

**Report of On-Site Evaluation  
ACEJMC  
Undergraduate program  
2013– 2014**

Name of Institution: The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Chancellor Steven Angle  
Name of Unit: Department of Communication  
Name and Title of Administrator: Betsy Alderman, Department Head

Date of 2013 - 2014 Accrediting Visit: February 2-5, 2014

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: January 2008  
Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Accreditation  
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Accreditation

Recommendation by 2013 - 2014 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

**Team Chair**

Name and Title: Ford Risley, Head, Department of Journalism  
Organization/School: Penn State University

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

**Team Members**

Name and Title: Kim LeDuff, Associate Vice Provost  
Organization/School: University of West Florida

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

Name and Title: Ronald Smith, Professor  
Organization/School: Buffalo State College

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

Name and Title:  
Organization/School:

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

Name and Title:  
Organization/School:

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

## Part I: General Information

Name of Institution: University of Tennessee Chattanooga

Name of Unit: Department of Communication

Year of Visit: 2014

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

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

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

The following excerpts from the UTC "Faculty Handbook" (1, 3) reflect the legal authority on which the University of Tennessee and the educational mission of its campuses rest:

The University of Tennessee is a statewide, multi-campus, land-grant, publicly aided university whose fundamental mission is to provide a comprehensive postsecondary educational experience of highest quality, and to make that experience accessible to a wide and varied constituency. The University accomplishes this mission through action in three broad substantive areas:

1. *Instruction* for students of all ages, offered in traditional campus settings and at off-campus locations at time, at places, and via media which maximize accessibility of such instruction to all who might benefit therefrom. The University believes that teaching and learning must include not only the conventional modes of basic and formative learning, but also the expanded framework of continuing and recurring learning.
2. *Research* to discover new knowledge, to broaden and enhance the application of existing knowledge, and to enrich the other facets of the educational experience. Research-derived information may often serve both as subject matter and as catalyst for activities in the other two areas of the University's mission.
3. *Public service* commensurate with the unique resources of the University as an educational institution, to individuals, government, business, and industry. This service includes dissemination of the results of scholarship through publication

and other means.

Through a mutually supportive interaction, these activities are directed toward reaching the goals which characterize great educational institutions:

- to develop in individuals broad intellectual skills, including the capabilities for reason and critical evaluation;
- to provide opportunities for acquiring these intellectual skills along with specialized knowledge to prepare individuals to pursue careers that are personally satisfying and of benefit to society;
- to increase understanding of the self, of others, and of the physical world;
- to bring trained intellects to bear in comprehending the human cultural heritage and in solving the more immediate problems of society at large.

The University's mission is accomplished through four primary campuses at Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin, and Memphis--each with unique and compatible roles and scopes--and through statewide operating divisions including the Agricultural Experiment Station, the Agricultural Extension Service, the Institute for Public Service and its constituent agencies, the UT Space Institute, and the Division of Continuing Education.

## **Charter Provisions of the University of Tennessee**

### **Article IV:**

The object of the University shall be to engage in the governmental function of affording an education primarily to the youth and citizens of the State of Tennessee and to instruct and train them in those subjects leading to the degrees of bachelor of arts, master of arts, medical degrees or any other degrees known and used in any college or university in any of the United States; also to be a leading research institution devoted to research and instruction in agriculture, the arts and sciences, law, medicine, business, education, architecture, and the other disciplines.

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

Yes  
 No

If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: January 27-30, 2008

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

January 1996

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

The principal mission of the communication department is to provide a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences and strong professional preparation so that students are educated for satisfying lives and successful careers.

Goals of the curriculum help graduates to:

- develop a realistic vision of the future so that they may adapt and grow as their professions evolve;
- make responsible decisions based on their appreciation of the ethical imperatives of their professions;
- manifest sensitivity to, and understanding of, the aspirations of women and men of different ethnic origins;
- demonstrate problem-solving competencies that will equip them for positions of leadership;
- pursue courses of study at the graduate and professional levels.

