

Report of On-Site Evaluation

Graduate/Undergraduate programs
2011 – 2012

Accrediting Council on Education
in Journalism and Mass Communications

Report of On-Site Evaluation

ACEJMC

2011 – 2012

Name of Institution: Elon University _____
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Leo M. Lambert, president _____
Name of Unit: School of Communications _____
Name and Title of Administrator: Paul Parsons, dean _____

Date of 2011 - 2012 Accrediting Visit: Oct. 9-12, 2011 _____

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Oct. 23-26, 2005 _____
Recommendation of the previous accrediting team: Accreditation _____
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Accreditation _____

Undergraduate program recommendation by 2011 - 2012 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation _____

Professional Graduate program recommendation by 2011-2012 Visiting Team: Accreditation _____

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Douglas Anderson, dean _____
Organization/School: College of Communications, Penn State University _____

Signature _____

Team Members

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Organization/School: The Oregonian _____

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Name and Title: Marie Hardin, associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education _____
Organization/School: College of Communications, Penn State University _____

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Name and Title: Barbara Hines, professor and director of graduate studies _____
Organization/School: School of Communications, Howard University _____

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Name and Title: Raul Ramirez, executive director, news and public affairs _____
Organization/School: KQED Public Radio, San Francisco _____

Signature _____

Name and Title _____
Organization/School _____

Signature _____

PART II — Standard I: Mission, Governance and Administration

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

Indicators:

- (a) The unit has a mission statement and engages in strategic or long-range planning that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.
- (b) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.
- (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.
- (d) The institution and/or the unit defines and uses a process for selecting and evaluating its administrators.
- (e) Faculty, staff and students have avenues to express concerns and have them addressed.

Evidence:

A mission statement

A strategic or long-range plan

A faculty policy manual, handbook or other document specifying the roles of faculty in governance and the development of educational policy

Assessment of unit administrator by faculty and by administration outside the unit

Files on searches and hiring decisions

Files on concerns and complaints

OVERVIEW

The School of Communications was not established until 2000, but the roots run deep at Elon for the teaching of journalism. Indeed, a course titled "Argumentation, Debating and Newspaper Writing" was offered in 1917, with "Journalism" being offered in 1923-1924. Journalism courses were offered through the years in the Department of Literature and Languages, which in 1980 was renamed Literature, Languages and Communications. Then, in 1988, the Department of Journalism and Communications was formed, with the number of majors growing consistently over the next decade. By 1999, it had become the second-largest program on campus.

For all intents and purposes, the modern era for the program came in 2000 when the School of Communications was founded, with 11 faculty members and an interim dean. In 2001, following a national search, the current dean was appointed. Now, a decade later, the faculty has quadrupled in size; the dean is recognized as one of the country's best; enrollment has surged to more than 1,000 undergraduates; an M.A. program is in place; and the School is home to some 20 percent of the Elon student body and three of the university's 12 largest majors.

The growth of the School—in quality and quantity—is nothing short of spectacular. And it has become an integral and respected part of an institution whose standing also has skyrocketed in recent years. Elon College was founded in 1889 by the Christian Church, which is now the United Church of Christ. The self-study notes that its close church tie “is best described today as an historic affiliation.” The institution changed its name to Elon University in June 2001. At the same time, according to the self-study, it “also changed the mascot to the Phoenix, in remembrance that Elon College burned to the ground in 1923 and, like the mythical bird, rose from the ashes.”

Elon’s enrollment now approaches 6,000, making it the third-largest private university in North Carolina, behind Duke and Wake Forest, but, as the self-study notes, “the institution’s core values have remained constant: close relationships between students and faculty, a culture that supports innovation, and a strong sense of community.”

This clearly is a university on the move—as is the School.

The university’s strategic plan is built around eight themes: a commitment to diversity and global engagement; supporting a quality faculty and staff; attaining the highest levels of excellence across all academic programs; working strategically and innovatively to enhance undergraduate and graduate education; underscoring a commitment to remain a best-value university; developing innovative alumni programs; enhancing athletics while maintaining high academic standards; and enhancing facilities, with a concomitant commitment to protecting the environment.

