete Writing for Communication, as well as writing and reporting courses in their major sequences.

A new course added since the last accreditation review addresses the need for expanded multimedia training. Digital Skills, required before journalism students take their first reporting course, teaches basics of HTML, website construction, content management systems, basic Photoshop and digital video editing.

The curriculum is enhanced by access to the Washington media market, with the Journalism program offering public affairs reporting opportunities and the Strategic Communication program offering opportunities for students in the nonprofit, political and government sectors.

While courses generally reflect the range of student competencies outlined by the Council, ethics and history are not required courses. Journalism Ethics is one of 16 options that students in the broadcast sequence may choose from and one of 11 courses students in the Print Journalism track may choose from for required classes. A small proportion of SOC students (267 students, or an average of about 42 a year) completed the optional Journalism Ethics class from 2008 through the spring of 2014. A review of the syllabus for the core Understanding Media class required of all SOC majors shows little attention to ethics. Public Relations students are required to additionally take the Communication and Society

course, which does cover ethics in some detail. Public Relations students may also elect to take an Ethics in Strategic Communication class, and they write their own ethics codes in the required senior capstone course, Public Relations Portfolio. Faculty members and administrators say that ethics is woven into almost all SOC courses.

Similarly, History of Mass Communications is not required for any of the sequences under review, although the Understanding Media course provides a basic grounding in historical issues related to the fields. In addition to that course, students in the Journalism sequence may elect to take a History of Broadcast class and must choose one of three Media Studies classes that deal in some way with historical media events (How the News Media Shape History; Dissident Media: Voices from the Underground, or Contemporary Media in a Global Society). There is no specific history option for the Public Relations and Strategic Communication sequence, although some historical aspects of the industry are covered in several electives, including the PR Presidency and Politics and the Media.

Students in Journalism sequences are required to take a Communication Law class; however, Public Relations students are not. Legal issues pertaining to public relations are covered in the required Public Relations course as students are exposed to the basic tools and techniques in public relations.

A substantially revised curriculum for the B.A. in Public Relations and Strategic Communication (formerly called Public Communication) was introduced in the fall of 2014. In its self-study, the SOC notes: “With the exception of the B.A. in Journalism, the School’s curriculum has been restructured and revised to reflect changes in the external environment.” Efforts to revise the Journalism curricula were delayed when a proposal was rejected by the provost in 2013. While some members of the faculty expressed frustration at the slow pace of change, discussions continue on Journalism curricular revisions that include: increasing hours allowed in the major under new ACEJMC rules; merging the broadcast and print tracks; adding more digital training to the curriculum; increasing the hours allowed for internships; adding capstone experiences; moving students into reporting classes more quickly; and reinstating a grammar module in Writing for Communication that was discontinued several years ago or instituting a grammar exam for majors.

JOURNALISM (BROADCAST)

This is the smallest of the three sequences being evaluated, representing just under 10 percent (59 of 599) of declared majors. Students may take a minimum of 36 and a maximum of 40 credit hours in the major.

Three core courses (9 credits) are required: Understanding Media, Writing for Communication and Digital Skills. Students then proceed to five (15 hours) required major courses: Reporting, Communication Law, Digital Audio Production, Advanced Television & Video Production, and Backpack Video Journalism. Students take an additional four classes (12 hours) of Media Studies courses that include Journalism Ethics, Sports Journalism, Digital Media and Culture and Internship, among other options. There is no capstone experience.

Content of courses, as indicated by syllabuses reviewed, adequately covers the fundamentals of the discipline. There is a balance between skills and theory classes, and classes are presented in logical order. Courses appear to have kept pace with industry practices.

Broadcast students have access to experienced faculty members and state-of-the-art facilities, including a New Media Innovation Lab and 16 edit bays as well as a television studio and control rooms in a separate building. Students produce a weekly newscast that is carried online and on a local cable channel.

JOURNALISM (PRINT)

The Print Journalism sequence has slightly more than 12 percent of declared majors with 74 of 599 students. Students may take a minimum of 36 and a maximum of 40 credit hours in the major.

The same core courses (9 hours) are required for this sequence as for the Broadcast sequence above. Students then take another three classes (9 hours) of required major courses: Reporting, Communication Law and Advanced Reporting, followed by three courses (9 credits) of additional skills courses that include Feature Writing, In-Depth Journalism, Opinion Writing, Writing for Convergent Media and Internship, among other options. Finally, students take three courses (9 credits) of Media Studies courses that include such courses as Journalism Ethics, Digital Media and Culture, Politics and the Media and Foreign Policy and the Press. No editing course is required, and there is no capstone experience for students in this sequence.

Content of courses, as indicated by textbooks used and syllabuses reviewed, adequately cover the fundamentals of the discipline. There is a balance between skills and theory classes, and classes are presented in a logical order.

A review of syllabuses indicates courses have kept pace with industry practices. For example, students in the basic Reporting class required of all majors must submit photo galleries with several of their stories, and students in the Advanced Reporting class must include multimedia, such as edited audio and video, as part of their story packages. Students report that their instructors are generally up-to-date and digital skills are emphasized in skills classes.

Print Journalism students benefit from faculty members with extensive experience in their professions and have welcomed the addition of new instructors with strong digital skills.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

This is the largest sequence, with 49 percent (294 of 599 declared majors).

Since the last accreditation visit, the School renamed the degree Public Relations and Strategic Communication and made curricular revisions in the Public Communication division to shift the emphasis to strategic communication. The new curriculum was launched in fall 2014. Students in this major are required to take 48 credit hours in the School.

The new curriculum added credit hours for the major, allowing students to take more communications courses and create concentrations around areas of interest. As a result, students take 48 hours in the major, compared to a maximum of 40 for Journalism majors. Current students have the option of continuing under the old curriculum or switching to the new one.

The sequence includes a core curriculum of eight classes: Understanding Media; Writing for Communication; Communication and Society; Public Relations; Public Relations Writing; Public Relations Case Studies; Public Communications Research; and Public Relations Portfolio, which serves as a capstone experience. Subsequently, students choose three electives (nine credit hours) from a block called “Advanced Skills and Strategies,” and three (nine credit hours) from another block called “Advanced Topics and Specialties.” The remaining required six credit hours may be selected from the aforementioned categories or from other approved courses. Students may take up to six hours in internship credit.

Students are offered six different concentrations that, while not required, guide them toward specific career paths. For example, a concentration in Corporate Communication suggests classes in Interpersonal Communication, Public Speaking, Communication Law, International Strategic Communication, and Social Media Strategies and Tactics, among others.

The PR curriculum adheres to PRSA requirements. A review of syllabuses indicates courses have kept pace with industry practices. Although students are not required to take the Digital Skills class required of Journalism students, digital skills are incorporated into other classes in the sequence. The capstone Public Relations Portfolio class, for example, includes an assignment for students to create their own online portfolios.

A notable strength of the sequence is the capstone Public Relations Portfolio class, in which students work with real-world clients, including non-profits and major businesses, to develop social media campaigns, events, public service announcements, websites and media relations campaigns, among other projects. Recent clients have included the Newseum, Hilton Hotels and Honest Tea. Students are divided into teams and compete to produce the campaign chosen by the client.

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

Students, faculty and administrators agree the School’s primary focus is on teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As one faculty member put it: “This is a place where teaching and students are still a top priority.”

There is general agreement that while the School has made strides in keeping up with the changing needs of the industry, more remains to be done to ensure that students have digital skills in Web production, coding and multimedia storytelling and that they have data skills, including the ability to measure audiences and present data. Social media is integrated into a number of classes, with students participating in class Facebook pages, Google groups and tweeting lectures and discussions.

