

# Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

Graduate/Undergraduate programs

2013– 2014

Name of Institution: City University of New York

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: William P. Kelly, interim chancellor

Name of Unit: CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

Name and Title of Administrator: Stephen B. Shepard, founding dean

Date of 2013 - 2014 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 17-20, 2013

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: NA

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: NA

Graduate program: NA

Undergraduate program: NA

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: NA

Graduate program: NA

Undergraduate program: NA

Undergraduate program recommendation by 2013 - 2014 Visiting Team: NA

Graduate program recommendation by 2013-2014 Visiting Team: Accreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

## **Team Chair**

Name and Title: Douglas Anderson, dean

Organization/School: College of Communications, Penn State

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Team Members**

Name and Title: Sue Burzynski Bullard, associate professor

Organization/School: College of Journalism and Mass Communications, Nebraska-Lincoln

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: Chuck Wanninger, freelance writer and editor

Organization/School: Port Port Huron, Mich.

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

## **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**

It defies logic that a graduate program in journalism could come so far so fast. The self-study for the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism notes that, in 2001, journalism professors from several of the four-year senior colleges in the City University of New York system “began discussing the need to pool their resources to create a one-year master’s program in urban journalism and mass communications through CUNY’s Graduate Center.”

The idea quickly gained traction. And in May 2004, the board of trustees approved the launch of the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The self-study noted: “As its rationale, [the board] cited journalism’s lack of diversity and the need for a publicly supported graduate school in the New York metropolitan area. A public journalism school, the board said, would open opportunities for those who couldn’t afford the expensive tuition at the premier private journalism programs of Columbia University and New York University.”

In November 2004, the founding dean was named, a man who was about to retire from a distinguished career as editor-in-chief of *BusinessWeek* magazine. Planning for the School was visionary, intense, focused, realistic and thoughtful. Almost from the beginning, planning took into consideration ACEJMC standards and expectations.

The founding dean wrote in his 2013 book, *Deadlines and Disruption*, that, when he was hired, the chancellor told him that he “would have substantial authority to design the curriculum and to hire the faculty. . . He wanted the school to be ready to open in the fall of 2006, which was less than two years away. That meant building a new facility,

designing the curriculum, recruiting the first class of students, hiring faculty, and maybe raising money for scholarships.”

To help jump start the process, the chancellor loaned the founding dean a woman from his staff who had overseen a range of special projects in the central office and who knew CUNY procedures. The one-year loaner became a permanent appointment as associate dean who continues today. The dean’s description of her in his book aligns with the observations of several faculty and staff members: She possesses “a big picture grasp of strategic issues, a journalist’s commitment to deadlines, and a tenacious dedication to gritty details.”

The first class of master’s degree students entered in September 2006. The goal of the School, which is located in midtown Manhattan, adjacent to the headquarters of *The New York Times*, is simple and straightforward: “To win recognition as a great New York City school and as a great national school, an institution sending smart, diverse, digitally savvy young journalists to help lead the way in a dynamically changing profession.”

At the time of the School’s launch, students were required to specialize in print, broadcast or interactive journalism. In its third year, the School transitioned to a fully converged curriculum, but six subject concentrations remain: Arts & Culture Reporting; Business & Economics Reporting; Entrepreneurial Journalism; Health & Science Reporting; International Reporting; and Urban Reporting.

Incoming Fall classes number about 100. In Fall 2013, 196 students were enrolled.

The School’s mission statement is succinct: “The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism prepares students from a broad range of economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds to produce high-quality journalism at a time of rapid change. We are rooted in the core skills and ethics of journalism: strong reporting and writing, critical thinking, fairness and accuracy. We teach new technologies and storytelling tools across media platforms to engage audiences and promote a broader democratic dialogue. We serve our local and global news communities by sharing our reporting, research and facilities. We serve our profession by graduating skilled journalists, diversifying voices in the media, and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship to help build a sustainable future for journalism.”

By all accounts, the School has received extraordinary support within a huge system. CUNY enrolls 270,000 degree-seeking students at 24 institutions throughout the City. The Journalism School is an arm of CUNY’s Graduate School and University Center, which administers 30 doctoral and six master’s degree programs. Other institutions

under the auspices of the center: the Graduate School, the School of Professional Studies, the CUNY Baccalaureate Program and the Macauley Honors College. The Graduate Center handles human resources, payroll, purchasing, financial aid, and the services of the bursar and registrar for the Journalism School.

The self-study notes the generous support the School has received: “From the School’s inception in 2006, the university has increased its funding annually, even during years when state support for the city system as a whole declined. We were financed generously in our startup years of operation, and our budget has kept up with our enrollment. We have never lacked the resources to provide our students with a top-notch education, including small class sizes and exposure to the latest technology.”