As a unit of a metropolitan university, the department is committed to serve the people and the communication professions of Chattanooga and Southeast Tennessee through the application of its collective knowledge, skills and resources. (Revised SP2012)

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

Semesters of 15 weeks

Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Two short summer sessions of 5 weeks/One summer session of 12 weeks

Intersessions of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

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

Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree

Graduate work leading to Master's degree

Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

**9. Give the number of credit hours required by the University for Graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.**

120 semester hours

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

Three semester hours

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty  
Communication Major

Person in Charge  
Dr. Betsy Alderman

**12. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:** 11,674 (Source: UTC 2013-2014 "Fact Book")

**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):**

Name of Sequence or Specialty  
Communication Major

Undergraduate majors  
367 (SP 2014)

Total

367

**14. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (news writing, 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.**

SPRING 2014 CLASSES	Description	Enrollment
COMM 2300.0	Media Writing 1	16
COMM 2300.1	Media Writing 1	14
COMM 2300.2	Media Writing 1	16
COMM 2300.3	Media Writing 1	16
COMM 2300.4	Media Writing 1	14
COMM 2310.0	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 2310.1	Media Writing 2	13
COMM 2310.2	Media Writing 2	14
COMM 3330.0	Persuasive Writing	15
COMM 3350.0	Publication Design 1	15
COMM 3610.0	Advanced Reporting	16
COMM 3660.0	Creative Editing	16
COMM 4000.0	Photojournalism	14
COMM 4000.4	Photojournalism 2	14
COMM 4000.2	Introduction to Online Advertising	30
COMM 4100.0	Public Communication & Environmental Issues	17
COMM 4350.0	Publication Design 11	9
COMM 4550.0	Documentary 11	11
COMM 4550.0	Video 11	12
COMM 4700.0	Public Relations Campaign	8
COMM 4800.0	Directed Project	1
COMM 4850.0	Individual Internship	37
COMM 4998.0	Individual Studies	3

FALL 2013 CLASSES	Description	Enrollment
COMM 2300.1	Media Writing 1	14
COMM 2300.2	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2300.3	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2300.4	Media Writing 1	13
COMM 2300.5	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2300.6	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2310.0	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 2310.1	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 2310.2	Media Writing 2	12
COMM 2310.3	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 3330.0	Persuasive Writing	13
COMM 3330.0	Persuasive Writing	11
COMM 3350.0	Publication Design 1	15
COMM 3400.0	Audio Production & Presentation	16
COMM 3450.0	Video 1	15
COMM 3450.0	Video 1	12
COMM 3500.0	Television News Production	16
COMM 3550.0	Documentary 1: History, Theory, Practice	37
COMM 3660.0	Creative Editing	14
COMM 4000.0	Photojournalism	5
COMM 4000.0	Introduction to Public Relations Writing	14
COMM 4100.0	Public Communication & Environmental Issues	20
COMM 4800.0	Directed Project	0
COMM 4850.0	Individual Internship	10
COMM 4998.0	Individual Studies	1
COMM 4998.0	Individual Studies	1

SPRING 2013 CLASSES	Description	Enrollment
COMM 2300.0	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2300.1	Media Writing 1	16
COMM 2300.2	Media Writing 1	15
COMM 2300.3	Media Writing 1	16
COMM 2300.4	Media Writing 1	14
COMM 2310.0	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 2310.1	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 2310.2	Media Writing 2	16
COMM 3330.0	Persuasive Writing	10
COMM 3330.0	Persuasive Writing	15
COMM 3350.0	Publication Design 1	15
COMM 3400.0	Audio Production & Presentation	15
COMM 3610.0	Advanced Reporting	15
COMM 4000.0	Photojournalism	14
COMM 4100.0	Public Communication and Environmental Issues	22
COMM 4350.0	Publication Design 11	15
COMM 4550.0	Documentary 11	13
COMM 4550.0	Video 11	16
COMM 4700.0	Public Relations Campaign	12
COMM 4800.0	Directed Project	2
COMM 4850.0	Individual Internship	26
COMM 4998.0	Individual Studies	3

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

\$435,516

Percentage increase or decrease in three years: - .84 percent (increase)

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$325,749

**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.**

Last Name	First Name	Classification	Status
Alderman	Betsy	Full-Time Faculty	Tenured
Friedman	Michael	Full-Time Faculty	Tenure-track
Gailey	Elizabeth	Full-Time Faculty	Tenured
Harriss	Chandler	Lecturer	Renewable for three years
McGhee-Hilt	Felicia	Full-Time Faculty	Tenure-track
Rushing	Kittrell	On phased retirement	Teaching in the English department fall 2013 & spring 2014
Sachsman	David	Full-Time Faculty	Tenured
Simmons	Charlene	Full-Time Faculty	Tenured
Sprayberry	Noble	Instructor	One-year temporary hire*

\*Conducting a search to fill position with tenure-track assistant professor, 2014-2015.

