

Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Undergraduate program

2013– 2014

Name of Institution: Buffalo State (SUNY)

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Howard Cohen, Interim President

Name of Unit: Communication Department

Name and Title of Administrator: Joe Marren, Chair

Date of 2013 - 2014 Accrediting Visit: Oct. 13-16, 2013

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Oct. 21-24, 2007; Jan. 9-11, 2010 (revisit)

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Provisional; accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Provisional; accreditation granted 2010

Recommendation by 2013 - 2014 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: **Marie Hardin, Associate Dean**

Organization/School: **Penn State University College of Communications**

Signature _____

Team Members

Name and Title: **David Kurpius, Professor and Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management**

Organization/School: **Louisiana State University**

Signature _____

Name and Title: **Earnest Perry, Associate Professor and Chair, Journalism Studies**

Organization/School: **University of Missouri School of Journalism**

Signature _____

Name and Title: **Ward White, Strategy Officer**

Organization/School: **Edelman**

Signature _____

PART I: General information

Name of Institution: **Buffalo State (State University of New York)**

Name of Journalism/Mass Communications Unit: **Communication Department**

Address: **Bishop 210, 1300 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo NY 14222-1095**

Date of Scheduled Accrediting Visit: **13-16 October 2013**

Name of Institution: **Buffalo State (SUNY)**

Name of Unit: **Communication Department**

Year of Visit: **2013-14**

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

XX 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

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

- Private
- XX Public**
- Other (specify)

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

The origin of Buffalo State is in the founding of the Buffalo Normal School in 1871 as a training program for teachers. In 1888 it became known as the State Normal and Training School. In 1928 the institution became the State Teachers College at Buffalo and in 1946 the New York State College for Teachers at Buffalo.

Buffalo State was incorporated as one of the colleges of arts and sciences within the State University of New York in 1948, following the amendment of the New York State Education Law on April 14, 1947. The legal parameters of this law are outlined in New York Consolidated Laws Chapter 16, Title I, Article 8, Section 352, Paragraph 3.

In 1950, the institution became known as the State University College for Teachers at Buffalo and in 1960 the State University College of Education at Buffalo. In 1962 it became the State University College at Buffalo, and in 1993 it became known as Buffalo State College. In 2012, the name was changed to SUNY Buffalo State, alternatively Buffalo State (SUNY) and Buffalo State (The State University of New York). Buffalo State holds the designation of a Carnegie Master's "L" university (larger institution offering

bachelors' and masters' degrees).

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

XX Yes

No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: **2010**

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

2008 Provisional (Journalism, Media Production, Public Communication majors)

2010 Accreditation (Journalism, Media Production, Public Communication majors)

6. Attach a copy of the unit's mission statement. Give date of adoption and/or last revision.

Mission Statement (*Adopted Fall 2000; Amended Spring 2005*)

The Communication Department of Buffalo State is ...
... *a faculty of scholars* serving the communication disciplines by creating new knowledge and effectively sharing existing knowledge within a community of scholars and media professionals.
... *a faculty of educators* preparing students to think analytically and creatively, communicate clearly, act ethically, and succeed professionally.

Core Values (*Adopted Spring 200, Amended Spring 2013*)

As a collegial and dedicated group of faculty and staff both individually and collectively dedicated to this mission, the Communication Department holds the following values:

- ◆ **Academic Excellence.** In its relationship with higher education – at Buffalo State, within the State University of New York, and beyond – the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of academic excellence. We provide opportunities for students to think critically, discern ethically, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively.
- ◆ **Service Excellence.** In its relationships with students, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of service excellence. We give priority to student interests and needs in matters such as course development, scheduling, faculty accessibility, and the creation of a climate of encouragement and mutual respect.
- ◆ **Communication Primacy.** In its grounding within the communication disciplines, the Communication Department values communication as the essential basis of democracy and as the vehicle for providing information, analysis and advocacy. We uphold the highest professional standards and practices of the media and communication professions.
- ◆ **Quality Performance.** In its relationships with employers and graduate schools, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of quality performance. We maintain high professional standards and seek to develop graduates who meet and exceed these expectations.
- ◆ **Social Responsibility.** In its relationships with the community, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of social responsibility. We offer leadership, scholarship, creative work and service to the communication and media professions, adding to the quality of life in Western New York and beyond.

Strategic Vision (*Adopted Spring 2004*)

The Communication Department at Buffalo State embraces the tension inherent in offering a quality professional education within a liberal arts context. The department will continue to provide a comprehensive array of specialties that is reflective of our mission, consistent with our vision and values, and appropriate to our resources.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Fall and spring semesters of 16 weeks

Summer sessions of 2/4/6/11 weeks

January term of 3 weeks

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

XX Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree

Graduate work leading to Master's degree

Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

9. Give the number of credit hours required by the university for graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit. **120 semester credit hours**

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

Most internships are three credits, though the department has provisions for one- and two-credit internships to meet student needs. Internship is repeatable above 120 credits, but each internship credit above three pushes the graduation requirement beyond 120 credits. Thus only three internship credits can apply to the basic graduation requirement of 120 credits.

Students earning one or two credits are required to meet the same number of contact hours (150) required for a standard three-credit internship.

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

Professional majors are Journalism, Media Production, and Public Communication (Public Relations and Advertising), plus a non-accredited program in Communication Studies. Each is a Bachelor of Arts degree program. The department does not appoint a sequence head for each major.

Additionally, the department offers a minor in speech (currently with only two enrolled students) and a concentration in Sports Communication (currently with 20 students enrolled and 11 recent graduates). The department also supports a four-course sequence in Public Relations Management as part of a Master of Science program in Multidisciplinary Studies (not accredited by ACEJMC).

Communication participates in several interdepartmental programs, including BA in Television and Film Arts, BA in Arts and Letters, BA in Writing, and minors in Digital Music Production, Indigenous Studies, International Studies, Leadership, Legal Studies, Speech, Study of Understanding Community/Diversity/Peace, Writing, and Women's Studies.