The student-centered, rapidly growing, innovative School of Communications, which gained initial accreditation in 2006 for its undergraduate program, fits nicely within this well-managed university. The School is one of 18 programs housed in private institutions currently accredited by ACEJMC.

The School’s mission is straightforward: “To prepare students to be exemplary communicators in an increasingly diverse, interactive and global age.” Its mission statement emphasizes that it is “committed to helping students become better writers, speakers, creators and thinkers. We want them to learn and innovatively harness the technologies that are transforming the way we communicate. We promote the primacy of accuracy, integrity, professional standards and ethical principles.”

The School is, indeed, a full-fledged enterprise dedicated to preparing “students for careers and lives of purpose through excellent classes, outstanding student media, professional internships, entrepreneurial experiences and other forms of engaged learning.”

The mission of the School’s graduate program, which is within the scope of this review, is even more succinct: “The M.A. in Interactive Media program prepares students to think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.”

The School enrolls 1,048 undergraduate students. It offers four journalism-mass communication majors (a fifth major offered through the Department of Sport & Event Management, now housed in the School, is beyond the scope of this review), with two of the JMC majors subdivided into sequences. The enrollment breakdown: Journalism (Print/Online News, 105; Broadcast News, 82); Strategic Communications, 386; Media Arts &

Entertainment (Broadcast and New Media, 158; Cinema, 135); Communication Science, 18; Communications-Undeclared, 32. Strategic Communications is Elon's largest major; Media Arts & Entertainment is the third largest; and Journalism is No. 11. [The Sport & Event Management major enrolls 125 students.]

The M. A. in Interactive Media program is designed for 36 students a year; because of a higher-than-expected yield in 2011, this year's cohort numbers 41.

By all accounts, the School is significantly stronger than it was at the time of the last review. It has created several new opportunities for students, including the launch of summer programs in Los Angeles and New York.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

A hallmark of the School is its planning. It has poured significant effort into its current faculty-driven strategic plan, which covers the period from 2011-2016. As the self-study notes: "Academic planning at Elon is systematic. All units complete five-year strategic plans on the same timetable." The School met virtually all of its goals and objectives in its five-year plan for 2005-2010—and its success in meeting its goals is reflected in the many advancements it has made since the last accreditation review. The primary goals in the 2005-2010 plan: Build one of the nation's premier communications programs (including achieving national accreditation by ACEJMC); recruit, educate and reward outstanding students; build an outstanding faculty with appropriate resources for success; develop the curriculum to meet future academic challenges; and strengthen the communications facilities to meet future needs. The School's strategic plan is not a paper tiger. Progress is systematically monitored. Each year, the School also outlines a list of priorities. Sixteen bulleted items comprise the 2011-2012 priorities, including hosting a "successful ACEJMC site visit." The self-study accurately notes that its strategic plan does not gather dust on a shelf and that the plan "guides resource requests and priority emphases for the year or years to come." Clearly, the School takes long-range planning seriously.

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

Faculty members play an active and appropriate role in governance. Elon produces a university-wide *Faculty Handbook* that all units on campus adhere to. The *Handbook* states: "The administration of Elon University makes every effort to practice democracy in administrative matters." By all accounts, it does so. The Academic Council is the "voice of the faculty." Of its 16 members in 2011-2012, three are Communications faculty. The School has a *Course Handbook*. It also has a Student Advisory Board that meets monthly with one of the School's deans. The School's faculty and staff meet regularly, and begin each year with a day-long retreat. A logical range of committees is in place: awards, curriculum, diversity, fellows, teacher-scholar and technology.