Most faculty members see the School primarily as a professional unit, with the goal of preparing students for jobs in the industry. Some expressed concern that this goal has recently begun to be overshadowed by an emphasis on scholarship at the university level.

Interviews with students and alumni indicate satisfaction with the quality of instruction. Students described a faculty that is highly engaged in the profession, accessible and caring. Many professors have close connections to the communications and journalism professions and frequently leverage those

connections to open doors for students. It appears that these mentorship relationships last well beyond graduation for some students.

Students also cited location as a significant advantage in their education. They said the School brings many high-level professionals into classes, provides many other opportunities for students to interact with professionals and hires many adjunct instructors who bring fresh skills and knowledge to the classroom.

Some students said the availability of classes is sometimes an issue, forcing them to postpone taking the classes or taking them out of sequence.

Most course syllabi are detailed and comprehensive, with specific learning objectives.

According to the self-study, to ensure that courses with multiple sections achieve the same objectives, division directors and the associate dean for academic administration review syllabuses for all faculty teaching for the first time, meet with adjuncts and review the results of teaching evaluations. Experienced full-time faculty members are sometimes paired with adjuncts to provide mentoring and help.

In its self-study, the SOC reports that special attention is paid to the core Writing for Communication course, which is taught primarily by adjunct instructors. One professor, who serves as director of the School's writing programs, developed a base syllabus used by all those teaching the course and conducts a training session each semester for all instructors to address grading issues, teaching techniques and course content. A review of syllabuses for this class shows that sections are highly standardized. However, the syllabuses for the core Understanding Media and Communication and Society courses do not conform to a standard syllabus.

The SOC faculty is well represented in university-wide teaching awards. One SOC professor has twice been named AU Faculty Member of the Year and also was named Honors Professor of the Year. Others were recipients of the 2014 Professor of the Year award, presented by the AU Student Government, and the university-wide Outstanding Scholarship, Research, Creative Activity, and Other Professional Contributions award. Faculty members also have received several small university grants for research and curriculum development.

Non-tenured and tenured faculty are supported by the university's Center for Teaching, Research and Learning, which provides a website with teaching resources and hosts an annual conference and weekly sessions throughout the academic year to support stronger teaching methods. The Center and the university library also provide multimedia training to faculty to assist with the use of electronic tools for teaching. An SOC professor served as associate director for the center until his retirement in 2013.

The associate dean for academic administration serves as a mentor to many new faculty members, answering questions and reviewing syllabuses and student evaluations.

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

The School is largely in compliance with this rule for on-site courses. Most skills classes have enrollments of slightly fewer than 20 students, with several skills classes showing enrollments of as few as five or six students. Two sections of the Public Relations Portfolio capstone class had enrollments of 22 and 23 students in the fall and spring of 2014.

The School teaches a handful of online classes during summer sessions and none for full-time students during the academic year. All are electives except for an online version of the required Writing for Communication course. Enrollments ranged from 13 to 22.

(e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter credit hours). Students may take up to two semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals. Students may take up to three semester courses (or their quarter equivalent) at a professional media outlet owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.

Since 2009, the university has consistently been ranked by U.S. News and World Report in the top 10 of schools nationwide offering internships for credit. The latest rankings put the university at 10th, down from No. 1 in 2011 and 2012, which the university suggests may be linked to changes in the for-profit sector related to non-paid internships.

The university's career center is the major contact point for most internship postings, but the School plays a significant role in matching students with appropriate outlets. (One major employer of interns said that the university's career site is notably superior to those of other prestigious universities in the area.)

Once a student selects a site, a job description must be reviewed and approved by faculty members assigned to internship classes that semester. Faculty members assigned to supervise internships vary from semester to semester. They typically hold three classroom sessions per semester in which students can discuss their work and workplace issues and during which the School's advisers conduct career preparation training. For credit-bearing internships, the School sends on-site work supervisors a survey that asks them to rate student performance on a range of factors from resourcefulness and dependability to writing ability and use of technology. The results of the survey account for a major portion of the student's grade. Students also are required to complete a paper summarizing their experience. Requirements are clearly outlined in syllabuses for the internship classes.

The School permits students in the Public Relations and Strategic Communication major to complete six credit hours of internships, under the revisions effective in fall 2014, but students in the Journalism sequence are restricted to no more than three hours. Students are required to complete 180 hours of work over a 12-week period to earn three hours of academic credit. Students generally complete internships for credit in their junior or senior year. According to information provided by the School, about 50 students complete internships for credit each semester.

While internships are not required, students, faculty members and administrators said it's rare to encounter a student who has not done multiple internships. Some students interviewed said they had completed a half-a-dozen internships by their senior year, most of them not-for-credit. They said internships are a big part of the culture at the university, with many students starting as early as their freshman year.

The School uses a system of open job and internship postings, but executives interviewed by the site team reported that the faculty is very engaged in the internship program.

In 2011, the School launched the Dean's Internship Program, which offers the best students the opportunity to work with high-profile partners such as The Washington Post, NPR, USA Today, National Geographic and the Newseum. Eighty-two Dean's internships have been awarded since the fall of 2012 to graduate and undergraduate students.

Interviews with executives and editors from NPR, USA Today and National Geographic, as well as APCO Worldwide (a global communication and business strategy firm) indicate that School interns are highly valued. Notably, each of those organizations offers paid internships; one reported that, of 15 internships during the fall 2014 semester, seven were held by students from this university. The School's interns stand out, said one executive, because they are "highly motivated and exceptionally ambitious; they are really trying to make a difference and are extremely willing to get involved in a variety of different things."

The robust internship program is credited with helping SOC graduates find jobs. The School reports that 80.6 percent of undergraduate students and 95.6 percent of graduate students had found positions within six months of graduating in 2013. The numbers for 2012 were 78.8 percent and 91.7 percent employment for undergraduates and graduates, respectively, and the numbers for 2011 were 68.8 percent and 85.7 percent employment for undergraduates and graduates, respectively.

SUMMARY: Students benefit from a professionally strong faculty that is committed to student success. A new Public Relations and Strategic Communication curriculum offers students both a broader and deeper experience, with additional credit hours in the major. Faculty members generally agree that similar curricular revisions are needed in the Journalism sequence, but they disagree on the specifics. It is an issue they vow to tackle in the next year. Efforts are ongoing to keep courses current, and students benefit from a multitude of internship opportunities in the Washington area.

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

(f) At least half of the required credit hours must be in professional skills courses that are appropriate to professional communication careers.

The M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs program requires 33 credit hours. Nine hours of the core curriculum are professional skills courses. There are three specialties in the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs – investigative, international and broadcast. With the specialty courses and elective choices, the minimum number of professional skills course credit hours would be 18 for international students, 24 for investigative students and 27 for broadcast students. Each is more than 50 percent of the required credit hours.

The M.A. in Interactive Journalism requires 30 credit hours. The curriculum has no electives. Of the 30 credit hours, 18 hours are professional skills courses, or 60 percent.

The M.A. in Strategic Communication requires 30 credit hours. Of those, 12 cover professional skills. Students are also encouraged to complete an internship as part of the program. Students who take this option have 15 hours, or 50 percent, of their coursework in professional skills courses. Those who do not take this option have 12 credit hours to devote to graduate-level courses elsewhere in the School or the university. Many of these courses have professional skills. While it is possible for a student to complete this program with fewer than half of the required hours in professional skills courses, the School says that is “highly unlikely.”