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

Fall 2012 – Total Student Enrollment: 11,214

9,731 Undergraduate Students	8,590 FT	1,141 PT
1,483 Graduate Students	513 FT	970 PT

Fall 2013 – Total Student Enrollment: 11,095

9,391 Undergraduate Students	8,309 FT	1,082 PT
1,704 Graduate Students	502 FT	1,202 PT

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

Spring 2013

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Undergraduate majors</u>		<i>% Enrolled²</i>
Sequence: Journalism	161 enrolled spring 2013	190 active/eligible ¹	85%
Sequence: Media Production	183 enrolled spring 2013	227 active/eligible	81%
Sequence: Public Communication	180 enrolled spring 2013	209 active/ eligible	86%
Sequence: Communication Studies	166 enrolled spring 2013 ³	220 active/eligible	75%
Total	690 enrolled spring 2013	846 active/eligible	82%

Fall 2013

<u>Name of Sequence or Specialty</u>	<u>Undergraduate majors</u>		<i>Change</i>	<i>% Enrolled²</i>
Sequence: Journalism	156 enrolled	187 active/eligible	-3.1%	83%
Sequence: Media Production	201 enrolled	239 active/eligible	+9.8%	84%
Sequence: Public Communication	187 enrolled	215 active/ eligible	-3.9%	87%
Sequence: Communication Studies	212 enrolled	254 active/eligible	+27.7%	83%
Total	756 enrolled	895 active/eligible	+9.6%	84%

Note 1: The university considers as “active students” both those who are enrolled in at least one course and those who are eligible to enroll but who may not be enrolled in a particular semester. This includes students on leave of absence and those who choose not to enroll. In both cases, students are listed as active (i.e., eligible to enroll) for four semesters before being expunged from the active student list.

Note 2: This compares with 78 percent of all Arts and Humanities students (2,037 active, 2,620 eligible), Spring 2013.

Note 3: The pattern with Communication Studies is that this major generally has a larger number of students in the fall semester than in the spring semester, because many students enter the department in the Communication Studies program, either because they are uncertain about their preferred major or because the Admissions Office defaults to Communication Studies for some entering students. During the fall semester, a significant number of students typically switch into one of the other department majors.

14. 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.

<u>Skills Course</u>	<u>Average Enrollment</u>	<u>Spring 2013</u>	<u>Fall 2013</u>
COM210 Converged Media Writing	<u>13.4</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>
“		9	18
“		7	16
“		15	15
“		14	16
“		17	16
“		15	9
“		11	16
“		11	x

COM303 Writing for News	16	17
“	19	13
COM304 Writing for Broadcast	9	12
“	16	15
“	15	18
COM308 Public Relations Writing	16	12
“	17	17
“	x	17
COM312 Basic Media Production	16	17
“	17	17
“	15	17
“	16	18
COM322 Communication Graphics	16	16
“	16	16
“	x	15
COM336 Comm and Web Publishing	15	14
“	16	13
COM337 Electronic News I	16	16
COM338 Electronic News II	16	x
COM389 Music/Audio in Media	16	x
COM390 Sports Journalism	15	12
COM405 News Reporting	11	4
“	10	16

15. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2013 – 2014 academic year:

Percentage increase or decrease in three years:

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

Here is the Communication Department budget allocation for the past three years.

2013-14: \$1,244,900 total w/ salaries \$22,900 operating budget w/o salaries (OTPS)

2012-13: \$1,508,979 total w/ salaries \$22,900 operating budget w/o salaries (OTPS)

2011-12: \$1,492,361 total w/ salaries \$20,759 operating budget w/o salaries (OTPS)

2010-11: \$1,449,506 total w/ salaries \$18,390 operating budget w/o salaries (OTPS)

Percentage Change. The total budget with salaries shows a total decrease over four years of 14.1 percent: 2.9 percent increase in the second year; 1.1 percent increase in the third year; 17.5 percent decrease in the fourth year. However, this is preliminary data and does not reflect the calculation of part-time faculty for the entire academic year. The more accurate figure is a 4.1 increase for the past three complete academic years.

The OPTS (Other Than Personnel Services) operating budget without salaries shows an overall increase over four years of 24.5 percent: 12.9 percent increase in the second year; 10.3 percent increase in the third year; 0 percent in the fourth year.

Full-Time Salaries. The total for salaries for full-time faculty (not including professional staff and support staff or part-time faculty) is \$1,012,200 for 2012-13, the most recent complete academic year.

(See detailed budgets for three years at Item #1 with Standard 7.)

16. 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.

<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Specialization</u>
Bruce Bryski	PhD	Associate Professor	Speech, Media Criticism, Political Communication
Paul DeWald	MA, MS	Associate Professor	Video Directing and Producing, Video Oral History
Annemarie Franczyk	EdD	Assistant Professor	Journalism, Media Writing, Converged Media
Ruth Goldman	MFA	Assistant Professor	Digital Media, Production, Post Production
Jack Karlis	PhD	Assistant Professor	Social Media, Public Relations, Journalism
Meg Knowles *	MFA	Associate Professor	Visual Communication, TV Documentaries
Ann Liao	PhD	Associate Professor	Speech, Rhetorical Comm, Intercultural Comm
Joseph Marren **	MA	Associate Professor	Journalism, Ethics, Media Writing
Tom McCray	MA	Associate Professor	Audio Production, Radio, Voicing, Management
Michael Niman	PhD	Professor	Journalism, Media Criticism, Alternative Media
Seth Oyer	PhD	Assistant Professor	Public Relations, Crisis Comm, Marketing Comm
William Raffel	PhD, JD	Associate Professor	Broadcast News, Media Law, International Comm
Louis Rera	MAH	Associate Professor	Visual Comm, Post Production, Photojournalism
Deborah Silverman	PhD	Associate Professor	Public Relations, Ethics, Media Writing
Ron Smith *	MS	Professor	Public Relations, Applied Research, Strategic Planning

* Sabbatical Fall 2013 ** One-course teaching load as department chair

Professional Staff w/ Lecturer Responsibilities

Nanette Tramont Journalism lecturer, internship coordinator, adviser, alumni-community liaison
 Brian Milbrand Media Production lecturer, equipment loan, media specialist

17. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2013. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2013. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2014, please provide the updated list of faculty at time of visit.)

Spring 2013 (60 sections)

Kenton Anderson 1 SPC 205
 Luanne Bauer 2 SPC 205

Michelle Blackley	2	COM 100, SPC 205
John Bobey	1	COM 304
Dorothea Braemer	1	COM 312
Sean Brennan	1	COM 100
Anthony Casuccio	1	COM 389
Margo Davis	2	SPC 205
Gabe DiMaio	1	COM 317
Robert Gaughan	1	COM 335
Amy Greenan	3	COM 322
Faizan Haq	1	SPC 311
Stanton Hudson	3	COM 100, COM 301, COM 308
John Iusi	2	SPC 307, SPC 407
Rick Karnath	1	COM 329
Amy Kimmel	1	SPC 205
Pam Kloc	1	COM 308
Tom Koller	1	COM 210
Brian Meyer	3	SPC 205, COM 210, COM 303
Brian Milbrand	2	COM 312
Frank Miller	1	COM 328
Lori Miller	1	SPC 205
Tim O'Shei	2	COM 100, COM 325
Maria Pabico	1	COM 336
Gina Passantino	2	SPC 205
Jeff Paterson	1	COM 418
Alan Pergament	3	COM 210, COM 210, COM 304
Matthew Pitts	1	COM 338
Lisa Polizzi	1	COM 337
Jim Ranney	2	SPC 205, COM 210
Daniel Rera	1	COM 336
Scott Scanlon	1	COM 303
Joshua Smith	2	COM 401
Len Tobin	1	COM 304
Nanette Tramont	2	COM 210, COM 488
Jeffrey Ventura	1	COM 392
Frances Walgate	2	SPC 205
Jay Zbaczyniak	2	SPC 205
Linda Zemel	2	COM 210