**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’s five-year strategic plan was adopted by its governance council in May 2013. An associate dean, seven faculty members, a student and an alumni representative comprised the strategic planning committee. The committee consulted widely – members of the faculty and staff, students and professionals. Priorities were discussed and drafts of the plan circulated, critiqued and rewritten. Prior to the May approval by the governance council, the plan was reviewed at a meeting of the faculty. The plan is no paper tiger. Thoughtful and aggressive, it is built around seven goals: strengthening curriculum; strengthening instruction; strengthening leadership in key areas; strengthening alumni outreach; finding and taking advantage of opportunities for expansion, including online education; expanding facilities; and expanding financial resources. Commendably, an action plan provides year-by-year goals through 2018.

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

Faculty members play active and appropriate roles in governance. The School’s faculty meets regularly: 10 times during the academic year 2012-2013. Full-time faculty members, adjuncts, consortia faculty, the senior administration and student members comprise the governance council. The council meets once a semester to consider and

vote on curriculum, standards and policy. An executive committee meets if matters require more immediate decisions. A logical – and expansive – range of standing committees is in place: curriculum and degree requirements; faculty standards; campus life and facilities; technology and library; strategic planning; and diversity. The School has other committees, according to the self-study, “with discrete responsibilities that operate outside the framework of the governance council”: personnel and budget; admissions; academic appeals; and faculty-student disciplinary.

**(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 the dean, who has served since the program was founded and who will retire at the end of the calendar year. By virtually all accounts, he has guided the School with adroitness, skillfully steering sometimes heated discussions about the direction of the program. The dean is seen by many as a confident leader: smart, dedicated, open minded, thoughtful, and a good listener and counselor.

The dean reports to the CUNY chancellor. The dean’s administrative team includes an associate dean, who is praised by the faculty for her attention to detail, quick responses and tireless work ethic, and an assistant dean whose responsibilities include admissions and student affairs. Several others in the School have administrative responsibilities, including a director of development; center directors; and directors of career services, finance and administration, and administration. Many faculty and staff members noted that the styles of the dean and associate dean complement one another well.

Central administrators praised the administrative team in the School, with one noting the “strong, confident leadership” of the founding dean.

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

The dean and other administrators are evaluated annually. Those below the rank of dean are evaluated by the supervisor to whom they report. The dean is evaluated

annually by the chancellor, based primarily on the School's progress toward meeting performance targets.

As is the case at many major institutions, an extensive review of the dean is conducted every five years. Some 120 people associated with the School—including members of the full- and part-time faculty, professional staff, students, funders and external leaders – participated in an exceptionally positive 2011 review of the dean. The self-study noted: "...the dean is a good communicator, is committed to the success of the school, and has a strong commitment to diversity. Respondents also said he has high standards for faculty, staff and students and holds himself to those same high standards. They indicated that he displays integrity, uses data appropriately and makes good decisions for the benefit of the School. Respondents indicated that the dean has built a sense of community and is dedicated to innovation and flexibility. They said he listens to the campus community and quickly responds to issues."

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

Procedures for the timely resolution of complaints are clearly outlined and followed.

**SUMMARY:** The School has a strong and effective leadership team in place, with ample evidence of participatory faculty governance. Central administrators note the rapid development and ascent of the School; professional constituents praise the programs in and direction of the School; and faculty, staff and students take pride in the enterprise.

**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.*

**Units requesting evaluation of a professional master's program must also demonstrate how their professional master's graduates attain this additional core competency:**

- contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

**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.**

**(a) 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.**

NA

**(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 School provides a strong professional curriculum. Its emphasis is on skills that students need to succeed in today's rapidly changing journalism world. It is committed to teaching traditional journalism skills and values — reporting, writing, critical thinking, ethics — but it also offers courses addressing ever-changing technologies.

The School requires 45 credits for its master's degree. In most cases at least 33 of those credits are in professional skills courses. All students take the following core courses: Craft of Journalism (six credits), Legal and Ethical Issues (three credits), Fundamentals of Multimedia Storytelling – Broadcast (three credits), and Fundamentals of Multimedia Storytelling – Interactive (three credits). In addition, students must take either another six credits in the Craft of Journalism II or a broadcast version of the same course. Students also take nine credits in a three-course subject-concentration sequence, which requires intensive reporting, writing and multimedia skills. Every student completes a professional level project for his or her capstone.

Students who complete the M.A. in journalism also have the option of taking an entrepreneurial sequence in a fourth semester, earning an advanced certificate in entrepreneurial journalism. Alternatively, students can opt to earn an M.A. in entrepreneurial journalism, substituting entrepreneurial courses for subject concentrations.

Courses are presented in a logical sequence. Although students must choose a subject concentration, they have myriad choices in electives. Very few courses have prerequisites. Students (and faculty) also can build expertise by taking short, optional workshops offered in a January Academy. Those courses vary — offering technical training in video editing software or a workshop on math for journalists, for example.