(g) Instruction and curricular requirements for professional master’s students are more advanced and rigorous than for undergraduate students, including courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Many of the courses – such as Communication Theory and Research for Strategic Communication – in the professional master’s programs are limited to students in those programs. In meetings with master’s students, almost all of them felt as if the course requirements were sufficiently more rigorous than their respective undergraduate programs. A review of the syllabuses for these classes shows that the students are required to complete professional and academic work that requires analytical thinking and an understanding of complex topics. In addition, the M.A. students are required to complete a capstone project of approximately 40 pages that one professor described as “more than an undergraduate term paper but not quite a thesis.”

Because of the size of the School’s M.A. enrollment, which allows it to offer specific courses just for these students, M.A. students rarely, if ever, take courses with undergraduates.

SUMMARY: The curriculum and instruction of the M.A. programs reviewed for accreditation are rigorous and distinctive from undergraduate programs. The School’s M.A. programs pride themselves on preparing students for the real world while giving them a theoretical underpinning of mass communication messages. A capstone project ensures that the students can hit the ground running after graduation.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit’s definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.**

In 2008, the ACEJMC site team noted that while the School had created both a diversity plan and a permanent Diversity Committee, there was no evidence of follow-through and it appeared that students seemed to fail to grasp the meaning of racial and ethnic diversity despite the presence of courses specifically related to those issues. The current self-study includes a Diversity Plan dated April 2009, characterizing it as a “preliminary document” and “work in progress” that builds upon the findings of the 2008 self-study. This 2009 plan asserts that the School is committed to “creating an environment that welcomes and nurtures diversity in all its aspects, including diversity within the (School’s) student body, faculty, curriculum and teaching, creative, scholarly and professional activity, and service.” It enunciates six principles and goals associated with that aspiration and offers proposed actions in various phases.

The six principles and goals are: to spread the spirit of diversity across the curriculum, service, scholarly, creative and professional activities; to increase undergraduate students’ understanding of the meaning of racial and ethnic diversity; to increase enrollment of graduate and undergraduate students from historically under-represented racial and ethnic groups; to strengthen recruitment of faculty groups from under-represented groups; and to strengthen retention of female faculty and faculty from under-represented groups.

The School’s permanent Diversity Committee meets monthly and has created a diversity website that provides information about scholarships and fellowships, advising and relevant events. The committee is very active; it also has organized specific activities and speakers (Student Dialogues on Diversity and Inclusion Week among them) and is charged with reviewing the climate for diversity and reporting to the faculty.

- (b) The unit’s curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit’s curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

The School offers five courses that qualify as part of the university’s required classes emphasizing a “variety of perspectives” on gender, race, class and culture. All Journalism and Public Communication students are required to take one of those courses, Understanding Media, which includes communication theories related to various audiences, including African-Americans and international audiences in

Islamic countries.

The School also offers several electives incorporating diversity issues: Race, Ethnic and Community Reporting (focusing on under-covered D.C.-area communities); Entertainment Communication (exploring such topics as LGBTQ presence in the entertainment industry and portrayal of other minorities); Media Power in Latin America; Journalism Ethics (focusing on the media role in giving voice to society's traditionally voiceless); and Grassroots Digital Advocacy.

Other classes that have specifically incorporated diversity issues include Strategic Multicultural Communication (effective communication with multicultural groups); Public Communication Research (public opinion research within racial and ethnic groups); Interpersonal Communication (cross-cultural communication); Public Relations Portfolio (working with organizations that serve the global community); PR Case Studies; and Strategic Communications Management (recruiting, hiring and retaining diverse employees).

Guest speakers in the past three years have included professionals engaged in journalism and strategic communication issues pertaining to Asian, Hispanic and African-American affairs. Students noted that they are exposed to diverse viewpoints, that guest speakers are diverse, and that inclusivity discussions are included in classes in addition to those where diversity is the focal point. Diversity components are mentioned also in various syllabuses.

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and supports their retention, progress and success.

The School had 16 faculty searches over the last three academic years. Of the 285 total applicants in the hiring pool, 138 (48 percent) were female, and 94 (33 percent) were minorities. Offers were made to and accepted by nine female candidates and two minority candidates.

However, the School reports that retention has been a problem. Since the 2004 Diversity Plan was approved, the School has hired five faculty members of color and tenured one faculty member of color. However, it reports that six faculty members of color have retired or resigned. As stated in the 2009 Diversity Plan: "While progress has been made in faculty recruitment, retention has been an issue and threatens to undermine our best efforts to make diverse hires. SOC must improve its retention of faculty from underrepresented groups by consciously creating an environment that welcomes and nurtures diversity, and formalizing a program to mentor and advocate for those faculty members." To address this, the plan proposes establishing a "formal mentor-advocate program that pairs incoming faculty with more senior faculty." The plan also proposes to offer exit interviews to resigning and retiring faculty of color.

Of the 33 full-time journalism and public communication faculty for 2013-14, 27 (82 percent) were white, three (9 percent) were Asian, one was Latina and one was Black. In terms of ethnicity, that constitutes modest change from 2008-09, when the School reported that 86.8 percent were white, 6.6 percent were black, 4.4 percent were Asian and 2.2 percent were Latino. The split in terms of gender was roughly equal: 17 female and 15 male.

Of the 106 part-time/adjunct faculty for 2013-14, the gender split was equal and 85 percent were white. Beyond that, 6.6 percent were Black/African-American; 6.6 percent were Asian; and 2.8 percent were Hispanic/Latino.

Of the 36 individuals on the professional staff, 23 are women, including three African-Americans and one Latina. There are two men of Asian descent on the staff.

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

The self-study reports that the School has “increased its diverse undergraduate population only marginally.” Of the current undergraduate population, however, it reports that approximately 20 percent are considered Pell eligible and about 10 percent are first-generation college students.

The School considers its geographic service area to be the United States. In 2013-14, 58.8 percent of the School’s undergraduates were white compared with 72.4 percent of the U.S. population. The School’s minority student population included 6.4 percent Black/African-American; 10.1 percent Hispanic/Latino; 6.4 percent Asian American/Pacific Islander; and 5.2 percent “other” (American Indian and two or more races). Total minority student population: 28.1 percent. In addition, 6.9 percent were international students. (The School reported the ethnicity of 10.6 percent of undergraduates as “unknown.”) Compared with 2008, the recent numbers reflect a relatively static white population while the percentage of Black/African-American students declined and the Hispanic and Asian percentages increased.

Graduation rates of under-represented groups are slightly better than those of white students in the Journalism and Public Communication majors. Over the previous three years, according to the self-study, Hispanic, American Indian/Native American and Black/African-American students have graduated in four years at an average rate of 85.2 percent compared with 81.6 percent of white students in the two majors.

In the M.A. programs, the School’s efforts to recruit Black/African-American students have resulted in a higher number of these students than the overall university. Nearly 19 percent of the M.A. students are classified as Black/African-American, compared to 11.5 percent for the university. The School has a slightly lower percentage of Hispanic/Latino and Asian-American/Pacific Islander students in its M.A. programs than the overall university.

The School has made a specific effort to recruit diverse students into the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs program. A fellowship agreement the School has with The Washington Post calls for the students receiving that fellowship to be Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino or Black/African-American. The director of the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs is African-American and uses industry contacts to recruit diverse applicants. In addition, he is working to develop a program with an historically black institution—Hampton University—to recruit undergraduate students under which those who come to the School can count some of their undergraduate coursework in their M.A. program.

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

The university adopted a Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment Policy in 1999 prohibiting such actions on the basis of color, race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and disability. The policy is extensive and includes mention of hostile environments. It spells out in detail informal and formal procedures for dealing with such practices.

Students with a documented disability that requires accommodations are eligible for such through the university's Academic Support and Access Center. Incoming students with learning disabilities may also apply to become part of an optional, fee-based program that helps students with the transition from high school to college.