\* Michael Andrews, Instructor & TV Studio Manager, is half-time in the department.

**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.)*

<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classification</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Brown	Nicole	Adjunct	Spring 2014
Jennings	Brendan	Adjunct	Spring 2014
Morrison	Catherine	Adjunct	Spring 2014
Robinson	Raymond	Adjunct	Spring 2014
Weeks	Billy	Adjunct	Spring 2014
Winham	Richard	Adjunct	Spring 2014
<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classification</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Brown	Nicole	Adjunct	Fall 2013
Fortune	Mary	Adjunct	Fall 2013
Jennings	Brendan	Adjunct	Fall 2013
Lockhart	Bill	Adjunct	Fall 2013
Morrison	Catherine	Adjunct	Fall 2013
Weeks	Billy	Adjunct	Fall 2013
<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classification</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Ballard	Angela	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Braden	Kristiina	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Brown	Nicole	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Duvoisin	Linda	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Fortune	Mary	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Jennings	Brendan	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Lockhart	Bill	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Morrison	Catherine	Adjunct	Spring 2013
Weeks	Billy	Adjunct	Spring 2013

*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.*

Year	Total Graduates	65 or more 80 or more semester hours outside the major		semester hours in liberal arts/ sciences	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2012-2013 academic year	<u>94</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>100%</u>
2011-2012 academic year	<u>75</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>100%</u>





## **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 University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is a metropolitan university that primarily serves the state of Tennessee. It is part of a comprehensive land-grant university system with four campuses at Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis. The university currently enrolls 11,660 students.

The university began offering communication study in 1978 through the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, a unit of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Department of Communication was created in 1984 with five concentrations (advertising, broadcast and electronic media, journalism, broadcast journalism, and public relations). The Department was first accredited by ACEJMC in 1996, and reaccredited in 2002 and 2008. At the beginning of the Fall 2013 term, the department enrolled 349 students, the largest number in its history.

The Department's mission is "to provide a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences and strong professional preparation so that students are educated for satisfying lives and professional careers." The Department has five-year goals and updates the goals annually. The goals, while generally maintenance-oriented, seem logical and in line with the Department's mission. They also reflect the university's overall strategic plan.

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

The Department has oversight of educational policy and curriculum, conforming to the standards of the university in the faculty handbook. The Department updated its own bylaws and personnel policies in 2012.

The Department held 14 faculty meetings during the preceding year.

The Department has three standing committees: the Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Committee; the Scholarship Committee; and the Internship Committee. Most issues are settled by the entire faculty, acting as a committee of the whole.

- (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 head, a longtime member of the faculty, has served in the position since 2010. Before that she served as acting head for two years. She is unanimously praised by

the faculty and administration as a tireless advocate for the Department and an accessible, supportive and effective leader.

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

The department head serves at the discretion of the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the spring, members of the Department are asked to complete a questionnaire identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the head. The dean conducts an annual evaluation of the department head, using the questionnaires and the head's annual performance report.

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

Students say that the department head, faculty and staff are readily accessible. The department head has an "open-door" policy for faculty, staff and students to express concerns or problems.

Students with complaints about specific courses or teachers are asked to speak first with the teacher of the course. If the issue is not resolved, they are invited to take the issue to the department head.

**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.**
- (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.**

The department reports a 100 percent compliance with the 72-hour rule for 2012-13 graduates, and 100 percent compliance with the previous 80/65 rule for previous graduates. A spot check of the records for graduates in the past year confirms the accuracy of this.

- (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.)**

Other than adjusting for the changed ACEJMC requirements from the 80/65 rule to the current 72-credit standard, the curriculum has not been substantially revised since 1992. The Department offers what it calls a “generic” curriculum with only one major offered that requires 33 credits – 21 credits in seven specified departmental courses and an additional 12 credits of departmental electives. The required courses include four theoretical/conceptual courses (Intro to Mass Comm, Mass Comm Perspectives, Law/Ethics, and Senior Seminar) and three skills courses (Media Writing I and II, and Internship/Special Projects). Most electives are professional skills courses, including Intro to Social Media, Public Relations, Persuasive Writing, Video I and II, Advanced Reporting, Feature Writing, and Producing TV News.