In the core reporting and writing courses, instructors start with a common syllabus that is updated each semester. In other courses with multiple sections, often taught by adjunct faculty, concentration directors meet with and observe faculty members frequently to ensure that the student experience is similar regardless of who is teaching the course. The interactive director works closely with faculty members teaching seven sections of a multimedia fundamentals course, meeting with them weekly to discuss lesson plans and approaches. Students say they often aren't sure who is a full-time faculty member and who is an adjunct. They say class outcomes are consistent across course sections.



Students also say courses are appropriately challenging, preparing them for real world internships and work.

**(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 School's strong reliance on a professional faculty, including adjuncts, ensures that instruction keeps up with current industry trends. Because many faculty members still are working in the industry, students said, instructors effectively incorporate what they did in their newsrooms into their classes the next day.

All students graduate with multimedia skills. The School has approached its curriculum in a creative way to keep up with the ever-changing needs of the industry. It has created, for example, one-credit, five-week courses in such specialties as gaming and coding. The skills taught in the interactive version of the multimedia fundamentals course are different today than they were when the course was initially created. This faculty is not hesitant to adopt and try new tools.

The School aims to achieve professional competence in its program. Students produce real world work that is published in a variety of venues. Even students who have had previous journalism experience said they were pushed to do more and to try new methods of storytelling. The second semester craft courses require analytical stories and multimedia reports.

The School also has tried to ensure that faculty members stay current by offering lunch-hour symposia on technological skills such as podcasting, video storytelling and Google docs. Faculty members also have taken courses, particularly in the January intercession, to learn new skills. The School's strategic plan calls for more faculty training and recommends hiring a new staff person to enhance faculty training.

The School does not have awards for teaching, but its guidelines for appointment, tenure and promotion make clear that it expects teachers to stay current in their subject area and to meet certain standards for teaching.

The strategic planning committee also has made recommendations aimed at ensuring that the curriculum stays current and that teaching stays strong. It recommended that every three years an external panel review syllabi, student work, student evaluations and faculty peer reviews.

**(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 in compliance. Skills courses have 18 or fewer students. Many classes are much smaller.

**(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.)**

All students are required to take a summer internship, which is a three-credit course. Students are responsible for finding their own internship and they do so with the help of job fairs and postings at the School. Additionally, the assistance of recent CUNY graduates is cited as a key to internships.

Though students are encouraged to seek paid internships, the reality is that most are unpaid. The School has a fund to subsidize students up to \$3,000 for the internship – a real plus that ensures success for the program.

The internship must be at a single media outlet, run for at least eight weeks and a total of 280 hours of work. Students involved with the School's international concentration are expected to seek internships abroad.

Students report they have little difficulty in finding the summer internships and they value the experience. The School has systems in place to help ensure that the internship provides relevant journalism experience – no public relations, marketing or advertising.

The Career Services Office monitors the internship program and tries to troubleshoot any issues. A progress report is filed midway through the internship and then a final report is issued when the program ends. Grades are on a pass-fail basis.

And finally, students can take additional internships in the fall and spring semesters – but such programs must be authorized. Students receive only one credit hour and cannot work more than 10 hours a week.

**SUMMARY:** The School offers a curriculum that provides students with the knowledge and competencies necessary to succeed in today’s rapidly evolving industry and increasingly global society. It reflects a commitment to changing as the demands of today’s jobs change without losing sight of traditional journalism skills and values.

## **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 School has a written diversity plan that was adopted by the School's governance council on May 7, 2013. The council approved the April 2013 recommendations made by an ad hoc diversity committee for achieving an inclusive curriculum, diverse faculty and student population and supportive climate. Although the School began with a diverse population (40 percent minority representation in its first class), the plan acknowledges that the number of students from underrepresented groups had declined in more recent years (32 percent in the class of 2013) and that a more diverse faculty is needed. The plan spells out specific ways to achieve the recommended goals. It does not include a timetable or specific guideposts for tracking progress. But the School did create a standing committee on diversity in May 2013, whose role will include assessing progress.

- (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.**

Students in the required core Craft of Journalism courses are assigned to cover diverse neighborhoods in multicultural New York. The urban reporting concentration offers a course on New York's social issues, which includes race relations, immigrants and socioeconomic gaps among populations. Other concentrations touch on diversity as well: the international reporting concentration includes a cross-cultural course; the arts and culture concentration's cultural issues course explores race and ethnicity; and health and sciences students cover poverty.

Students who met with the accrediting team generally believe the School does a good job of addressing diversity issues in their classes. Diversity, however, is not

addressed in the curriculum in a consistent way. Its mention is absent from most syllabi.

The self-study acknowledges that half of the respondents in a faculty survey said they had not received guidance on incorporating diversity into their courses. The 2012 graduate exit survey showed majorities of survey respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the inclusion of diverse viewpoints in the classroom. Although slightly fewer than half indicated satisfaction with the quality of instruction on diversity issues or with the quality of discussion on issues of diversity, virtually no one expressed dissatisfaction. The majority simply had no opinion on those questions. The responses on questions of diversity were overwhelmingly positive in the 2013 alumni survey. However, a few commenters offered constructive criticism, indicating the need for more diversity discussion in the classroom and extending the concept of diversity to age and political views. To ensure that diversity is more consistent in the curriculum, the diversity plan suggests that the diversity committee will develop guidelines for incorporating it into syllabi. The committee also suggested designing “best practices” materials for incorporating diversity into the curriculum and making it part of the new faculty handbook. Those measures aim to ensure a more consistent approach.