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMARY: The School takes diversity seriously and is part of an institution that, as noted in Standard 1, describes its student population as representing a microcosm of global diversity, attracting students from throughout the United States and more than 100 countries. The School has a written diversity plan and an active diversity committee. The curriculum includes courses that focus on diversity, with additional courses including diversity modules. The School's student body is slightly more diverse than at the time of the previous accreditation review. The full-time faculty includes five persons of color and slightly more females than males.

GRADUATE SUMMARY: The School makes a concerted effort to attract a diverse student body for its M.A. programs, and has done an excellent job in recruiting Black/African-American students. While its M.A. student population among Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino students falls slightly below the university averages, the School has seen an increase in these areas since the last visit.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/ non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School sets out detailed criteria for selecting and evaluating full- and part-time faculty as well as for tenure and promotion decisions. Tenure-line faculty members are evaluated for high-quality teaching, scholarship and service under guidelines developed by each division. Each set of guidelines is reviewed by the university Committee on Faculty Actions and approved by the provost and appropriate dean.

The SOC employs a weighting system for merit-raise reviews that takes into account creative, scholarly and professional work, teaching and service. Instead of a specific weight for each category, ranges are used. For example, the scale for tenured faculty is 30-60 percent creative, scholarly and professional; 30-60 percent teaching; and 10-20 percent service. The unit's budget officer then calculates merit giving the most weight to categories in which each faculty member is strongest. The evaluation system has been a contentious issue within the faculty, which developed and approved new guidelines that will go into effect in 2014-2015.

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

As of the spring 2014 semester, there were 33 full-time faculty: five full professors, including the dean; six associate professors; 11 assistant professors; four faculty-in-residence; five professorial lecturers; and two instructors. In May 2014, one associate professor, one professorial lecturer and one instructor left, and one faculty-in-residence retired.

There were 36 part-time faculty members teaching one course each. Because of the university's location in the nation's capital, the SOC is able to attract adjunct faculty with substantial professional, scholarly, and creative experience. Most adjunct faculty teach skills classes. Adjunct faculty voted to join Service Employees International Union Local 500, with the initial contract going into effect on June 1, 2013.

In the spring of 2014, two of the 36 part-time faculty members listed in the SOC self-study held Ph.D.s; six had bachelor's degrees; and the remaining had master's-level degrees. Adjunct faculty may be hired without a master's degree, but the division director must provide justifications.

During the 2008-09 review, the site team expressed concern about the balance of full-time and part-time faculty members, saying that it should not tilt any further toward adjuncts. In its self-study, the SOC reports that since spring of 2011, 63 percent of its undergraduate courses in the majors under review have been taught by full-time faculty. That is about the same ratio as six years ago, despite growing enrollment. School leadership has met growing enrollment by hiring additional full-time faculty. Additionally, the School's system of faculty governance makes clear that the full-time faculty has the major responsibility for the academic life of the School.

Some faculty members expressed concern that there is an imbalance in the number of faculty in the Public Relations and Strategic Communication sequence when compared to the Journalism sequence. Just under 50 percent of the faculty teaches in the Journalism sequence, which has almost 40 percent of declared and intended majors. Just over 50 percent of the faculty is assigned to Public Relations and Strategic Communication, a sequence that claims more than 60 percent of the students.

(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.

Among the 33 full-time members of the faculty in the spring of 2014, eight held Ph.D.s, one held a Ph.D. and J.D., one held an Ed.D. and another held a J.D. Twenty-two held master's degrees. There were 17 women and five minority faculty members.

Both full-time and part-time faculty members have extensive professional experience in the areas in which they teach. The full-time faculty in the spring of 2014 possessed more than 700 years of professional experience altogether. No one had fewer than seven years of professional experience and most had more than 15. The part-time faculty members who taught in the spring 2014 semester had even more professional experience – a total of more than 900 years.

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

All courses are evaluated each semester, including online courses. Student evaluations of SOC faculty match or slightly exceed the mean for all university faculty members. Typical scores are 6 or above on a 7-point scale for in-person classes and slightly below that for online classes. Adjunct faculty evaluations tend to be slightly below those of full-time faculty, but only by a fraction.

The evaluation instrument used by the SOC is standard to the university, although departments may add questions. The SOC employs additional questions to gain feedback on improvement in writing skills and whether the course challenged students.

Division directors review the numerical results of student evaluations but do not have direct access to student comments. The associate dean for academic administration may ask a faculty member for student comments if the numerical rating raises concern.

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

Individual faculty members are active in the life of the university. Over the review period, members of SOC have held positions that include serving on the Faculty Senate, the university Communication Committee Board of Trustees and the executive committee of the university Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Faculty members have served as AU Parent Orientation speakers and Admissions event speakers as well as honors capstone judges.

Faculty and administrators from other units said the SOC is well-regarded on campus for its accomplished faculty and its attention to students. They praised the school for its collaborative efforts

across campus as well as its ability to get things done. As one administrator from another unit said, “They ask ‘How can we make it happen’ not ‘Here’s why we can’t do it.’”

SUMMARY: All members of the full-time faculty have professional expertise in addition to scholarly credentials. Faculty are involved across campus and widely respected by their peers in other units. The School draws on a deep pool of talented professionals for its part-time faculty.

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

f) Faculty members teaching in the professional master’s program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at that university.

All members of the School’s full-time faculty are members of the graduate faculty and can teach graduate courses. The criteria for undergraduate instruction and graduate instruction are identical.

(g) Graduate faculty teach the majority of professional master’s courses.

During the past five semesters ending spring 2014, at least 70 percent of the professional master’s courses were taught by full-time faculty. The lowest semester was spring 2014 at 70 percent, with the highest being fall 2011 at 87 percent. These numbers are higher than the courses taught at the undergraduate level by full-time faculty.

SUMMARY: The School understands that its professional master’s programs need to be taught by its full-time faculty. The School does have a healthy amount of contract, non-tenure track faculty teaching in these programs, but they are still full-time faculty. The full-time faculty members in the professional master’s programs are also involved in ensuring that the curriculum maintains its relevance, showing their importance to teaching in these programs.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

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

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School adheres to the university's policies regarding sabbaticals as well as paid and unpaid leaves of absence. These are designated as (1) leave without pay or with partial pay, (2) research leave, (3) sabbatical leave and (4) family and medical leave. The requirements and benefits associated with each are defined and explained in detail. Faculty members applying for research leave may apply for compensation if outside funding doesn't fully compensate the faculty member's salary. A senior faculty member with the equivalent of six years of a full-time workload is eligible for sabbatical leave for a research-related endeavor for one or two semesters. Eight faculty members took sabbaticals or leaves during the previous six years. Five of those were one-semester sabbaticals, one was a year-long sabbatical and two were one-semester research leaves.

Each division receives an annual budget of \$25,000 for travel, conference fees, supplies and other expenses. Preference for travel funding is given to tenure-track faculty, but all faculty may apply for such funding. The university also provides separate funding, awarded through an application process, for such things as international travel and curriculum development. Journalism faculty travel spending for the previous year totaled \$15,980; Public Communication faculty travel spending for that year totaled \$10,305.

The dean also has instituted a faculty research and projects grant program to support "original and high-impact" creative, professional, scholarly work in the communication field. Applications for these grants are reviewed by an interdisciplinary committee of the faculty. In 2013-2014, six proposals were selected and awarded a total of \$21,160.

Two university offices (the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Center for Teaching, Research and Learning) also provide support to faculty seeking external grants and funding, and the provost provides competitive intramural research grants.