Fall 2013 (54 sections) Preliminary enrollment

Kenton Anderson	2	SPC 205
Michelle Blackley	1	SPC 205
John Bobey	1	COM 304
Dorothea Braemer	1	COM 312
Sean Brennan	1	COM 100
Margo Davis	3	SPC 205
Barbara DeSimone	1	COM 341
Gabe DiMaio	1	COM 317
Robert Gaughan	1	SPC 205
Faizan Haq	1	SPC 311

Stanton Hudson	3	COM 100, COM 301, COM 418
John Iusi	2	SPC 307, SPC 407
Pam Kloc	1	COM 308
Tom Koller	2	COM 210, COM 390
Brian Meyer	2	COM 210, COM 303
Brian Milbrand	2	COM 312
Frank Miller	1	COM 328
Lori Miller	1	SPC 205
Tim O'Shei	2	COM 100, COM 325
Maria Pabico	1	COM 336
Gina Passantino	1	SPC 205
Jeff Paterson	1	COM 301
Alan Pergament	3	COM 210, COM 304, COM 390
Matthew Pitts	1	COM 337
Jim Ranney	2	SPC 205, COM 210
Daniel Rera	1	COM 336
Scott Scanlon	1	COM 303
Joshua Smith	2	COM 401
Sara Sullivan	2	COM 100
Len Tobin	1	COM 304
Nanette Tramont	2	COM 210, COM 488
Jeffrey Ventura	1	COM 392
Frances Walgate	2	SPC 205
Jay Zbaczyniak	2	SPC 205
Linda Zemel	2	SPC 205, COM 210

18. Schools on the semester system:

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

<i>Year (Summer, Fall J-term, Spring) *</i>	<i>Total Graduates</i>	<i>80 or more semester outside major</i>		<i>65 or more semester hours in liberal arts/sciences outside major</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
2012-2013	158	158	100%	158	100%
2011-2012	151	151	100%	150	99.4%

* Includes Summer, Fall, January-term and Spring semester for each academic year. Typically, data for the summer term concludes the academic year, but data presented here includes the previous summer to provide a full two-year cycle. Note: Summer 2013 data will be available at the time of the site visit.

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.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The Department of Communication at Buffalo State (SUNY), the largest of the 13 SUNY colleges, is housed in the School of Arts and Humanities. The Department is the largest in the school and the second-largest academic department in the college, according to the self-study. The Department maintains a retention rate and graduation rate that is comparable to or higher than that of the college, according to data provided in the self study and on the Department's website.

The Department, which was established in the 1970s and given its current name in the 1980s, went up for ACEJMC accreditation for the first time in 2007. It was awarded provisional accreditation in 2008 and was fully accredited in 2010. The Department has three professional majors under review: Journalism, Media Production, and Public Communication.

The Department has a detailed strategic plan with six major goals, and the dean and provost both said they were in support of it. The plan involves goals around academic standards, community engagement, student recruitment, advisement and support, faculty support and scholarship, alumni and media engagement, reputation and communication, and diversity and inclusiveness. The plan identifies the Department's needs and resources and designates oversight for steps toward strategic goals.

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

Department bylaws provide policies and procedures for faculty governance. The bylaws were last updated in late 2012. They include detail about the role of the Chair and Associate Chair, and standing committees. Faculty members meet regularly and engage in substantive discussions, many of which are based around the work of the Department's five standing committees and three additional committees.

- (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 Department Chair stepped into the role in the spring of 2011 when the previous Chair was asked to take on a role in the dean's office. The Chair was then elected to a full three-year term in 2012. He is well liked by his colleagues, who describe him as an advocate for the Department with an easy-going style. The dean and the provost both described the current Chair as one of a long line of effective Chairs in the Department. The current Chair is seen as active in governance beyond the Department, as he was recently vice chair of the Buffalo State College Senate and serves as a SUNY University faculty senator from Buffalo State, sitting on the Executive Committee as the Comprehensive Colleges Sector Representative.

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

The process for selecting administrators is described in the Department's bylaws. Evaluation of the Department Chair is then conducted in the last year of the Chair's three-year term. The Associate Chair leads the faculty evaluation to recommend continuation or non-continuation to the dean.

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

Clear pathways are in place to address concerns of faculty, staff and students. The chair works to resolve conflicts. There is a process in place for taking student complaints outside the Department when necessary.

Overall evaluation, 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:

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

(a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of journalism and mass communications. Or, ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.

***Revised:* 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 the unit 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 curriculum has not been revised significantly since the last accreditation review. The Department added a “branded area of specialization” in Sports Communication as an option for students. This is not considered a major or minor by SUNY, but it was a way for the Department to creatively offer students training in the growing area of sports communication. The Department has met the 80/65 rule in all but a very small handful of cases. It reports 100 percent compliance on the 80-credit rule, and 97 percent compliance on the 65-credit rule. A check of their student records found this to be the case. The one student record randomly discovered that was not in compliance with the 65 rule had 63 credits and a note stating that this student would meet the rule once the general education (“intellectual foundations”) requirements were updated. All other spot checks were found to be in compliance. The Department included this element as part of its degree audit for students, making it easy for advisors and students to see where they stand on that standard. The Department is in 100 percent compliance with the new 72-hour rule.

(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 Department offers three sequences that are under review for accreditation (journalism, media production, public communication). A fourth sequence, communication studies, is not under review.

All communication majors are required to take the “Communication Core” of four courses (COM100 Media Literacy, COM210 Converged Media Writing, COM215 Introduction to Visual Communication, SPC205 Introduction to Oral Communication).

Journalism: There were 156 students enrolled in the Journalism program at the time of the site visit. There are eight required courses for the major (COM 302 Principles of Journalism, COM 303 Print News I: Reporting, COM 312 Basic Media Production, COM 337 Electronic News I: Producing; COM 325 Feature Writing *or* COM 338 Electronic News II: Reporting, COM 400 Communication Law, COM 405 News Lab and COM 450 Communication and Society). In interviews, students expressed interest in taking Media Production courses that they believed would prepare them for work in a converged newsroom. One faculty member echoed that sentiment, and stated that the Department needs to move more in that direction.