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

Of the 11 full-time faculty members, 36 percent are female and 36 percent are members of a minority group. Two of the concentration directors are African-American. Of the 85 part-time adjunct faculty members, 48 percent are female and 25 percent are members of a minority group. The diversity plan calls for taking a more consistent approach to increasing diversity among faculty ranks, especially adjuncts. Hiring adjuncts has been left to the discretion of program directors in the past. Because the School relies so heavily on adjuncts, the diversity committee suggested a more dependable way of seeking diverse candidates is needed. The diversity committee’s suggestion to recruit from ethnic and community media organizations in the City as well as drawing on the diverse faculty of CUNY campuses in New York’s boroughs makes sense in a metropolitan area with an ample multicultural base. The School has made increasing the number of adjuncts from underrepresented groups a goal.

One female adjunct, also a member of a minority group, was named an associate professor in a tenure track on the full-time faculty. Two of the three full professors on the faculty are female and one is also a person of color.

Of the 11 full-time faculty members, seven are tenured. Five faculty members (four white males and a male member of a minority group) have earned tenure since joining the School. Three of the white males were granted early tenure (two by the dean and one through the normal process). One of the faculty members (a white male) also has been promoted to full professor. One minority-group, tenure-track faculty member was denied tenure, and another minority-group, tenure-track faculty member was moved to a non-tenure-track position.

**(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 2012-2013, 68 percent of the School's enrollment was white compared with 78 percent of the U.S. population. The School's minority student population was 32 percent, including 7 percent international students of color. CUNY graduate programs as a whole were made up of 56 percent white students. Because the School recruits and draws its population from across the country and abroad, it suggests the U.S. census provides a better demographic comparison.

The percentage of students from underrepresented groups was at its highest in the class of 2010 at 45 percent. It dipped to 32 percent in the class of 2013 and bounced back to 36 percent in the class of 2014.

The self-study suggests the School will ramp up its efforts to recruit underrepresented students from CUNY undergraduate colleges. It also plans to provide more support for minority students once they enter the School to help offset somewhat lower retention rates for minority students.

**(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 faculty handbook addresses practices for the conduct of classes, including dealing with disabled students and student harassment. The School also has addressed diversity in a number of ways, including diversity training for the entire student body and faculty in 2010. Cultural awareness also has been addressed in

student orientation sessions in 2007, 2012 and 2013.

The School's diversity plan calls for additional measures, including holding faculty forums each semester for discussions on diversity, stressing the need for diversity to extend beyond race, ethnicity and gender, and making diversity a component in new faculty orientation. Those measures would help alleviate concerns raised about occasional inappropriate or insensitive behavior in a class or by a student. The plan also suggests reaffirming the idea that faculty, students or staff can express concerns about bias, discrimination or insensitivity without fear of reprisal. Although there seems to be universal support for the diversity plan, a few faculty members believe that before the plan's creation in Spring 2013 not enough attention was paid to maintaining a welcoming, inclusive climate. A few faculty members have perceived faculty of color have at times been "marginalized," and that their voices have not always been heard. The diversity committee and diversity plan can help make diversity a stronger priority.

The School has a formal procedure for resolving personnel disputes. Students also have a formal process in place for formal complaints against a faculty member.

**SUMMARY:** The School's diversity is reflected in its student body and faculty with relatively high percentages of minority group representation. Its commitment to diversity as a priority will be more consistent when it enacts the recommendations outlined in its newly adopted diversity plan.

## **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's tenure and promotion guidelines define criteria for hiring, evaluations, reappointment, promotion and tenure.

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

The School has a small core of full-time faculty, who teach roughly a quarter of the courses (21 percent in 2012-13, 28 percent in 2011-12 and 26 percent in 2010-11). The full-time faculty, though, is responsible for consistency throughout the curriculum. The School's founding strategy uses the vast resources of professionals working in New York City. The School has 11 full-time faculty members and 85 part-time adjunct faculty members. It relies on senior adjuncts, adjuncts and consortial (full-time faculty at other CUNY colleges) for the bulk of its teaching assignments. Senior adjuncts teach at least two courses a semester or supervise a program at the School. Its full-time faculty has primary responsibility for scholarship and service.

**(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.**

The School relies primarily on a faculty with extensive professional experience. Nine of the 11 full-time faculty members and the School's dean have master's degrees. Two have bachelor's degrees. The full-time faculty possesses 311 years of professional experience. Most of its adjuncts are working professionals with an array of impressive experience. Many faculty members have national reputations for their areas of expertise. With its heavy emphasis on professional experience, the School prides itself on its ongoing and up-to-date connections with the industry.