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

The School's Tenure and Promotion Criteria, Guidelines for Creative, Professional, Scholarly Achievement, dated March 2011, spells out in extensive detail what each division considers adequate creative, professional and scholarly performance. It states clearly that the School values professional achievement and innovation as well as scholarly research.

Guidelines for the Journalism Division note that nearly all members of that faculty will have had extensive professional experience and that creative/professional work and scholarly work typically are

separate types of activity. Members of this faculty are not expected to excel at both but are expected to excel in one and demonstrate familiarity and understanding of the importance of the other. Examples are provided to illustrate the types of creative and professional work that are expected; a common theme is that such work will demonstrate depth or mastery of an important and relevant subject and will have impact and significance beyond the university. Similar examples are provided for faculty members pursuing a scholarly route, in which books and scholarly journal articles are favored over such things as conference papers. In all cases, the faculty members in this division are expected to develop and pursue a “well-defined, ambitious agenda.”

Guidelines for the Public Communication Division also recognize scholarly and professional paths as two equally valid and substantive models. The “scholarly achievement” path is further broken down into one of traditional academic scholarship and one of public scholarship. Extensive examples are provided of the types of work that qualify for each. For faculty focusing on professional achievement, the over-arching theme is that the work will have impact and significance for the profession or society as a whole. Again, examples are provided.

Candidates for tenure-track positions are evaluated both on what creative, scholarly work has already been accomplished as well as their potential for continuing to produce work that has an impact on the field and the profession. Once hired, these faculty members are mentored by the associate dean for faculty affairs to measure progress toward tenure.

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

All guidelines related to evaluation give equal weight to faculty members’ professional specializations as to scholarly specializations; the necessary component for each is that the activities should have impact and significance.

(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.

Faculty members are encouraged to be active in professional organizations, associations and conferences, and all faculty members list multiple presentations at conferences, workshops and other events. Since the last accreditation review, the School launched a monthly faculty research forum – webcast live – that presents opportunities for public dissemination as well as direct peer review. Many faculty members also make media appearances related to their specialties.

The self-study chart that provides a count of scholarship productivity shows good numbers across all areas. Notably, 10 faculty members have published 12 books since 2008. In that period, there were also 35 articles in refereed journals, 50 refereed conference papers, 13 academic papers and 35 book chapters. The School also reported 30 creative and professional works. The School identifies as prominent areas of research such current issues as the role of social media in political movements, climate change debates, online advertising and the future of digital journalism.

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

By all indications, the climate allows for a free exchange of ideas.

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMARY: The School supports, recognizes and rewards research, creative activity and professional activity. Guidelines for hiring, promotion and tenure are clear. The School respects and encourages a range of scholarly, creative and professional activities. The faculty's productivity illustrates its diverse range of interests and areas of specialization.

GRADUATE SUMMARY: While the projects of master's students are not reflected in this standard, many produce creative and professional work that is on par with that which they might deliver after graduation. Some of the graduate students' work for the School's Investigative Reporting Workshop, and some of the workshop's projects during the past five years have been ideas generated by those students. One examined how money was being spent on wind farms in the United States through the federal stimulus bill. A current master's student is examining nonprofits outside the United States, while another is reporting on how the two major political parties engage in sweetheart gerrymandering. In addition, master's students in Strategic Communication produce capstone projects that often are tied to their professional jobs.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Prospective students meet with the School's assistant director of recruitment and retention to review the degree requirements and Communication majors are guided through the university application process. Admitted students are assigned an academic adviser and then begin receiving information through a coordinated communication plan. First-year students begin engaging with their adviser through a pre-registration tool to assist students in their planning. Once classes begin, students meet individually with their academic adviser, completing a proposed graduation plan designed to help ensure graduation in four years.

The School's student advisory staff consists of three full-time professionals. Each adviser is responsible for more than 350 students, plus additional duties at recruitment events. In addition, there is a deep culture of informal advising among faculty as noted below.

The university conducts the Campus Climate Survey of students every two years and the 2013 survey found 71.7 percent of the School's students reported they were "satisfied with the quality of the academic advising provided by my school/college." The average reported across the University was 74 percent.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

American University is proud of its open-door policies and the accessibility students have to full-time faculty, all of whom are required to hold a minimum of six face-to-face office hours each week spread over at least two days. Most faculty members make themselves available more frequently, either via email or in person and accommodate student schedules by holding "by appointment" office hours. Students confirm both in conversations with the site team and in the Campus Climate Survey that faculty members in the School are highly accessible. The survey found 91.6 percent of School students reported "faculty are accessible" compared to a university-wide average of 91.0 percent.

The School describes its faculty as "high-level communicators" who use email, social media, blogs and other electronic communication to keep in touch with students. This characterization is supported by conversations with students and faculty. Most faculty members post course material and contact information on the online Blackboard platform, a commercial virtual learning environment that provides course management and a means of communicating between and among faculty members and students.

Some School faculty members also are said to have a long history of direct campus involvement either by maintaining an office in a residence hall or actually living in a residence hall year round.

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

Policies are available in the university catalog, advising worksheets and an online degree audit. The School maintains a website that includes news and information. Changes to the university academic regulations are posted on the provost's website, and then emailed to School students. In addition to a listserv, the School uses social media to disseminate information.

Throughout the academic year, students may revisit specific policies each time that they meet with their academic adviser.

Retention is said to be a university-wide priority, and the School asserts it works collaboratively across units to keep students engaged with the university. The School has an assistant director assigned to undergraduate recruitment and retention who, for example, intervenes when students are found to be contemplating leaving the university.

(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 School describes an array of student organizations and media enterprises that provide students with extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities related to journalism and public communication. According to the university website, the student media organizations are: American Literary, a literary magazine; The American Word, a news magazine; ATV, a student-operated television station that is available 24 hours a day on campus cable channels as well as online; The American Way of Life, described as a "progressive" magazine; The Eagle, a student newspaper published since 1925; Her Campus AU, an online magazine for college women; WVAU, a student radio station that broadcasts online 24 hours a day and The Talon, a student yearbook. Each organization is student-run and open to all university students, regardless of school, class or major. Funding comes from an undergraduate activity fee assessed each semester. The student organizations include the Public Relations Student Society of America, the American University Association of Black Journalists, the Social Media Club and REACT to FILM.

The School has developed an "Involvement Unit" within its website that encourages students to get involved outside of the classroom to enhance their leadership ability, professional self-confidence and to build a sense of community.

(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. Clear and accurate data are published on the accredited unit's website.

The School maintains retention and graduation statistics and the material is available on its website.

The School's four-year graduation rate runs between 76 percent and 79 percent. During the previous three years, those students who started at the university as Journalism majors had a 77 percent to 81 percent four-year graduation rate; those beginning as Public Communication majors had a four-year graduation rate ranging from 77 percent to 92 percent. (This number varies greatly because of the low number of students beginning their AU career as a Public Communication major.) According to the School, however, the ACEJMC-required data "do not paint a truly accurate picture." Students who seek to attend the university do not apply to the School, but directly to the university and can change majors at any time. Because very few students enter the university as Journalism or Public Communication

majors, the School notes that the ACEJMC data does not capture the four-year graduation rate with precision.

SUMMARY: The unit is remarkable for its student-centered teaching culture. Students interviewed routinely describe their professors as engaged, responsive and approachable. Many take advantage of the School's various student media opportunities to enhance the skills they have learned or will learn in the classroom.

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 enrollment, retention and graduation data are published on the unit's Website.