With the relaxation of the ACEJMC standards on communication courses, recent graduates have begun taking additional departmental electives. Several students reported packaging these electives around a common career path, such as broadcast news, print journalism, or public relations. Several media professionals and alumni who work with interns and graduates indicated a preference that the Department should more formally package professional pathway electives. This is a possibility supported by some students, who cited

the lack of concentrations as their only negative comment about the curriculum. The dean said he was surprised to find that the Department offers no formalized concentrations. And several faculty expressed support for structuring optional concentrations for communication students. Indeed, many of them already advise students toward a group of electives with a particular professional focus.

The Department might consider responding to the urging of students and practitioners to develop an option for professional concentrations within its unified major. Regardless, the team observes that the Department might be better served by retiring the “generic” label for its curriculum, replacing it with a term used by the department head: “an integrated approach to communication.”

The university requires students to take a minor in addition to a major. Most Communication students minor in Public Speaking, which is offered through the Theater Department. It should be noted that the dean has indicated a willingness to transfer the Public Speaking minor (and the three faculty lines associated with it) to the Communication Department, a move that could address the issue of faculty resources.

The Department also offers a 15-credit Communication minor, with two required courses and three upper-level electives. This minor is not considered to be a drain on departmental resources, since the 78 enrolled students are not advised in the Department, nor do they require additional sections to accommodate them. On the contrary, the Department notes that several new high-performing majors have been recruited through the minor program.

- (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.)**

Based on a syllabi review, course observations, and interviews with both faculty and students, instruction appears to be current. The skills courses appear to be responsive to professional norms. The Department has initiated new courses in social media, and instructors report adding elements of interactive and social media in their courses.

Courses seem to be appropriately demanding. The syllabi review indicates that many courses require considerable student output. The most recent graduating class (December 2013) had an average major GPA of 3.18.

Department faculty offers several courses in which students work on projects or with clients from the community. However, the designation of “service learning courses” is not commonly used.

One significant deficiency was noted through the syllabi review: Most course syllabi lack adequate student learning outcomes. Of 26 course syllabi available for the current semester, 38 percent had no outcomes stated; 42 percent had objectives such as “to give students...,” “to gain knowledge about...” and “to become familiar with...”; only 23 percent had outcomes stated as measurable expectations for what students are expected to be able to do after completing the course. Of these with either goals or actual learning outcomes, only four mentioned history, three diversity, and six ethics. Thus it appears that learning

outcomes, especially as they might align with ACEJMC values and competencies, are not central to the Department's curricular development.

In terms of consistency among multiple sections, only two courses this semester are taught in multiple sections with different instructors. Of these, one course shares a common syllabus with student learning outcomes; learning outcomes in the other course syllabi are unrelated to each other.

No set of curricular proposals was provided to the review team. Thus, coupled with inconsistent and/or missing student learning outcomes as noted above, it is unclear if the concept of student learning outcomes is part of the departmental intention for each course. The lack of measurable outcomes foreshadows difficulties the department has with assessment.

**(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 has four well-equipped smart classrooms for its writing-based skills courses. These rooms are dedicated for Communication students. Additionally, the Department has two non-teaching computer labs for the exclusive use of Communication students.

Enrollment in skills courses is generally capped at 16. With two exceptions, all skills courses for the past two semesters have had enrollment of 16 or less; three advanced professional electives show enrollment of five, eight and nine students. Public Communication & Environmental Issues often has an enrollment of more than 20. The course is a hybrid skills/theory class. Communications majors take it as a skills class, while students outside the department take it as a theory class. The other exception is Introduction to Online Advertising, a new class that had an enrollment of 30 in spring 2014. The faculty member works with the students in small groups.