Media Production: As the largest sequence in the Department (201 enrolled in fall 2013), Media Production is a focus area of the Department. There are seven required courses for the major. Four courses are taken by all media production students (COM304 Writing for Broadcast, COM312 Basic Media Production, COM328 Intermediate Audio Production, COM329 Intermediate Video Production). Students are then given the choice of 2 courses (COM317 Media Management *or* COM400 Communication Law) for the fifth course requirement. Finally, students must choose two additional courses from a list of six courses (COM428 Advanced Audio Production, COM429 Advanced Video Production, COM431 Advanced Field Production, COM432 Advanced Postproduction, COM433 Advanced Television Documentary Production, COM434 Advanced Video Production Practicum). Students also take COM450, the senior seminar Communication and Society. Finally, students in this sequence choose two communication electives to complete their coursework. This can be an internship, independent study, independent project or a 300/400 level elective course (requires advisement). Media Production students and faculty reported positive benefits from participating in the university’s service learning program.

Public Communication: In fall 2013, 187 students were enrolled in Public Communication. The Public Communication curriculum is built around seven required courses: COM 301 Principles of Public Relations and Advertising, SPC 307 Group Communication *or* COM 407 Organizational Communication, COM 308 Publications Writing, COM 322 Communication Graphics *or* COM 336 Web and Social Media Production, COM 401 Communication Research, COM 418 Campaigns in Public Relations and Advertising, and COM 450 Communication and Society. Students take three additional elective courses that relate to an area of professional interest, drawing from a robust offering of electives.

Students reported rich experiences from participating in service learning through their Public Relations Writing, Communication Research, and Campaigns in Public Relations and Advertising courses in support of local organizations, especially non-profits.

The Public Communication curriculum appears well designed to accomplish what it intends – to provide not just skills for today’s marketplace but also to develop transferable skills to adjust to future change.

(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.)

The courses observed and the course syllabi indicate high quality instruction that is demanding and up-to-date. The faculty appeared well prepared for lectures and presentations. Students in the courses visited were engaged and active learners in the classroom.

Faculty demonstrated a commitment to continued excellence through their awards and citations for high-quality teaching. Five faculty members won the United Students Government Faculty Appreciation Award, three earned service-learning awards or fellowships, and one other worked closely with the Volunteer Service Learning Center. The Department Chair earned the Presidents' Leadership Award, and one other faculty member won the Students Award for the Promotion of Equity and Diversity.

Student success provides evidence that the coursework is leading to student achievement. Two Department of Communication students won the Buffalo State Student Leadership and Humanitarian award in 2013. Three students won SPJ scholarships (one student won twice, for a total of four scholarships). One student won the Associated Press Young Journalist of the Year award. A Media Production student had his production selected for the SUNYwide Film Festival. Other students earned regional and local scholarships.

Journalism: The faculty observed in this area demonstrated a strong interest in making sure students not only demonstrated the ability to write and report, but to understand why they were doing it a certain way. Students interviewed stated faculty were fully engaged in helping them find internships and jobs. Many of them described their instructors, both full-time and part-time, as mentors.

Media Production: The faculty observed in this area demonstrated a high-level of interest in student learning and success. Students and faculty reported numerous mentoring situations and significant help with internship and job placement. Some faculty members remain active professionally in both radio and television. This provides connections to opportunities for students interested in gaining experience or employment at stations or in the broadcast field.

Public Communication: In two-thirds of the classes observed, social media was integral to the instruction. The Department's newest hire is a Ph.D. whose specialty is social media. On-site observation found students fully engaged and instruction to be of a high quality.

During the reporting period, more than one-third of the 15 full-time faculty members were recognized with Faculty / Staff Appreciation Awards from the

student government. Two received recognition for service learning projects. One received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

(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 Department controls its own lab space and has some additional space available. The Department computer labs are arranged with one faculty computer and 16 student computers, effectively limiting the enrollment to 16 students per lab course. None of the skills courses exceed the ACEJMC limit of 20 students per course.

(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. (If the unit has more than one sequence, address the opportunities by sequence.)

Across all three accredited majors, the Department not only allows but strongly encourages students to undertake at least one credit-bearing internship. Our conversation with students confirmed that a large majority of students seize the internship opportunity, both for credit and not. The majority of students interviewed complete more than one internship.

A full-time staff member supervises the for-credit internship course during the spring, summer and fall semesters. To be eligible for a credit internship, students must have at least a 2.6 in their major and must have completed two or three (depending on the major) pre-requisite courses, distinct requirements for each major. Internship credit is not allowed to exceed six semester credits.

The system supporting the internship procedure is thorough and professional. At its foundation is a formal contract of expectations signed by all three parties – school, intern and host. The program requires interns to submit a weekly log of activities, a final report on the host organization written as if they were doing job-hunt research on that entity (history, management practices, employee benefits and training, etc.), a resume, a class presentation on the internship and attendance at three workshops from Buffalo State's Career Development Center.

The intern's on-site supervisor is required to submit two reports on the student's progress, at mid-term and final. Conversations with alumni revealed not only that this requirement is enforced but also that the Department's internship supervisor will also on occasion visit the host organization on site.

Overall, the internship process appears to be solid in both scope and quality.

Overall evaluation, 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.

Since the previous accreditation process, the unit has incorporated its Action Plan for Diversity into its overall Strategic Plan. The specific areas of emphasis in the plan are curriculum, student recruitment, faculty diversity and advocacy.

Diversity is part of the annual report submitted by each full-time faculty member and the Chair to the dean and provost. In spring 2006 and spring 2013, the Department issued a survey to faculty members asking how they approach issues of diversity, inclusiveness, multiculturalism, and global awareness. The results indicate a significant increase in faculty perception of the significance and inclusion of diversity issues within courses. It also shows that more materials and handouts are being provided to students. Though there are fewer instructor-directed diversity assignments, the survey found significantly more student-generated assignments with diversity themes, indicating that students show an interest in and appreciation of diversity themes even when they are not specifically assigned to address these issues.

(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 college requires students to take at least one diversity course as a graduation requirement. There are 17 such courses across the college. Two of them are communication courses, including the Department's Race, Class and Media course, which was cited by students and faculty as one of the most popular courses on campus. There are six additional courses required of Communication majors that deal with inclusiveness, representation and diversity. Those courses specify learning outcomes, content and the materials. The Department has also infused diversity into four elective courses, and individual faculty work with students on independent coursework that focuses on diversity issues.