The School has a robust graduate services office staffed by four employees who handle admissions for all of its graduate programs. In addition, the School employs a full-time graduate adviser who works with students throughout their time in the master's programs to help ensure that they graduate. The retention policy for the master's program is that students must maintain a B average. Those with an average below B are put on probation. In addition, the students in the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs program must go through a three-week boot camp before starting the program. The boot camp has eliminated some students who were not prepared for the program. One student scheduled to enter during the fall 2014 semester did not successfully complete the boot camp.

The enrollment, retention and graduation rates for the master's classes entering 2009 through 2012 are posted on the School's site. The data show retention rates of 90 percent or higher for the three master's programs included within the scope of this review. The graduation rates are also at that level. The M.A. programs reviewed are all one-year programs, although some students do take longer.

SUMMARY: The School has a good handle on the admissions and retention of its M.A. students. Faculty expressed a concern about some international M.A. students in Strategic Communication being admitted in 2013 who struggled with English. They felt as if the admissions process should have caught that issue. That issue was eliminated with the class entering fall 2014, according to the faculty teaching in the program.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School's annual expenditures clearly are related to its strategic plan and goals. The self-study notes: "The School's strategic plans mirrors that of the University in calling for unsurpassed undergraduate education, a distinctive graduate experience, active engagement in current issues, innovation and the use of technology to empower excellence. We strive to provide students with state-of-the-art technology, classroom space that stimulates learning and links to external partners that provide not only learning opportunities but possible career placement as well."

The School's total annual journalism-mass communication budget increased from \$7,428,730 in 2011-2012 to \$8,287,611 in 2013-2014, the year of the self-study (up 11.6 percent). As is the case at virtually all programs across the country, the lion's share of the budget is spent on salaries — for full- and part-time faculty members, teaching assistants and staff -- with \$7,518,723 (counting fringe benefits) allocated in the 2013-2014 budget.

The self-study outlines the budgeting process at American, noting: "The university begins its fiscal year on May 1 and employs a two-year budget cycle. During the fall semester preceding the first year in the budget cycle, the University Budget Office requests a proposed budget from each unit. The provost then requests an expenditure budget and enrollment projections from each school and college."

The dean is responsible for the development of the budget for the School, taking into account recommendations from the division directors and others. The dean and provost discuss the request and decide on possible modifications. The provost submits the budget request to the president, who prepares the final budget for submission to the board of trustees.

The School was pleased that, in fiscal 2011-2012, its technology base budget was increased by \$200,000. Previously, additions were allocated cycle-by-cycle and were temporary.

The School says it is treated more than fairly by the university, with the self-study trumpeting the completion of renovations to the McKinley Building, which carried a price tag of \$26 million. In addition, the School notes that its technology is more sophisticated than that available to other students at the university.

The School's director of development reports to the university's centralized Development and Alumni Relations office, with a dotted-line report to the dean, with whom she works closely. Three full-time advancement staff members work directly with the School. In addition to the director of development, the team includes a senior advancement officer and a development coordinator who supports alumni and fundraising efforts. The School is in the embryonic stages of private fundraising, but has plans to increase its efforts. The School's permanent endowment, limited primarily to scholarships, is modest. The School has no endowed chaired or professorships. Fundraising efforts have accelerated over the past three years, with \$6.7 million having been raised toward a \$13 million capital campaign goal to

fund half of the costs of the renovations for the McKinley Building. Prospects are bright for an additional \$2 million for the building fund. The School's annual fund goal—for the dean's discretionary spending—for 2014-2015 is \$60,000. The School is among the smaller of American's free-standing units, with a relatively young alumni base, thus making private fundraising more of a challenge.

The School clearly is not awash in riches, but it certainly is more than able to deliver a quality education to its students.

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

As noted previously in this section, the School is treated more than fairly within the institution. And by all accounts, it has spent the money wisely.

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

Since the last site team report, The School of Communication has moved into a new 55,000-square-foot home in the renovated McKinley Building, the second-oldest building on campus and one with a central location and high visibility. The move took place in stages beginning in January 2014.

The School of Communication had been housed for decades on the third floor of the Mary Graydon Center, eventually laying claim to about 16,000 square feet of space. Many faculty offices were in other campus buildings, and SOC's centers were located in off-campus spaces.

A broadcast facility with studio and control room remains in its location in the Media Production Center near the main School, and a new game lab is located in a building adjacent to the School. However, all other School activities, programs and classes are now consolidated in one place.

The renovation was financed by the university as well as donations from alumni and faculty. The dean of the School continues to work with the university's Office of Development to secure donor gifts to name the building and/or the School.

A Media Innovation Lab, a 144-seat high-tech theater, and classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology are among the features of the building. The Advanced Student Broadcast class and student newscasts have been shifted to the lab from the Media Production Center, which needs some updates, including new audio boards, according to faculty.

Students have broad access to open labs and lounge areas as well as a rooftop patio.

Through the School's partnership with Sony, every classroom is equipped with Sony HD projectors, and three also have 7.1 surround sound systems. All seminar/conference rooms have Sony 60" HD flat-screen monitors with enhanced audio systems. Classrooms have printers.

The building, according to the SOC self-study and interviews with faculty and students, has improved the sense of community in the School. Some faculty members who barely interacted when their offices were located in different buildings across campus said they are getting acquainted for the first time. Students said they spend considerable time in the building outside of class and find it much easier to locate their professors.

According to the SOC self-study, “The McKinley Building gives SOC equal footing with other campus units that have their own facilities and gives students, faculty, and staff a sense of pride in the recognition that comes with a stand-alone building that looks directly onto the campus quad” – a sense of pride that was reinforced in interviews with students and faculty.

At the same time, the self-study points out that the building has resulted in “strain on resources (staff, technology and funding) as the School begins to take full advantage of the McKinley Building.”

(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 members and students praised the equipment and software available to them as well as the technical support they receive.

All classrooms are equipped as “smart classrooms” with computerized teaching stations, audio/video capabilities, projection systems and printers. The building holds two PC teaching labs and two MAC teaching labs that are staffed by student assistants and open until 9 p.m. (One is available upon request 24-7). The self-study reports that during prime times, the labs become overcrowded and that more space will be needed if the broadcast program grows. The self-study also states that the supervisor of the computer labs and radio-TV equipment is stretched and additional technical support is needed.

Computers have been replaced in the last two years and are installed with Adobe Creative Suite 6, two versions of Final Cut Pro and Avid editing system software. The broadcast facility utilizes the ENPS production system and has HD capability. The building is Wi-Fi accessible.

The School has available nearly 200 high-definition cameras for student check-out. Students said they generally have no difficulty checking out cameras and other equipment.

The university imposes lab fees that range from \$40 to \$70 that help support technology. However, faculty members and staff are concerned about keeping technology up-to-date and suggest the School consider a student technology fee.

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

Students were enthusiastic about the library services available to them, saying the university library is one of the strengths of AU. Many take advantage of library-sponsored workshops on various software programs, content management systems and social media platforms. An especially popular feature is an online chat service: Students can open up a live chat remotely and access a librarian immediately to get answers to questions. The library also checks out basic cameras and other equipment and provides tutorials via YouTube. Librarians are assigned to the SOC and other departments who become familiar with the resources associated with various disciplines and who hold office hours in the departments.

The library provides more than 3,500 book titles in journalism and related mass communication topics as well as 47 journal and periodical titles in those fields. It subscribes to more than 75 daily, weekly and international newspapers.

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMARY: The School's budget is adequate to provide a strong educational experience for its students and to give faculty adequate support. The university clearly supports the School, with the McKinley Building renovations a prime example. The newly renovated building is a major step in the development of the School and is much appreciated—and utilized—by students, faculty and staff. Technology and equipment throughout the School are well supported and generally up to date.