**(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.)**

The internship program appears to be a particular strength of the Department. A veteran professor directs internships, which most students take instead of the alternate required individualized capstone courses. During the current 2013-14 academic year (fall and spring), 47 students are taking or have taken the internship; one directed project; five individual studies. The internship director reviews application portfolios prepared by each student seeking an internship and recommends students for interviews, though each internship site makes an interview-based selection. The internship director establishes work requirements and completes an internship contract. The director requires twice-a-semester reports from the site supervisor. Each intern submits to the faculty director weekly progress reports of internship activities, a midterm and final self-evaluation, and an end-of-semester portfolio of professional writing and other work. Student feedback on internships was uniformly positive. It should be noted that two other departments (English

and Business) indicated that they have modeled their internship programs on the Department.

The Department also requires a “mini-internship” in the final weeks of Media Writing II (a required course), in which each student shadows a media professional for eight hours and writes a report. Additionally, the Department encourages students to obtain noncredit internships to enhance their professional skills and contacts. Student feedback indicated that most students graduate with not only the required formal internship but with one or more individual internship experiences.

## **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 Department has a written diversity plan that has been in place since 2006 and was revised in 2012. Based on conversations with both faculty and students, it is evident that the plan is being implemented and that the Department is consistently working toward improving diversity through the curriculum and increasing opportunities for students to engage with people from diverse communities. The student body within the Department is reflective of the diversity on campus and in the Chattanooga Metro area.

While it does appear that there is an effort to assess and revise the diversity plan, the Department seems not to yet have developed appropriate measures of assessing whether or not students truly understand the importance of diversity in practice upon graduation.

- (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.**

There appear to be two courses directly related diversity and diverse perspectives in communications and media, Comm 3200 (Mass Media Perspectives) and Comm 3240 (Race, Gender and Media). It is evident from the syllabi and the course schedules that students learn about the complexity of diversity as it relates to mass media and representation in the curriculum. Upon review of the syllabi, it appears that while most faculty address issues of diversity and representation in the curriculum and reflect it in the syllabi, there were some who offered no evidence that diversity training or education is incorporated into course work. This was particularly true of those courses related to Public Relations and courses taught by adjuncts.

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

The Department and the university are clearly dedicated to diversity campus-wide. There is also a conscious effort across campus and in the Department to recruit and retain diverse faculty. The Department diversity is outstanding. There are currently six tenure or tenure-track faculty members; four are female, one is African American. Since the last visit, the African American female faculty member completed a Ph.D. through the university's "Grow Your Own" program, which supports diverse faculty who choose to pursue a terminal degree. She is now progressing on the tenure track.

In faculty searches the search chair, department chair and search committee members worked closely with the university's office of Equity and Diversity to generate a diverse pool of applicants. The Department unsuccessfully attempted two "opportunity hires." Senior faculty actively mentor and encourage junior faculty. The dean also reports being actively concerned about diversity and supporting departments that actively work to increase faculty diversity.

- (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.**

As of fall 2013, the Department had 349 majors. Of those, 70.9 percent are white, 15.9 percent are black/African American, 2.4 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 1.4 percent are Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The University has approximately 11,600 students. Of those, 74.6 percent are white, 16 percent black/African American, 3.2 percent Hispanic/Latino and 2.8 percent Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The student diversity on campus and in the department is generally reflective of the diversity in the Chattanooga Metro Area.

There is a strong effort on behalf of the faculty to recruit diverse students and faculty and to foster an inclusive and supportive environment in the Department.

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

The university has information on the website that offers the university's policies on discrimination and sexual harassment. The University also has an affirmative action plan that is consistently updated (update 2010). All syllabi include an ADA statement.

Conversations with faculty and students indicate that the unit fosters an environment that is open and inclusive. Students commented that they feel faculty truly support an "open door" policy and that they always feel welcomed. They also report that the department head sets the tone by knowing students by name. They describe the faculty as being "compassionate."

## 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 Department has criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff. These are articulated in the bylaws and the university Faculty Handbook.

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

The primary emphasis of the department is on teaching. Full-time faculty members have a 4/4 instructional load, with some flexibility (articulated in the Faculty Handbook) for large-lecture classes. The eight full-time faculty members, on average, spend 54 percent of their time teaching (range 25-80), 25 percent in research (range 10-40), and 21 percent in service (range 5-50).

The Department also uses part-time faculty for teaching. Six of the part-time instructors teach one course each semester. One teaches on a half-time basis (but teaching three courses a semester), with the remainder of his work assigned to University Relations. Thus full-time faculty teach 72 percent of courses (Spring 2014) and part-time faculty teach 28 percent.