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



The School regularly evaluates both full-time and adjunct faculty. Every adjunct and tenure-track faculty member is peer reviewed once each semester. The School has recently added peer reviews once a year for tenured faculty as well. Students also evaluate faculty performance via electronic questionnaires. In 2013, the School added a mid-term questionnaire that new instructors are required to use. The questionnaire is also available for other teachers who want to adopt it. In courses with several sections taught by multiple instructors, syllabi and lesson plans are frequently reviewed to ensure that students are getting the same learning outcomes. Senior adjuncts often observe new faculty in their classrooms.

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

Faculty members serve on various CUNY boards and committees. Administrators from other areas of the campus praised the faculty and its administrators for producing highly proficient journalists.

**SUMMARY:** The School operates with a cadre of excellent full-time faculty, a large pool of highly qualified adjunct faculty and a small group of consortial faculty from elsewhere in CUNY. Its largely professionally based faculty is a good fit for the School's mission.

**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 is precise in its expectations for faculty research, creative and professional activity. The self-study makes clear that requirements for faculty have been in place from Day One, but that as the School “has matured, we have sharpened our focus on faculty scholarship. In practical terms, we will expect all faculty members—full-time and adjunct—to contribute excellent works of journalism as well as thought leadership in the profession.”

The School provides solid financial support for travel, release time and faculty leaves. And the School’s new five-year strategic plan makes clear that, as the program “moves into its next phase of maturation, the focus on faculty scholarship will heighten.” The strategic plan, as well as the self-study, trumpet a promising new venture, the establishment of the CUNY Journalism Press, an academic imprint that publishes books about journalists and journalism—a logical and important commitment by the professionally-oriented School.

#### **(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 guidelines are explicit in outlining expectations for teaching, research and service. The document notes that the scholarship expectations “are substantial and rigorous.” The guidelines make clear that “while scholarly articles and educational texts are always welcome, scholarship at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism also extends to journalistic works that contribute to public knowledge or current debate on matters of significance and/or advance the practice of journalism.” The record shows that faculty members are active scholars and producers of professional material, particularly when considering the broad—and appropriate—range of activities. Commendably, the guidelines call for and place emphasis on the “quality and intellectual impact” of the works. A cross section of books written or edited by faculty members illustrates a range of interests and expertise: *The Crisis of Zionism; Deadlines and Disruption; One*

*Woman's Army; Schools of Ground Zero: Early Lessons Learned in Children's Environmental Health; The 9/11 Investigations; and What Would Google Do?*

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

The School embraces a broad understanding of scholarship and creative activities. Indeed, the range of works that the School recognizes could serve as a model for professionally-oriented journalism programs. According to the self-study, "Qualifying work should appear in respected venues and can span a range of media formats, including but not limited to: substantial articles in newspapers or magazines; collections of shorter pieces about one subject area or diverse topics; books; audio or video pieces or documentaries for television, radio or the web; contributions to websites or blogs; or creation of a website or blog as a body of work. Qualifying work should reach its appropriate audience, and interaction with that audience can be considered part of the work...Peer review plays a key role in evaluating the quality of more traditional academic scholarship, and faculty at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism are expected to demonstrate that their journalistic work is valued by their peers."

**(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 at conferences and in associations, and to present their works. The School provides financial support, with the strategic plan calling for even more in the years ahead.

The self-study chart that provides a count of scholarship, research creative and professional activities illustrates the quantity—and range—of works by full-time faculty members, as well as consortial faculty who have full-time jobs at other CUNY colleges and senior adjuncts who have major responsibilities at the School. Productivity by all the groups is notable, with good numbers showing across the spectrum: awards and honors; grants; books; edited books; book chapters; monographs; refereed publications; refereed conference papers; invited presentations (where the output is particularly impressive); encyclopedia entries; book reviews; articles in non-refereed publications; documentaries; columns and essays; industry reviews and commentaries; multimedia works; and TV news magazines.

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

The School, in its rhetoric and actions, creates an atmosphere supportive of wide-ranging intellectual endeavors. As the self-study notes, the School, by forming a faculty scholarship committee, continues to strive “to improve and systematize...scholarship incentives and support.” Among the recommendations of the committee: The School should “do more to recognize and publicize the work produced by our faculty members. The School is creating an online faculty showcase that records and promotes the work of our faculty members, including adjuncts.” Several faculty members have benefited from sabbaticals and leaves during the past six years.

**SUMMARY:** The broad swath of faculty scholarly and creative works in a professionally oriented program that admitted its first class of students in Fall 2006 is noteworthy. The School has unambiguous guidelines in place; insists on quality in a range of acceptable works; and is intent on becoming even more productive in the years ahead.

**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.**

Communication with students starts before they enroll. Recruiting efforts are enhanced on the School's primary website, which provides full information at its "how to apply" link that includes application information, a sample entrance exam and notes about tuition, fees, financing and so forth.