GRADUATE SUMMARY: The School's building and facilities are appreciated by the master's students, who use the computer labs and broadcast facilities on a regular basis. In addition, some graduate students work in the Investigative Reporting Workshop and have their own desks to make calls and use computers. Some master's students have funded fellowships to work at local media organizations, with The Washington Post being the most prominent.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni and is actively engaged with its alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching, whether on site or online, current and to promote the exchange of ideas.

Alumni are described as an important part of the School, often speaking in classes, sometimes serving as clients or judges for student projects and providing insight into the skills needed by graduating students. The School offers a list of more than 40 working professionals as examples of alumni who keep in contact and who are used as resources. Journalism students have the opportunity to hear from these and other alumni in a variety of contexts, including classroom sessions, conferences and relationships with professional organizations.

Faculty members talk regularly with alumni and other industry professionals to keep current with best practices and technology. Alumni also evaluate and consult on course outcomes and assessments and are invited to judge student work for awards.

The School operates a mentoring program that it describes as “unique,” pairing students with top alumni for career advice. Mentors can provide advice on short- and long-term career goals, tips on improving resumes and portfolios and ways to use networking to build a career. Nearly 130 alumni, some from respected national media and communications firms, have served as mentors in the past six years.

SOC’s Dean’s Council serves as the School’s principal external volunteer board. It has 23 active members who help build support for the School’s initiatives and programs. The Council helps elevate the visibility of the School and enhance the academic experiences of students. It reviews curriculum and assists in developing new courses.

The School takes advantage of its location by engaging in partnerships with major Washington media and the Journalism Division enjoys a deep relationship with The Washington Post, placing students directly with the newspaper’s investigative team. A member of the Post’s investigative team holds a full-time faculty position and coordinates this effort. Beginning in fall 2013, about five students per semester have received placements. Since 2012, 19 School fellows and interns have produced more than 375 bylined articles in print or online.

Two faculty members also worked with LinkTV between 2011 and 2014, with one of them including students in the production of a program devoted to public affairs issues throughout Latin America. One of the faculty members has left the School, however. While the American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies continues to work with the former faculty member on the series, School of Communication faculty are no longer involved.

Until external funding ended this year, J-Lab, a program promoting interactive media and innovative journalism, provided extensive opportunities for interaction among professionals, entrepreneurs, students and faculty as well as background and context for continual curriculum improvement in the Journalism Division. While the J-Lab executive director remains on the faculty as an adjunct at this writing, the J-Lab project is ending.

Faculty members are active in professional groups such as the Society of Professional Journalists, the Radio-Television Digital News Association, the Public Radio News Directors Association, the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association, the Online News Association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Student Press Law Center and the D.C. Open Government Coalition. The unit has formed a partnership with New America Media to promote minority media.

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

The faculty of both the Journalism Division and the Public Communication Division have engaged in a variety of workshops, discussions and panels aimed at both professionals and the general public, offering 11 specific examples from the years since the last accreditation effort.

Faculty vitae show additional examples of engagement in workshops, discussions and panels.

School faculty members have served as judges for a variety of contests aimed at recognizing and promoting excellence in media practice. A representative listing of such work included 15 examples.

(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 faculty of both the Journalism Division and the Public Communication Division are clearly deeply engaged in academic associations and related activity. The School provides a list of some 13 Journalism and 16 Public Communication faculty members with extensive involvements in and service to academic and professional committees and organizations.

The dean provides each division with an annual budget of \$25,000 for travel, conference fees, supplies, and other costs associated with faculty creative, professional, scholarly development as well as internal events such as lunches or dinners. In addition, some faculty members have negotiated additional travel funds as part of their contracts. Preference for travel funding is given to tenure-track faculty, but all faculty members are eligible to apply.

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

The School has a number of course initiatives with commitments to community service, including a 2013 "Water Project" that enlisted three Public Communications and one Journalism faculty members to create classroom learning experiences tied to promoting public awareness of water quality and conservation issues.

Various other classes have used public service projects extensively as a vehicle for student learning. Public relations portfolios projects include the Yellow Ribbon fund, the National Law Center for Homelessness, the Newseum "Share Your Legacy" project, Henry the Hand Foundation (an effort to promote hand awareness for children to prevent spreading of diseases), Food for Others of Northern

Virginia, and Generation Wags and Girls, Inc., a nonprofit that empowers young girls to pursue sciences/math in school.

Among the Journalism projects that have contributed to public service are Hungry D.C., a 2014 multimedia project with WAMU exploring the issue of hunger in the nation's capital; Voting Young, a project with The Washington Post, which in 2012 looked at the political interests of first-time voters; and Shadow of 9-11, a 2011 project with Gannett looking at the impact on young people of growing up after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

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

The School has provided facilities since 2008 as a sponsor for the Urban Journalism Workshop, in collaboration with the Washington Association of Black Journalists and media partners such as The Washington Post and NPR. The School provided computer labs, a television production studio and staff. The program is free for high school students.

Discover the World of Communication is a summer program designed for students in grades 9-12. Classes taught by School faculty, adjuncts and media professionals focus on topics that include building a digital portfolio, newswriting, filmmaking, public speaking, persuasive writing and broadcasting. About 500 students from the United States and around the world attended the summer 2014 sessions at the AU campus with more than 100 attending at Berkeley. Among the activities available to students were watching live broadcasts at NBC 4, WTTG Fox 5, NPR and ESPN Radio, covering a Nationals baseball game or WNBA game from a press seat and touring the Newseum. The program offers scholarships to local D.C. students who otherwise could not afford to attend.

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMARY: The School has a solid commitment to the professions and to high standards of professional practice. It uses its alumni to engage and to mentor students and contributes to the academic life of the School, the university and the academy as a whole. Public service is a part of student learning throughout the School at both the B. A. and the master's levels. Faculty members look for ways to use teaching and School resources to contribute to the well being of the Greater Washington community. The School's culture almost makes public service a given requirement for its programs.

GRADUATE SUMMARY: The School's master's students are heavily involved in the unit's public service initiatives, primarily through the Investigative Reporting Workshop, which produces multiple pieces of public service journalism annually with the help of M.A. students. In addition, students in the M.A. in Strategic Communication program often work on campaigns or capstone projects for nonprofit organizations.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School takes assessment seriously—and has been doing so since 2002 when it initially began developing learning outcomes for its undergraduate programs. Spurred by the emphasis on assessment by its regional accrediting body, the university and ACEJMC, the School recognized early on that the process would enhance the program. The university supplies support for its campus units and conducts annual reviews of their assessment efforts. The University Committee on Outcomes and Learning Assessments provides annual feedback and direction to schools. The university has generally given the School good marks through the years, noting, for example, that its learning outcomes are tied to direct and indirect measures, that the measures are likely to provide information that can be used to improve the program and that data are reported in ways that can be tied to specific learning outcomes. One university report concluded: “There is a continuity to the reports and a history of assessment that the division can work from. That is excellent. The program is actively involved in assessment activity.” The School has, year in and year out, diligently gathered information, analyzed it and acted upon it.

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

The School’s written assessment plans for its two undergraduate divisions are well constructed. Data constantly are gathered and analyzed. The plans employ a variety of direct and indirect measures, including portfolio reviews, annual surveys of graduating seniors, annual surveys of internship supervisors, periodic alumni surveys, input from professionals about course content, and focused curriculum and syllabus reviews at faculty retreats. The School also makes use of data from periodic campus climate surveys and the National Survey of Student Engagement.