The ratio of full-time faculty to students is 1:44.

- (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.**

All six tenure or tenure-track faculty hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. One full-time lecturer holds a Ph.D. The other holds a bachelor's degree and has 25 years of professional experience. The full-time faculty averages 11 years of professional experience (range 3-25), with three having 10 or more years. The part-time lecturers have an average of 18 years of professional experience (range 5-28). One is a Ph.D. candidate; two have master's degrees, and four have bachelor's degrees. Most are working full-time as professionals.

Full-time faculty maintain active affiliations with professional and scholarly organizations, including the Tennessee Press Association, Society of Environmental Journalists, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Southeastern Command and Leadership Academy media relations programs, and Public Broadcasting television. They are involved in fundraising projects including the Children's Nutrition Project of Haiti and Chattanooga Area Food Bank. They give on-air interviews with several radio and television news programs; provide editorial involvement with journals

and publications including *News Media and Society*, *Mass Communications and Society*, *Applied Environmental Education and Communication*, and *Transaction Series in Journalism*; and serve as reviewers with Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

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

Full-time and part-time faculty are evaluated each year, based on their own input in developing annual objectives addressing teaching, research/creativity, and service. These are reviewed by the department head and submitted to the university. The university has developed extensive forms for performance reviews and individual evaluations, with separate forms for part-time lecturers.

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

Discussions with faculty and heads of other departments, with office directors and senior staff, and with administrators indicate that the Department's faculty have the respect and admiration of others on campus for being model university citizens who actively participate in university activities.

**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.**

Although the university's primary focus is teaching, scholarship is encouraged and supported. The Department has appropriate requirements for faculty research and creative activity as is fitting for a unit of its scope and mission. It also supports and rewards faculty scholarship.

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

Research, creative and professional activities are required for promotion and tenure in the Department. The criteria are detailed in the Department's bylaws and in the university's "Faculty Handbook."

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

For the purposes of tenure and promotion, the Department recognizes a broad definition of scholarship to include not only refereed journal articles and books, but other forms of scholarship, including documentaries and magazine articles.

**(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.**

Despite heavy teaching and advising loads, faculty members in the Department have a solid record of scholarship. Faculty members have published refereed journal articles, edited books and produced a historical documentary.

Faculty members are encouraged to attend national conferences and present their research or creative works. Despite a lean budget, the Department provides generous funding for faculty to attend meetings.

The Department is well known for its sponsorship of the annual Symposium on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Press, the Civil War and Free Expression, which has been held at the university since 1993. A faculty member also organized the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists in 2013.

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

Faculty members are respectful of one another. They appreciate the differing points of view they may hold and the various approaches each brings to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

**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.**

Based on the self-study and student reports, it is evident that faculty in the Department do a good job of keeping students aware of the requirements and of opportunities available to them. Information also is prominently posted on the Department's website.

Students must be advised by a faculty adviser before they can register for classes each semester. Currently faculty advisers do not have a standard system for recording the proceedings in advisement sessions. It is up to the advisers' discretion how they choose to record it.

Students report that faculty advisers are instrumental in getting them involved in campus media and in finding mandatory internships.

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

There was concern that a four/four teaching load and being assigned 70-80 advisees might limit student interaction with faculty. Though the current situation is not advisable, students reported adequate time and attention from faculty advisers.

Students indicate that the environment in Frist Hall is open and welcoming. They say that faculty are supportive and often establish "personal connections" with students. Students also report that the department head is approachable and "emphasizes the fun of the major." They describe the faculty as going "above and beyond" to accommodate them.

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

The Department communicates with majors about events and activities on campus through e-mail, class announcements and by announcements prominently in Frist Hall. Information about student services, policies and requirements is available on the Department's website and the university's website. The department and some faculty also use social media to communicate with students.

**(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.**

Although student media is independent from the department, students (majors and minors) are very active in the four student media outlets on campus: *Mocs News* (twice weekly TV show broadcast on campus cable); *The Perch* (24-hour online radio); *The University Echo* (weekly print and daily online); and *The Sequoya Review* (literary magazine).