Once on campus, students receive a 52-page handbook that spells out degree requirements, schedules, fees, information about the School's mandatory internship program and so forth. The handbook also outlines procedures for advising – each incoming student is assigned an adviser and then students are able to select their own advisers after that. Students are expected to meet with advisers at the beginning of each semester. And they receive a mid-semester evaluation from their Craft of Journalism instructor.

In addition to the handbook, basic information is available online – degree requirements, core courses, subject concentrations, course descriptions, schedules and so forth. For students in their first semester, schedules and course are pretty well set – and they are assigned an adviser. By their second semester, students have identified concentrations and can select their own adviser.

Student services staff members track every student's progress with a checklist and follow up on such matters as incomplete grades or other things that might impede normal progress toward a degree.

Students give high marks for their professors' commitment to both educational and career advising, although there were a few instances cited that would indicate room for improvement. Additionally, there were some concerns about the lack of prompt attention from the Career Services Office.

#### **(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.**

Faculty members are expected to post regular office hours and provide information on how students can reach them. The self-study quotes a 2013 survey that said 91 percent of students say that faculty members are available outside of class. Feedback in student meetings also expressed an appreciation for professors' accessibility.

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

Basics are covered in the School's handbook given to students when they enter the program. After that, video screens are strategically placed throughout the building to advise students about announcements, events and deadlines.

The School uses email effectively to communicate day-to-day information to students. An excellent website provides regular updates on School activities. And most students also access School information on social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

**(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 primary outlet for student media and extra-curricular activities is the NYCity News Service – an online project that produces news available around the world. NYCity is led by a director who also handles a three-credit workshop in which students plan news coverage across all media forms.

In addition, students have the opportunities to showcase their work in other ways: A 219 Magazine, a television newsmagazine show, various blogs and so forth. There are two regular publications (The Nabe and the Mott Haven Herald) that produce coverage of New York City neighborhoods.

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

The School is in its eighth year and administrators have been able to accurately monitor student progress and graduation data from Day One. The Office of Student Affairs checks each student's progress toward graduation each semester. Graduation rates have ranged between 80 and 90 percent in the years since the School's first class graduated.

In addition, the Career Service Office tracks activities of the program's graduates. Though all years have been noteworthy, an exceptional example of success is with the Class of 2011: 79 of 93 graduates had full-time jobs in journalism.

**SUMMARY:** The School does a solid job of meeting needs of students – providing full information about policies, schedules, requirements and procedures. Systems are in place to communicate to students and alumni.

## **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 has a detailed annual budget, which clearly is related to its strategic plan. The self-study notes that the link between resources and needs helps to ensure “that the School’s annual budget allocations reflect the [program’s] strategic priorities, considering the strategic direction of the curriculum, the evolution of journalism education and the state of the School’s infrastructure.” Plans on the immediate horizon that will require funding call for, among other things, the creation of an Alumni Affairs Office, conducting market research, developing curriculum and writing a business plan for a new executive degree program.

The School’s expenditures planned for 2013-2014 total \$7,005,740, an 11 percent increase over 2010-2011.

As is the case for most institutions, the vast majority of the budget is for personnel: administrative salaries, teaching salaries, clerical salaries and teaching assistants. The School also is in position to allocate six-figure funding to database and online information services. The six-figure travel budget for faculty members exceeds that of most programs of this size.

The School also finds itself in the enviable position of being part of what it terms a “collaborative arrangement” with CUNY TV, the cable television station of CUNY, which reaches some 2 million households in the five boroughs of New York City. As the self-study notes: “All of the School’s broadcast and technology staff, as well as all audio-video equipment and computer hardware and software are funded through the CUNY TV budget...Needed equipment has always been purchased in a timely fashion, and the School has a richer team of broadcast and tech specialists supporting its students and faculty than would otherwise be the case.”

Like all programs of this scope and nature, it must rely increasingly on private fundraising to establish a cushion for excellence. Impressively, the School has raised more than \$25 million from foundations, corporations and individuals since its first class entered in 2006, including from the Sulzberger family of *The New York Times*, News Corporation, Time Warner, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Tow Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Charles H. Revson



Foundation. The market value of the School's permanent endowment is approximately \$10 million.

The numbers are particularly impressive for such a young program. And the School's strategic plan calls for strengthening its alumni outreach and expanding its financial resources. The School is in the process of creating its own foundation.

The School has a two-person development team, each of whom works closely with the dean and, when the occasion calls for it, faculty members. The signature fundraising event for the School is the annual Awards for Excellence in Journalism dinner. Proceeds fund scholarships and internships. The 2013 dinner, which honored founding dean Stephen B. Shepard with the lifetime achievement award, and Howard J. Rubenstein, with the distinguished service to New York Award, raised \$437,225.

The development team focuses on cultivation and stewardship of individuals, families, foundations and corporations. When the School's foundation is in place, a board of directors will be named.