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

The School involves professionals and alumni in the assessment process. Alumni routinely meet with faculty to review syllabuses, student writing, student-created websites and broadcast samples from a variety of courses. The Dean’s Council is the School’s primary external volunteer board, and it provides valuable feedback. There is ample evidence that the School gives due consideration to input — formal and informal — from its alumni and makes systematic efforts to, when appropriate, make programmatic and curricular adjustments in response. As mentioned earlier, the School regularly surveys alumni.

(d) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to provide suggestions for improving curriculum and instruction.

As noted above, the School makes effective use of its Dean's Council, just as it takes into consideration responses from alumni surveys and its annual surveys of internship supervisors. The School also draws upon the expertise of the working professionals who teach as adjuncts.

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

The School works hard to complete the loop in its assessment process — and it has plenty to show for its efforts. A few examples of curricular changes based on assessment of the undergraduate program in Public Communication (now Public Relations and Strategic Communication): PR Writing — After assessing the outcomes and assignments from all course sections, a faculty committee recommended that professors incorporate weekly writing assignments as well as a minimum of eight graded assignments to ensure consistency and rigor in all sections; PR Case Studies — Because faculty members found that students were not reading the case studies to be sufficiently prepared for class, instructors devised a series of worksheets designed to ensure that students not only were reading the cases thoroughly but also giving students an avenue to further synthesize their thoughts on the studies beyond a classroom discussion; and Public Communication Research — Faculty members reviewed a random sample of undergraduate research projects and concluded that quantitative and qualitative methods were not being equally emphasized. Instructors were then provided guidelines to incorporate into their syllabi.

A few examples of curricular changes based on assessment of the undergraduate program in Journalism: Writing for Communication — The introductory writing course for all School majors is constantly reviewed and assessed. The most recent alterations include more grammar instruction and additional focus on online and public communication writing as well as other multimedia assignments. A custom textbook was created for the course in 2013; Advanced Reporting — After a thorough review, a stronger emphasis on research as a component of reporting skills was added, including developing and enhancing skills in data and governmental research; and, a result of senior exit surveys and interviews with alumni, a new course in Data Driven Journalism is being developed and will be taught in Spring 2015.

SUMMARY: The School has a written assessment plan. It has been actively involved in assessment for more than a decade. Each year, it systematically gathers data, synthesizes the findings, analyzes the information and closes the loop by making programmatic and curricular adjustments.

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

(Narrative summary should include indicators a, b, c and e.)

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

The M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs and the M.A. in Interactive Journalism have five learning outcomes that mirror the professional values of the Council: defining key ethical issues and legal guidelines; understanding the context of media and technology in democracy and a global society; demonstrating digital skills; producing quality work; and performing journalism in an accurate, balanced and complete style.

The M.A. in Strategic Communication has eight learning outcomes that also are similar to the values and competencies of the Council. They include using qualitative and quantitative research, writing clearly

and concisely, thinking analytically about communication problems and using digital technology and technology tools.

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

The School uses its capstone courses and skills courses to assess its graduate students. The School also conducts an exit survey of its graduating M.A. students, and the survey addresses specific curriculum outcomes as well as whether students are satisfied with their degrees. The survey has been conducted annually since 2005. The School uses outside professionals to assess classroom work via the annual Public Communication awards. Journalism has begun a professional review of student work each spring. In addition, students who are working with professionals at places such as The Washington Post and the Discovery Channel have their work critiqued while on the job. Students working in an internship are also assessed.

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

One significant change to the curriculum has been made since its last review as a result of assessment. The School switched in 2012 from requiring master's students in Strategic Communication to complete comprehensive exams to requiring capstone projects. This change was made as the result of assessment done on the M.A. program that determined that the comp exam was not an accurate measure of learning outcomes.

The School has collected assessment data on two courses – Digital Skills and Social Media and Professional Internship – taken by Journalism master's students. However, there does not appear to have been any changes made to either course as a result of assessment. The School might want to consider conducting an assessment of the core courses in its M.A. programs to determine whether instruction needs to be changed.

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

The School uses professionals in Journalism and Strategic Communication to assess the quality of work performed by the master's students in internships and in work done by the Investigative Reporting Workshop. Professionals also sometimes review capstone projects for master's students if the capstone project is an assignment for the student's employer.

SUMMARY: The School's assessment of its graduate programs is solid, but not outstanding. It examines whether the students are learning what they are supposed to be, and it examines whether the values and competencies set forth by the Council are being taught in the classroom.

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

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/ non-compliance:

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.

The School has several strengths:

- A location in the nation's capital, giving students unparalleled internship opportunities and interactions with professionals in and out of the classroom.
- A strong professional orientation that prepares students for the journalism and communication industries.
- An awareness of the need to adapt educational offerings for a changing digital world and a willingness to try new things.
- A balanced full-time faculty that possesses a healthy blend of academic and professional credentials.
- A deep pool of exceptionally well-qualified adjuncts.
- A hard working and astute dean who earns praise from the faculty, staff, central administration and students for his inclusive style and vision.
- An energetic and strong group of students who take pride in their program; the instruction they receive; and the internship opportunities they have.
- A remarkably student-centered culture where teaching is the top priority for professors who are engaged, responsive and approachable.
- A strong sense of community among students, faculty and staff.

The School has some challenges:

- A need to continue to more aggressively pursue private funds to provide additional support for students and the program.
- A need to continue to evaluate the curriculum and adapt rapidly to the changing media landscape.
- A need to continue to maintain a diverse and balanced faculty to best meet the needs of its students.

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

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

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

- 5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to 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 unit's presentation on Diversity and Inclusiveness shows clear recognition of requirements and efforts to meet them. The committee reviewed those steps, noted successes and found some concerns in students' limited understanding of diversity and the general absence of students of color in spite of unit statistics. Shortly after the last accreditation review, the School established a Diversity Committee to create initiatives to foster diversity through the unit. The School also has created a diversity website that contains information about various diversity issues; has sponsored special programs; has reaffirmed its commitment to bring diverse speakers to its classes and to provide additional support for first-generation college students and those who come from low-income families. Students showed an awareness and grasp of inclusivity issues during meetings with the site team.

There is a concern that the balance of full-time and part-time faculty members should not tilt any further toward adjuncts. The School continues to teach more than 60 percent of its undergraduate course sections with full-time faculty, which this site team regards as an exceptionally high percentage, particularly given the availability of strong adjuncts in metropolitan Washington. The School's budget shows that, over the past three years, expenditures for full-time faculty members have increased, while expenditures for adjuncts have decreased. This site team commends the School for its appropriate blend of full-time and part-time faculty members.

The School has made progress in [availability of physical space] but does not expect to solve the problem prior to moving to its new quarters. Problem solved. The newly renovated McKinley Building provides the School with a showcase facility that serves its faculty and students well.

- 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 comprehensive and well organized. The School also provided the site team with necessary support information and materials in the workroom—and was very responsive to additional requests for information from the team during its visit.

**PART III: Summary by site visit team
(Professional master's program)**

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

The School's master's programs have several strengths:

- A one-year time frame for the M.A. in Journalism and Public Affairs and the residential M.A. in Strategic Communication that is jam-packed with instruction as well as practical work experience.
- An ability to connect master's students with a broad range of journalism and public relations operations in the Washington, D.C. area.
- Enthusiastic students who are passionate about what they are learning and motivated to succeed.
- A spirit of collegiality among students, staff and faculty that includes everything from regular pizza parties to happy hours.
- A strong curriculum that is at the forefront of what is going on in the various worlds of mass communication.

The School's master's programs have some challenges:

- A need to consolidate some of its 13 master's degree programs, some of which overlap. Only three of the 13 are within the scope of this review.
- A need to market more aggressively and build a brand that allows the School's M.A. offerings to stand out in a crowded field of institutions in greater Washington.

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

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

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

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

N/A

- 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.