The Department has placed interns at various ethnic-oriented media organizations, including at African American newspapers and Latino-oriented publications in Buffalo, African American radio stations, and in city and county offices focused on minority issues and Buffalo City Council districts with primarily minority constituents. Interns also have been placed with religious media and senior-oriented publications and organizations.

Efforts are made to use internships as an opportunity to provide diverse experiences for all students. Faculty members rely on diverse contacts in the community to infuse diversity into their instruction. They invite guest speakers and set up service-learning opportunities for students that require them to engage with underserved communities.

In interviews, students said diversity issues were addressed in class and that assignments were designed to expose them to different cultural and ethnic environments.

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

Forty-three percent of the entire faculty is diverse by race/ethnicity and gender (full-time 31 percent; part-time 47 percent). In regularly funded searches during the self-study period, the department received 51 minority applications among a total of 177 applications received for five faculty positions. Offers were made to hire three minority candidates as assistant professors in 2011 and 2012. None were accepted.

The Department has hired three women (one Asian) as assistant professors in recent years, and three women have been promoted to associate professor.

The Department has made 33 new part-time faculty appointments, including 15 women and two minorities, during the study period. The Department Chair indicated in an interview that he is in negotiations with three local professionals, who are minorities, to teach classes next academic year.

In interviews, both faculty and students discussed the need for minority representation on the faculty. The Department Chair, dean and provost stressed their commitment to recruit minority faculty candidates.

(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.

In order to recruit or retain minority students, the Department instituted several initiatives that increased its minority population to 43 percent, compared with 29 percent for the college.

The Department provides information and materials for the college's recruiting team in New York City. Most of the students successfully recruited through this program are from under-represented populations. It also provides materials for recruiting in Buffalo and elsewhere in Western and Upstate New York, targeting minority high school students in both urban and rural settings.

The Department offers a for-credit, discounted course to seniors at the Buffalo Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, which has a student population that is 50 percent African American and 10 percent Hispanic. Since 2011, the Department has sponsored a summer journalism workshop with scholarship assistance to needy students through its Student Enrichment Fund.

The Department's rate of retention of minority students is higher than the college retention rate. In Fall 2012, 86 percent of the minority students who enrolled the previous fall were still in the Department, compared to 74 percent across the college. In 2012-13, 22 African-American, Hispanic and mixed-race students were among the 88 graduating students who reported race and ethnicity. Note that this includes only a little more than half of the 158 students who graduated, since many students choose not to indicate race or ethnicity on their official records. The 25 percent minority graduation rate compares with 40 percent minority reporting of all undergraduate students in the department (based on 2012-13 data). This is an area that needs to be addressed and the Department plans to monitor this to identify multi-year trends.

(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 Department works closely with the Equity and Campus Diversity Office and the Disability Services Office to accommodate students and ensure their success.

Interviews with students and faculty indicate an open and welcoming environment. The Department has experienced only one formal discrimination complaint in recent years, when a graduate student complained feeling disrespected and academically penalized because of his race. The Equity and Diversity Office determined the student's claim had no basis. On his own initiative, the student later apologized in writing to the instructor, Department Chair, adviser and associate dean, indicating that he misinterpreted and overreacted to writing requirements for the course. No other complaints have been filed, according to the Department Chair.

Overall evaluation, 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 Communication Department has written criteria (at the Department, college, and SUNY level) for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.

The Department's recruitment committee prepares job descriptions, files vacancy notices and files appropriate forms in concert with the department chair. The committee reviews credentials, screens applicants for full-time positions, arranges for candidates to meet the Department faculty and recommends candidates for hiring.

The Department's personnel committee is charged with evaluating the performance of tenure-track faculty and taking its evaluation to the Department. These evaluations cover teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The Personnel Committee also coordinates classroom observations of the part-time faculty members, who are required to attend an annual orientation session and are informally mentored by full-time faculty across the Department. There is no annual review mechanism in place for tenured faculty, although they may request such a review, according to the Department Chair.

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

Faculty members are required to contribute in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Scholarship is understood as academic research or creative and professional activity. The primary emphasis is on teaching, as full-time faculty members carry a 3-3 teaching load and take primary responsibility for the quality of the courses and curriculum.

The Department's 15 full-time faculty members, a staff member, and two part-time faculty members also provide academic advising. Currently, the average advising load is about 45 students for each faculty member, although several faculty members reported upwards of 100 advisees. Faculty members are expected to communicate (preferably face-to-face), at some point during the semester, with each advisee.

The Department relies heavily on part-time faculty for teaching, and has begun to turn to them for some advising. Some part-time lecturers teach two or even three courses each semester. Two part-time lecturers both teach courses and advise a large number of students as part of an initiative by the Department, launched in 2011, to lighten the

advising load for full-time faculty. Part-time lecturers, according to the self-study, teach two-thirds of the professional skills courses.

The Department Chair has requested and continues to request additional full-time hires, as the Department's strategic plan has identified a 75:25 (FT-PT) ratio as ideal. One full-time faculty member will be retiring at the end of the year, bringing the number of full-time faculty to 14 for a student body of about 800 majors if additional hires are not made. The site visit report of October 2007 showed sixteen full-time faculty for 560 students.

The dean and provost are aware of the ratio of full-time faculty to students in the Department, and the dean has acknowledged that there is a shortage of full-time faculty for advising. The dean has made requests for additional full-time hires to the provost.

(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.

Current faculty represents a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise. The average full-time faculty member brings more than a dozen years' professional experience and about the same number of years in teaching experience to the classroom. About half the faculty members have Ph.D.s, and the Department also has a faculty member with a JD and another with an MFA.

Faculty members maintain active affiliations with professional and scholarly associations such as the Public Relations Society of America, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and the Union for Democratic Communications. They have also taken part in faculty development training through organizations such as the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

The part-time faculty members bring strong professional experience and a current perspective on communications industries to the classroom. Many are media professionals in the Buffalo market, working in public relations and print, broadcast, and digital media. Very few have less than five years' professional experience; most have far more than that (more than 20 years). Although most part-time lecturers have master's degrees, several hold doctorates, and at least one has a J.D. (and regularly teaches a law class in the Department).

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

Full-time and part-time faculty members are evaluated periodically through peer evaluation and every semester through student evaluations of courses. Instructors may choose whether evaluations are administered online or in the classroom. Items on the student evaluations include ratings of instructor enthusiasm, knowledge of the subject

matter, timeliness in feedback, and fairness in grading. On a 1-to-5 scale, the average rating of course and instructor is above a 4 for all faculty members.

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

Discussions with representatives from other units on campus indicated a high regard for the Department and individual faculty. The consensus among faculty, staff and administrators from across the college was that the Department brought a high level of positive visibility, through its alumni, to Buffalo State. The visibility of the Department “gives us identity” in the region, said the college’s Career Development Center director. The Department is also seen as a campus leader in service learning and as a strong contributor to the college’s general education (“intellectual foundations”) offerings.