There is a chapter of PRSSA on campus but NABJ and SPJ remain inactive. Students expressed interest in these organizations being more active or reactivated in the future. Students were not aware that they could secure a student membership with the national organizations even if there is not an active chapter on campus.

While students are strongly encouraged to do multiple internships, majors are required to complete an internship, an “on-the-job” class or directed project. In Media Writing II students are required to do a mini-internship at the end of the semester. These are valuable experiences for students that allow them to develop their skills and network with professionals. Faculty and staff in other units on campus identified the Department’s internship program as a model program.

Students appear to be actively engaged both on and off campus. Some are working in the field before graduation and have pending job offers waiting after graduation. Professionals in the community expressed satisfaction with the performance of UTC students as interns and employees.

- (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 reports enrollment, retention and graduation rates on the website. The data listed at the time of the visit was from 2011-2012. The Department continues to record and report this data as part of the strategic plan.

## 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 Department has an annual budget that outlines salaries, equipment and maintenance, supplies, travel, professional services/membership, communication, contractual/special services, and media processing.

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

The Department reports that it receives a “fair share” of university and college support. Following the 2008 site visit, the annual budget was doubled, although it has not been increased in the intervening years. Upon the arrival of a new dean, the Department received funds to address some equipment needs. The Department also is slated to benefit from high achievement on a model based on faculty productivity.

The Department has a five-year plan (2009-2014) toward fundraising (one of 11 goals for the Department). But this is Year Five, and so far the Department has only identified potential donors and made introductory courtesy contact with a few others. The department head indicates that the fundraising plan is behind schedule because of lack of support from the university’s advancement office.

The Department has initiated a technology fee that generates about \$16,000 a semester, which is used for maintenance and new purchases for media production.

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

The previous site visit noted two deficiencies related to facilities. One was a lack of adequate broadcast equipment. The Department has entered a three-phase response to address that deficiency. In Phase One, the Department equipped a new broadcast studio, which seems to be satisfactory for the Department’s teaching mission. In Phase Two, the Department obtained several video cameras, still cameras, and related equipment, and during the week of the site visit was installing the final third studio camera. The final phase, which is to translate the production facility to digital, has been delayed by a lack of funds.

At the time of the site visit, students were shooting and editing in HD mode. They were uploading in HD to the Department’s YouTube site and to the university’s website but not yet capable of direct HD output.

The previous site visit also noted a deficiency in the departmental space in Frist Hall (a former hospital), calling it “unsightly and far from the center of campus.” In the self-study, the Department called Frist Hall “a pit ... slated to be demolished” and said that it is

“Number One on the list of worst facilities” on campus. The dean indicated that the Department is expected to move to a transitional home, a nearby state office building, after July 2014. He also said that a funding stream has been identified for a permanent relocation in four or five years to a building housing Communication, English, Business and the dean’s office.

The review team observed that the Department, to its credit, has tried to address the deficiencies that are within its control. To fully rectify the problem of an outdated building will require the dedicated support of the university.

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

Faculty report adequate access to equipment for both teaching and their own research/creative/professional work. Students indicate generally easy availability for equipment loans and access to lab spaces.

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

Library resources appear to be sufficient. Faculty and students reported that they had access to the resources they need, including department-based software.

**COMPLIANCE**



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

*The unit and its faculty advance journalism and 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.**

Faculty members in the Department are actively engaged with alumni and professionals in the region and nationally. The Department publishes an annual alumni newsletter, *Alumni Connections*, where they feature the successes of graduates of the program as well as current students. They also highlight events and activities in the Department and on campus. Social media is also used to communicate and maintain relationships with alums. Alumni and other professionals in the community support the Department by coming to campus as speakers and helping students secure internships. While there has been an effort to revive the Communication Department Alumni Association, faculty and alums report that participation remains low. Faculty and the department head report that they are looking at ways of encouraging greater participation in the future.

- (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 Department hosts and sponsors a number of events in an effort to encourage high professional standards and address issues in the communication field. The Department hosts an annual Symposium on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Press, the Civil War and Free Expression. The annual *Communication Week* is an opportunity for alumni and professionals to meet with students. A faculty member also organized the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists.

The conferences and events offer opportunities for scholars, professionals and students to come together and address important trends and issues. They are also an opportunity for students to network with professionals who can lead them to internships and jobs.