Clearly, the School recognizes that it must be increasingly aggressive in raising private funds in the years ahead –and it is committed to doing so. At the end of the day, though, the College currently has sufficient budget—from university allocations and private funds—to provide a quality education to its students.

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

The School, by all accounts, is treated more than fairly within the institution. Indeed, the self-study noted: "As a startup charged with taking a place on the national stage, the Journalism School has been generously funded by the City University of New York."

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

The School is located in a 20-story, 1920's-vintage Manhattan building that once housed the New York Herald Tribune. Though the building itself is old, the School is new – built from scratch on two vacant floors before the School was launched. The facility is bright and modern and includes some attractive options – from a 130-seat wireless newsroom to modern television and radio studios to classic student lockers.

Teaching classrooms are clean and modern, with electronic equipment built in for use by instructors – display screens, desktop computers and audio-video projectors. There are a few labs with Mac equipment for writing, editing and media projects – but not many. Instead, all students are required to purchase their own laptop computers with relevant software. In addition,

students are charged a technology fee that helps defray the costs of electronic databases, computer hardware and software, and other costs.

**(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 School has state-of-the-art equipment throughout the building. And, as noted, all students have their own laptops loaded with software they will need for their coursework.

For broadcast media, the School benefits from its relationship with CUNY TV. That station equips the broadcast facility, staffs it with trained technicians and airs shows produced by students. This arrangement with CUNY TV allows the School to use state-of-the-art equipment without paying all the costs normally associated with journalism school broadcast programs.

Additionally, the School supports radio production classes – equipment for those needs was upgraded in 2011.

The School has one broadcast editing lab, with 16 MacPro workstations and up-to-date software. This lab is used for group and class instruction and is also available to students. Remote equipment (still cameras, video cameras, audio recorders and so forth) is available and may be checked out by students.

Students generally are appreciative of the state-of-the-art equipment and cite only occasional problems with reserving equipment.

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

The School maintains a classic journalism school library – called the Research Center and located in the “newsroom,” the School’s centerpiece. It includes a collection of journalism books, about 1,500 donated titles, plus local newspapers for use by students and access to more than 100 research databases and 40,000 electronic books.

Because the School operates in a stand-alone building in Manhattan removed from other parts of the CUNY system, journalism students do not have easy access to a full university library system. But the Research Center appears to meet the needs of both students and faculty members.

The School is, of course, fully wired for Internet service – so faculty members and students have use of technology to meet most of their research needs.

**SUMMARY:** The School's budget is tied to its strategic plan and it has been treated fairly by the university. The School has benefitted greatly from significant private gifts since its launching. The facility and its equipment meet the School's needs.

## **COMPLIANCE**

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

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

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School regularly plays host to meetings of area professional organizations such as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, and so on. And it maintains a strong program to provide continuing education for working journalists, particularly in the role of providing updates in the changing world of digital media.

Because the School is so new, it does not have a long list of graduates – including the December 2013 graduates, there are about 450 alumni – but it is working to build a relationship with them. There is a regular glossy newsletter, *INSIDE STORY*, which helps communicate to alumni. Many alumni speak in classes and participate in continuing education projects. And the School regularly interacts with alumni through a Facebook page.

The administration says that it has email addresses for virtually all of the nearly 450 graduates.

The School relies heavily on adjuncts, so there is a built-in interaction between the School and professional journalists in the area. Faculty members play a role with local chapters of organizations such as The Society of Professional Journalists and Online News Association.

And finally, the School has a Board of Advisers that meets to provide guidance and to help set the agenda for strategic planning. That group is also helpful in providing internships and job opportunities.

**(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 School offers a broad menu of opportunities for continuing education and exploration of the changing media landscape. That starts with involvement in three journalism centers – the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism, the Center for Community and Ethnic Media, and the Harold W. McGraw Jr. Center for Business Journalism.

The School also interacts with undergraduate CUNY journalism programs and regularly plays host to conferences with area professional organizations. And it has a strong focus in providing continuing education for working journalists – particularly with the emphasis on digital media training.

**(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 self-study provides a long list of activities in which faculty members have participated in conferences and journalism meetings. Likewise, the School regularly plays host to professional journalists who visit classrooms to share their knowledge and experience.

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

The School maintains an impressive collection of community involvement projects – some really good work serving New York neighborhoods by providing news and information in a variety of formats. Perhaps most impressive is the NYCity News Service – a multimedia, web-based outlet that feeds New York neighborhood stories to news organizations throughout the world. Students write, edit and package the stories. And the NYCity Website is as professional as those found in the professional world.

On a different level, the focus on community journalism is just as impressive. The Mott Haven Herald is a monthly newspaper serving communities in the Bronx – but it has a strong presence online and with Facebook and Twitter. Likewise, The Nabe is an online product that “explores the intersection between community news and online technology.” It serves two neighborhoods in Brooklyn. The Nabe, as well, has a robust presence on both Facebook and Twitter.