Individual faculty members are also seen as strong contributors to shared governance across the college and university, serving on multiple committees and in the senate. Most notably, the Department Chair was vice chair of the college senate in 2012-2013 and serves as a representative for Buffalo State to the SUNY senate.

Overall evaluation, 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 college's tenure standards are clearly stated in policies posted on the provost's website and available to all faculty. The Department follows the stated expectations for scholarship and creative work as it relates to tenure and promotion within the Department. The Department strategic plan, letters of expectation, and mentoring of junior faculty encourage faculty to pursue scholarship and creative work at the regional and national levels in the relevant fields, including journalism, public communication, and media production. Within these broad boundaries, faculty members are allowed creative liberties to develop their own research passion and tracks. Tenured and tenure-track faculty interviewed expressed a clear understanding of the expectations and directions for both scholarly and creative work to produce successful tenure and/or promotion dossiers for consideration.

The faculty has not revised the Department's mission statement regarding scholarship, creative and professional activity since the last site team visit. The clear statement defines a faculty of scholars as developing new knowledge and sharing that knowledge with both the scholarly and professional communities. This fits well with the overall focus of the Department and college. This also provides opportunity for valuing faculty work that focuses on more applied research.

Sabbaticals are encouraged. Full-time faculty may apply for a sabbatical in their sixth year at Buffalo State in each sixth year following a prior sabbatical. Applications are submitted to the department chair. If endorsed, the proposal moves to the appropriate dean. Sabbatical requests require a work plan that includes statements on how the sabbatical will serve the faculty member, department, and university. Plans must also include details on how the department will cover the absence, if the college grants the sabbatical. The provost is the final authority on granting sabbaticals. Faculty members may choose between one semester at full pay or two semesters at half. A formal report is required from the faculty member at the completion of the sabbatical. Three faculty members have taken sabbaticals since the last site team visit.

The School of Arts and Humanities administers travel funds for Communication Department faculty. The funds are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. The department reports that about half of the requests are funded annually. Requests are usually funded for \$1,000. An additional fund is available to support new faculty in their first year at the same level. At times, the department uses funds from its

foundation account to offset faculty travel costs for research or administrative purposes. Faculty did not express concerns about funding.

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

Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members' professional and scholarly specializations.

Faculty members communicate the results of research, creative and/or professional activity to other scholars, educators and practitioners through presentations, productions, exhibitions, workshops and publications appropriate to the activity and to the mission of the unit and institution.

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

The Department describes itself as “a faculty of scholars.” The evidence of scholarship and creative activity from the past six years indicates the faculty members are indeed living up to the statement as set out in their strategic plan. In that time period, the faculty produced 3 scholarly or professional books, 5 textbooks, 2 edited books, 15 book chapters, 18 refereed journal articles, 21 non-refereed articles, 52 academic presentations and refereed papers, 13 professional presentations and workshops, 5 encyclopedia entries, 13 juried creative works, 23 non-juried creative works, 3 guest artists, and 35 exhibitions. The full and associate professors produced the majority of the work.

The Department actively recruits faculty who will produce a research or creative record. The “Letters of Expectation” created for each faculty member are primary evidence of clear support for faculty developing a consistent, quality research and/or creative program. These negotiated letters state the clear expectations for research/creative work, teaching and research. Faculty praised the clarity of the letters in interviews, saying that it reduced the uncertainty of the tenure process.

Overall evaluation, 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.

The Department presents a carefully crafted pathway that leads to or requires student participation in advisement. To that end, advisement is required at three key points in a student's progress. This requirement is enforced by the addition of a PIN that requires completion of individual advisement before registration is possible. Academic advising is a task shared by all faculty members, assisted by one non-faculty professional staff member and two experienced adjunct lecturers who also advise.

The team received some input from students of color and transfer students that they find the advisement process less obvious and less effective for them. Overall, students appear to have benefited from good advisement, however.

Students receive career counseling from both full-time and part-time faculty, from academic advisors and from the campus Career Development Center, which offers a full range of relevant student assistance.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students

The Department views faculty accessibility as one of its hallmarks. The site team verified that all faculty members post their office hours, in addition to published telephone numbers and email addresses. Their offices are located conveniently.

Each faculty member serves as academic advisor to approximately 45 students. Students report that faculty members are available and accessible well beyond their required office hours.

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

The Department informs students principally through its website, email and bulletin boards. A sampling of students indicated to the team that they rely principally on email and think that the Department does a good job of keeping them informed about activities, requirements and policies. A few report that they rely mostly on the Department's Facebook page. The Department's CommBlog,

mainly driven by two professors, focuses on information designed to be of interest to students. Students are involved in the Department's communications planning.

(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.

A student-run newspaper (*The Record*), radio station (WBNY), TV station (BSC-TV) and the Communication Honor Society provide meaningful extracurricular and networking opportunities. The active PRSSA chapter, the oldest such chapter in Western New York, is advised by a professor prominent in PRSA nationally.

(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 Department's retention rate and graduation rate are either comparable to or higher than Buffalo State's overall rate and the average for peer institutions. These results are achieved in an environment in which 92% of the Department's students work at an off-campus job and 30% work more than 30 hours a week. The site visit team confirmed that the appropriate data is regularly published on the Department's website.

Overall finding of 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 Communication Department effectively uses its strategic planning process to prioritize resource acquisition. Most of the budget is directed toward personnel. The equipment budget is next in line, with an emphasis on meeting instructional needs of the department.

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

The Department has had approximately the same funding base for the last several years. The Department leadership and faculty noted that as the largest unit in the Arts and Humanities and the second largest on campus, it serves a large and growing enrollment without equitable resources. The self-study reports the Department is “the lowest per capita” compared to other departments in Arts and Humanities. The spring 2013 Arts and Humanities enrollment of 2,037 resulted in a per-capita average of \$81.54. The Communication Department received 37 percent of this average: \$30.01 per student, for an operating budget allocation (after salaries) of \$22,900 for 762 (690 enrolled Communication students plus 72 TFA majors counted as being in the Department). The Arts and Humanities dean said he had not seen a proposal to rework the allocation, stating that the Department Chair could bring a proposal to him for consideration. The Chair said that he has not made a formal request to the dean. One possible reason for not making the request is that the faculty and Chair reported “larger than average share of special equipment funds” from the dean for technological updates and replacements. The Chair reported regular and on-going discussions with the dean on resource issues and potential funding solutions. A solution for funding some lab technology has been a fee for lab classes implemented by the Department in Fall 2013.