- (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.**

Faculty are actively engaged in a number of national academic and professional organizations, including: PRSA, NABJ, NCA, AEJMC and the National Women's Studies Association. Some faculty hold or have held leadership roles with these organizations.

**(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.**

Based on conversations with members of other units on campus, as well as alumni and professionals in the Chattanooga community, faculty in the Department are highly regarded for their willingness to serve across campus and in the community. That engagement also benefits students. Students and faculty who work with student media are also active in serving the communication needs across campus.

Although it appears from the self-study that all faculty members are engaged in some form of service, some are more actively involved than others. It also appears that some faculty have encouraged more student involvement in community and campus service than others.

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

Faculty in the Department are very involved in scholastic journalism. Faculty members have consulted with local high school faculty who are setting up communication programs, offered for students to create communication materials for local high schools, and have judged regional essay contests and senior projects at local high schools. Faculty members have also served as speakers at local youth conferences and events.

The self-study reports that a major challenge with bringing high school and elementary school students to campus is a lack of funding at the local public schools. In spite of this, the faculty have made an effort to reach out to the schools. The faculty also invite high school students who are considering attending the university to spend the day on campus and explore communication classes and student media.

## 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 Department has aligned its goals for student learning with ACEJMC’s “Professional Values and Competencies.” However, the Department has done a decidedly mixed job of sharing the goals with faculty and students. The goals appear on the department’s website and in some classrooms. However, they appear in only a handful of course syllabi. Some faculty said they do not even know what the goals are.

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

The Department’s assessment plan uses several direct and indirect measures: internship application portfolios, senior seminar papers, the final exam in one course, and assessment by internship supervisors.

The internship application portfolios have been used for several years and appear to be yielding some results. However, problems with the other measures definitely limit their effectiveness. The senior seminar papers and the final exam in Mass Communication Law and Ethics have been used for a year or less, and thus have not provided enough data to be of real use. Moreover, the assessment by internship supervisors provides only limited data and is ineffective for several standards, as the Department readily acknowledges.

In general, there is a decided lack of data with the Department’s assessment plan. The self-study provided an assessment report for 2012-13. However, the Department could provide data for only three other years.

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

Analysis of the assessment data has led to some changes in the Department’s curriculum. Based on the review of student portfolios, the Publication Design and Web Design courses were revised, and a new course, Publication Design 2 was added. The Department also created a new photojournalism class. However, the improvements to the curriculum have only been made in the last couple of years.

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

Graduates are regularly asked to return to campus to speak to classes. Some graduates also serve as internship supervisors. The department head makes a special effort to remain in contact with graduates via email and social media. The department has a lively Facebook page.

The Department holds an annual CommWeek during the spring semester. One of the most popular events is “Pizza with the Pros” where students and graduates can network in an informal way.

The Department publishes an annual alumni newsletter that is mailed to the 1,600 alumni and published on the website. It also has an alumni association that has been revived in the last two years.

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

A panel of local communications professionals reviews the student portfolios in the internship course. The professionals are asked to evaluate the portfolios based on their own hiring criteria. The department uses the evaluations of the professionals in assessment, but this can be problematic if it is not a standardized tool.

**NONCOMPLIANCE**

### PART III: Summary by site visit team

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

##### Strengths:

- An energetic department head who works tirelessly with a lean faculty and staff.
- Dedicated faculty members who genuinely care about helping students learn.
- An outstanding internship program that has become a model for other departments.
- Bright, thoughtful and passionate students who are enthusiastic about the program.
- A commendable dedication to diversity in terms of both students and faculty.
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##### Weaknesses:

- An advising system that places an overly burdensome load on faculty members.
- A long outdated building that is not conducive to student engagement and learning.
- A lack of measureable student learning outcomes in course syllabi.

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

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

A more thorough and fully implemented plan to assess student learning that gathers, analyzes and applies data over a multi-year period.

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

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

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

In the previous accreditation report, the Department was found in noncompliance on Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment. Since that review, the Department's budget has been increased and a technology fee has been implemented. The new funds have been used to substantially upgrade the equipment and technology used by students. The Department remains housed in a poor facility, but it appears that it may be moving into a new home soon.

**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 forthright and easy to follow. Although some information was missing, the Department promptly provided it.