Additionally, through its internship and job placement efforts, the School plays a full role in the New York journalism community. Students are required to take a summer internship and their involvement with New York media outlets provides experience and exposure that benefits both the students and the publications.

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

The School plays host to numerous workshops and conferences in support of scholastic journalism. Faculty members participate in the New York City High School Journalism Collaborative. That effort includes training for high school faculty advisers, workshops for students and journalists, as well as participation in scholastic journalism contests. Professors also work with the New York City Scholastic Press Association.

One focus in this area is helping scholastic newspapers develop an online presence.

**SUMMARY:** The School has programs in place to enhance the journalism profession and fulfill its responsibilities to the students, alumni and the profession.

## **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 has done a thorough job of systematically defining goals for student learning. The nine learning outcomes for all students who graduate with an M.A. in Journalism: Demonstrate a commitment to the eternal verities of journalism; show the ability to conceive journalistic stories; show the ability to do professional-level reporting and research; show the ability to write well; demonstrate journalistic storytelling skills; show multiplatform ability; master a subject beat; show the ability to interact with the audience; and embrace the growing importance of versatility and entrepreneurialism. Through the years, the School has studiously built a strong assessment program.

Students who complete the M.A. in Entrepreneurial Journalism and Advanced Certificate in Entrepreneurial Journalism must, of course, meet the outcomes for the regular M.A. program. In addition, they must meet these outcomes: Understand the business dynamics and opportunities in the news industry from the perspective of both existing and startup organizations; understand business basics; learn management skills; understand the value of sound editorial judgment in a successful journalistic enterprise; produce a plan for a sustainable journalistic enterprise; learn collaboration with technologists, partners and business colleagues; gain practical experience through creating a business and an apprenticeship; understand how the technology landscape affects media in the U.S. and around the world; and address ethical and privacy issues at the intersection of journalism technology and business.

The School’s commitment to meaningful, substantive and rigorous assessment is apparent.

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

All students are required to complete a capstone project and compile a portfolio. The portfolio consists of four items: the students' first ungraded, unedited written work produced in their required first semester Craft 1 class; an ungraded, unedited print piece from a third-semester subject concentration class; a capstone project; and a piece that illustrates multimedia work. The School's assessment plan notes: "Students should treat the capstone as the culminating project in their main area of interest, whether that is a subject concentration or a media skill. Any medium – text, video, interactive, audio or photography – can provide the base for a capstone. But each project must showcase the essential reporting and writing proficiencies of a journalist. And each must demonstrate a student's competence in multimedia and/or interactive skills. An acceptable capstone must make substantial use of more than one medium."

The outcomes assessment process includes other measures, including alumni surveys, student evaluations of courses and professors, peer evaluations of professors and instructors, student satisfaction surveys and the CUNY performance planning process that focuses on outcomes.

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

Alumni surveys are administered each year. In addition, an annual review of portfolios is conducted by professionals with sterling credentials. The evaluation teams examine the four-item portfolios thoroughly and rigorously. A group of journalistic entrepreneurs also visits the School to provide feedback on student projects in that area of specialization.

**(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 extensive use of professionals and alumni, drawing primarily on the professional expertise in New York City.

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

The School completes the assessment loop effectively. Ongoing curricular changes flow logically from the direct assessment measures, as well as the indirect measures.



**SUMMARY:** The School takes the assessment process seriously. Its plan uses multiple direct and indirect measures to gather information. That information is then synthesized, analyzed and systematically applied to make needed and significant curricular adjustments. Assessment is woven into the fabric of the School.

## **COMPLIANCE**

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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

**The program has several strengths:**

- Strategic, focused and visionary leadership by the founding dean and administrative team that has taken the School from planning boards to prominence in less than a decade.
- Strong and committed full-time faculty members who possess sterling professional credentials.
- Expansive and talented pool of adjuncts.
- Small, demanding classes across the curriculum that are built upon invigorating and often intense interplay among students and teachers.
- Innovative, nimble and rigorous curriculum that prepares students for the changing media landscape.
- Bright, focused and dedicated students.
- Extensive contacts, relationships and linkages with media outlets, particularly in the City.
- A required summer internship that provides School financial support for all students who are in unpaid assignments.
- A serious assessment process that systematically gathers, synthesizes, analyzes and applies information.

**The program has some challenges:**

- Ensuring its commitment to diversity is consistent and a priority with follow-through and implementation of the recommendations in its newly adopted diversity plan.
- Continuing to enhance alumni relations and to expand private fundraising beyond the impressive early foundation to provide the necessary resources for an ambitious five-year strategic plan.
- Continuing the School's momentum by pushing strategic initiatives with the same zeal and commitment as during its formative years.

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

NA

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

NA

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

NA

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

NA

- 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.

NA

- 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 well organized, thorough, candid, forward looking, well written, attractively packaged, tightly edited and contextual—exceptionally well done, particularly for an initial review.