Salaries in the Department’s budget are provided on an as-needed basis. The Department has no set budget for full-time faculty. Funding is provided when faculty or staff are hired. Vacant position salaries revert to university-wide accounts and new money is provided when the university approves a position for hire. The university provides funding for part-time positions only when the Department is authorized to hire a lecturer.

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

The Department has no classrooms designated specifically for its use. It does control four computer labs. There is an overflow computer lab room with three computers and workspace for part-time faculty. The labs are appropriately outfitted with industry-level software including the Adobe Suite, Microsoft Office, AVID Editing, After Effects and other media production software. The software is regularly updated and the computers are replaced on a four-year cycle.

The Department is currently working to acquire space being vacated by another department. This new lab is designated to become a multimedia center for use by Journalism students working in print, broadcast and digital environments as well as by Media Production and Public Communication students. It also may house an integrated center for student media.

The Departmental office suite is located in Bishop Hall. It consists of the Chair's office, a secretarial office, a workroom/ mailroom, a small conference room, and a storage room. Each faculty member has a private office. The Department has limited space for adjuncts, which is problematic given the large size of its adjunct corps and the amount of counseling and engagement work the Department places on adjunct faculty. The Department Chair is working with the dean to obtain eight additional offices for faculty, including adjuncts. It is not clear whether the dean intends to provide the space when the existing unit vacates the space.

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.

The Department's production facilities in the Savage Building consist of a studio, control room, five video editing suites (two suites per room for two rooms and one separate editing suite room), two audio production/editing suites, a viewing room, and an equipment loan/storage/repair area. The equipment is good quality and is in good repair. The checkout room is well run, and students reported good availability of equipment except during peak periods. No students made a point of complaining about equipment availability from the checkout room, which is notable given the limited resources to keep the room open and equipment checkout available.

Student media is not part of the Communication Department and is not covered by this accreditation review. United Students Government provides space for student media and other student organizations. Currently USG provides separate space in the Campbell Student Union for WBNY radio, BSC-TV, *The Record* (student newspaper), and the Public Relations Student Society of America. The Department's students make significant use of the student media opportunities. The site visit team heard a number of complaints about both BSC-TV's facilities in terms of both space and equipment quality. Faculty members are aware of this issue but recognize that, because it is not under the Department, this is a difficult issue to resolve.

The Department also is structurally separate from the university's Instructional Resources, which includes two television studios, a still photography center, a teleconference center, and several associated offices and workspaces housed in Bulger

Communication Center. Instructional Resources assists the Department with equipment maintenance and repair, other engineering assistance, coordinated purchasing and equipment loan for students. The Communication Department is holding one course in the Instructional Resources studio this semester. The students are producing a project for Comedy Central. Faculty report that this is not a typical use of those facilities.

In 2013-14 academic year, the Department instituted a new materials fee based on course enrollment to cover disposable materials. A few students complained that they are not seeing the full benefits of this fee, although it was just the second semester of implementation during the site visit. This course materials fee is separate from the Buffalo State Technology Fee.

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

The library resources appear to be sufficient. Faculty and students reported that they had access to the resources they needed.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II- Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

The unit and its faculty advance journalism and the mass communication professions and fulfill obligations to its 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.**

The Department appears to have a loyal alumni following in Western New York, a positive factor for graduates seeking employment. The Department's outreach to that alumni base, however, appears limited and resource-constrained, rather than sustained, systematic and funded. An Action Plan for Alumni/Media Outreach was incorporated into the Department's strategic plan but appears more plan than action.

The Department-sponsored speaker series brought three high-profile guests to campus during the study period. The goal of the series is to move beyond guest speakers for individual classes and create a forum for broader audiences.

Since 2007, the Department has been more proactive in re-establishing the Communication chapter of the College Alumni Association, holding networking events for local alumni and inviting alumni to participate in mentoring, internship, fundraising, and other activities involving the department and its students. Communication is currently building the database for continued contact with 2,993 alumni contacts, 1,332 of them in the Western New York area.

The Department has an alumni advisory group to assist in networking and fundraising. The group generally holds one networking event each year for alumni and participates in one or two career information sessions each academic year.

The Department sponsors a Communication Hall of Fame for alumni who have distinguished themselves in communication fields. Since 1999, 16 alumni have been inducted. Department faculty review resumes and make the selection. New members are inducted every other year.

The Department also recognizes Western New York media professionals, most of them Department alumni, with its Professional Achievement Award. This award is given on the off years of the Hall of Fame.

- 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 has developed a strong track record of community and professional engagement. In 2009, two faculty members moderated a panel of six local journalists and public relations practitioners on crisis communication three weeks after an airline crash in a Buffalo suburb that killed all 49 aboard. Podcasts of the discussion were posted at the Department and university websites. In 2013, another faculty member coordinated an alumni panel for Professional Roundtable Conversations featuring journalists and public relations practitioners in an open discussion of career advice for students.

At the request of the local PRSA chapter, the Department began a graduate program in Public Relations Management in 1992. This program provides master's-level education to current public relations specialists as well as to would-be practitioners. The Department currently is considering staffing and other resources with the possibility of expanding this program into a free-standing Master of Science degree in Public Relations.

Working as part of the Department, several faculty members have provided media training, coaching and consulting for various governmental and non-profit organizations.

- 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.**

Individual faculty are members of local, regional and national professional and academic associations, including the Eastern Communication Association, the Broadcast Education Association, the Public Relations Society of America, the American Journalism Historians Association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the Native American Journalists Association.

- 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.**

Campus representatives interviewed by the site team had high praise, not only for the Department's involvement in service projects but even more so for its leadership in these endeavors.

Within the reporting period, faculty and their classes have had involvement in service projects with more than 100 organizations. This service involvement includes all parts of the Department – Public Communication, Media Production and Journalism. Most of these service projects were diversity-related as well.

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

The Department has sponsored a radio project associated with the Buffalo Association of Black Journalists. The YGB Radio project works with at-risk minority students in area high schools as they produce a radio news-interview series.

In August 2011, the Department hosted its first High School Journalism Workshop. The intent was to introduce budding journalists to current technologies and introduce potential students to Buffalo State in general and the Communication Department in particular. The students spent a week engaged with Communication faculty and alumni in writing, video recording and editing, social media, researching and interviewing. The second workshop in August 2013 involved the Buffalo Area Black Journalists organization.

In 2009, the Department hosted hands-on broadcasting training with Girls Scouts in middle/junior high school. Faculty gave presentations and coached the girls through the process of producing their own promotional video, which was uploaded to the Department's YouTube site and posted at the WNY Girl Scout website. Plans are in the works for a similar workshop in the upcoming academic year.

Overall evaluation, 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 unit has adopted the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies almost verbatim and has added competence in public speaking, for a total of 13 learning objectives. For the purposes of assessment, diversity-related learning objectives (#3 and #4 on the ACEJMC list addressing diversity in domestic society and a global society) are collapsed into a single “diversity” objective.

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

For all learning objectives, the Department has an aggressive assessment plan that is under routine revision and has involved multiple direct and indirect measures including pre- and post-tests, senior essays, an internship evaluation, and a recent survey of graduating seniors. The plan involves the participation of full- and part-time faculty and dedicated, ongoing effort from the assessment committee.

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

An assessment committee in the Department has collected and analyzed a great deal of data on a four-year cycle for each of its learning objectives, and the committee produces results of the analyses to share with the Chair and faculty. The results demonstrate student learning around the objectives. The Department focuses on three objectives per year over the course of four years for each assessment cycle.

According to the self-study, conversations with faculty and with the Department Chair, there is limited “closing of the loop.” The amount of data collection suggests that the response to data in improving instruction would be more significant. Much of the work seems to be around improving the data collection (such as revising the pre- and post-tests), and little of curricular substance is reported under “Action Steps” in the plan or self-study.

However, faculty members and the Department Chair cite examples of instructional and curricular improvement as a result of assessment activity. Perhaps most notable is the Department’s work with the College Writing Program to tailor two required, basic

writing courses (CWP 101 and CWP 102) for communication majors to address weaknesses in critical thinking and writing among students in the Department. These courses are pre-requisites for the gateway writing course for all majors.

Other examples of “closing the loop” are at the course level. An example is increased emphasis on key concepts in the law class after examination of senior essays, part of the Department’s analysis, revealed shortcomings in students’ master of the freedom-of-expression learning objective.

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

Many faculty – both full- and part-time – maintain strong personal contact with alumni, helping them further their careers and bringing them into their classrooms to meet students and to share their experience. This interaction frequently leads to improved instruction and coursework. The Department has not executed a strong, consistent outreach program to systematically engage alumni in improving the curriculum.

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

The Department’s use of professionals in the assessment process is sporadic. The assessment committee chair reported that in 2012-2013, two industry professionals helped with evaluation of student materials, but in the two preceding years, none had been consulted. The Department assessment committee has suggested that for some learning objectives, such as those around numeracy, research or history, consultation with professionals is more difficult than for those learning objectives such as Visual Communication.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

1. The Department has a strong culture of collegiality, where faculty all seem to be “pulling in the same direction” and are willing to put aside personal differences to work on common goals. There seem to be no factions, no simmering resentments, and no disruptive faculty who tear at the fabric of this hard-working Department.
2. The Department’s culture of collegiality extends to its students, who report strong relationships with faculty. There seems to be a clear perception of students that the faculty members are committed to their success in the classroom and beyond.
3. The Department enjoys a strong reputation on campus and in the community. One campus leader characterized the Department as the “most visible” because of its strong alumni base in local media outlets. The Department is also recognized as a leader in community-based (service) learning, in contributions to general education on campus, and in the contributions of its faculty in shared governance.
4. The Department has a strong culture of shared governance. Information is shared and consultation seems to be routine. Standing committees all contribute to the workload. Faculty members meet regularly, and consensus most often rules the day on decision-making.
5. The Department puts a very high premium on teaching – for both its full-time faculty members and its large contingent of part-time lecturers. Senior full-time faculty members informally mentor junior faculty and adjuncts on classroom-related issues.
6. The Department infuses diversity and ethics across its curriculum, asking faculty members to incorporate it in each course instead using a “one-and-done” approach to these critical learning objectives. Conversations with students indicate this approach is effective.
7. Although faculty members carry heavy teaching, advising and service obligations, they also maintain strong relationships with area professionals and alumni, which benefit student learning and opportunities.

Weaknesses

1. The Department’s reliance on part-time faculty for almost half of its major courses and for advising weakens its ability to control the quality of its curriculum and ensure a high-quality student experience.
2. Although the student fee for lab courses is helpful, the Department’s budgetary constraints – on discretionary funds for use on equipment, technology and resources – threatens to keep it from moving its curriculum forward and providing faculty members and students the support they need.

3. The Department uses the word “converged” in the title of at least one course, and faculty members and students are certainly aware of a fast-changing media environment. However, the curricula, overall, do not sufficiently integrate convergence across platforms and communication areas.
4. The Department’s data-gathering and analysis efforts around assessment are noteworthy, but the “bang for the buck” on curricular improvements, informed by adequate professional input, is not evident.
5. The Department’s focus on diversity in enrollment, in classes and across the curriculum is commendable but cannot substitute for diversity among the faculty.
6. Although faculty members in the Department maintain strong individual relationships with alumni that benefit teaching and learning, the Department would benefit from better engaging alumni to improve its curricula and assessment.

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

N/A

3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that must be corrected 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 corrected before the provisional status can be removed.

N/A

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

N/A

6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize 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 Department was previously accredited for the first time in 2010 after a provisional accreditation and revisit. This is only the Department’s second accreditation cycle. The Department’s two out-of-compliance standards were curriculum (the problem was mostly around the 80-credit-hour rule) and assessment (no evidence of response to data collection, which the Department had not yet concluded on its first four-year cycle). The 2010 revisit around these issues found compliance on the standards.

Other deficiencies noted in the original (2007) report were:

* *Student confusion around the Media Production major and the Journalism major, which included coursework on broadcast news.* This issue has been resolved with the passage of time since the broadcasting journalism emphasis was discontinued.

* *A faculty that did not include a single racial minority.* The Department has one minority faculty member (Asian-American) and its ratio of women has improved. The Department made three offers for full-time positions to minority candidates in the past several years, and all were declined. The Chair has put more concerted efforts on recruiting part-time lecturers to diversify the instructional pool.

* *Heavy reliance on adjunct faculty and very heavy advising loads.* This remains a weakness, one that the Chair continues to raise with the dean. The quality of advising, however, seems adequate based on student feedback and graduation rates. The Department has put measures into place to address the problem, such as pre-advising meetings with students by major, the employment of experienced part-time lecturers for advising and careful attention to training and mentoring adjunct faculty. Student feedback and evaluations indicate the quality of instruction is high and that student satisfaction with advising has increased.

* *Weakness in scholastic journalism outreach and outreach to alumni.* The Department has initiated a summer workshop for high school students. Its outreach efforts to alumni have improved but remain sporadic.

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 thorough. Much of the material that might be added as appendices, such as the strategic plan, was embedded in the study itself. The study also included an "executive summary" at the beginning of each section that was helpful. The study did contain typos that could have been caught with a more careful proofread. It also contained errors that the team had to clarify and address on site.