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

The chief administrative officer of the School is its dean. His administrative team comprises two associate deans; a department chair; an associate department chair; and a graduate program director. The dean is one of the country's most respected journalism-mass communication administrators, and Elon's provost has referred to him as "simply the best dean of communications in the country." The dean, a recognized leader in the national accrediting process and the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, was named Administrator of the Year by the Scripps Howard Foundation and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for 2010. To say that he effectively represents his program on campus and beyond would be classic understatement. Faculty members describe him as the architect of the "culture of collegiality" that permeates the School. He is seen as approachable, thoughtful, visionary, respectful, hands-on, patient, well organized, the master of follow through and—most of all—unselfish. One administrator said he "has an ability to articulate his vision for the School and then practice it. With him, it is always about what is best for the School." A central administrator said he regarded him "as the senior dean, and I look to him to provide leadership for the rest of the group." Other members of the School's administrative team are also respected. One associate dean is described as an exceptional scholar, a critical thinker, thoughtful, analytical, well-organized and innovative. The other associate dean is described as accessible, the keeper of the community, thoughtful, deliberate and carefully consistent. It all adds up to an effective administrative team, with the shared descriptor being "thoughtful."

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

The School's faculty and Elon's provost evaluate the dean annually. The dean regularly receives sterling means on the survey instrument. His highest evaluations are for providing positive leadership, being approachable and accessible, communicating effectively, and performing duties with integrity, credibility and fairness. The dean annually evaluates the associate deans, department head and graduate director.

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

Procedures for the timely resolution of complaints and concerns are clearly outlined. All steps are well defined. The self-study notes that the School "operates with an open style (faculty and staff usually can walk into any office throughout the day) . . . [and that informal] concerns often can be addressed immediately." For formal complaints, grievance procedures are outlined in Elon's *Faculty Handbook*. But the self-study notes that "no complaints have ever been filed involving the School."

For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:

Indicators

- (a) The unit has a mission statement and engages in strategic or long-range planning that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.
- (b) The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional graduate program as well as

policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional graduate program.

Evidence:

A mission statement (separate from the undergraduate program)

A strategic or long-range plan

Documents demonstrating administrative oversight for the professional graduate program

A faculty policy manual, handbook or other document specifying the roles of faculty in governance and the development of educational policy for the professional graduate program

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) The unit has a mission statement for its professional graduate program 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 mission of the graduate program is described in the self-study as “preparing students to think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.” It has been supported since before its launch in 2009 by administration both inside and outside the School. The provost described it as a “cutting edge” program, and the dean confirmed that the facilities and financial support to launch the degree were provided by the university. The School’s five-year strategic plan calls for regular re-evaluation of the M.A. program to “serve a fast-changing media world.” The M.A. program has not developed its own strategic plan.

- (b) The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional graduate program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional graduate program.

The administrative structure of the School provides for dedicated oversight of the graduate program through a director who is assisted by two staff members. The curriculum is one that is under the direction of the faculty, guided through discussions at formal and informal meetings.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Professional Values and Competencies:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

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

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

Indicators:

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

ACEJMC requires each unit seeking initial accreditation to include in its self-study report the number of semester or quarter hours taken in non-journalism and mass communications and in liberal arts, sciences and social sciences by all members of each graduating class in the two academic years before an initial accreditation visit.

Units seeking re-accreditation must determine the percentage of students meeting the 80/65 or 116/94 requirement, but they are not required to provide a full census of classes.

- (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.
- (c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.
- (d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1.
- (e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit.

Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed one semester course (or its equivalent) if the internship is away from the institution, and, for the most part, supervised by media professionals rather than academics.

Students may take up to two semester courses (or their equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals. Students may take up to three semester courses (or their equivalent) at a professional media outlet owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.

Evidence:

Student records and transcripts

Unit bulletins and brochures

Syllabi and other course materials

Records of teaching awards and citations, curricular and course development grants, attendance at teaching workshops, and publications and papers on teaching

Class rosters of skills courses

Records and statistics on and evaluations of internships, with and without academic credit

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

Note: 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 the unit.

Students in the School of Communications must complete at least 132 credit hours for graduation. Of that number, at least 80 hours must be taken outside of Communications (with 65 or more hours in the liberal arts and sciences). Only 52 Communication hours count toward graduation. During the two academic years prior to the site visit, the School was in compliance with the 80/65 rule: 98 percent of graduates had 80 or more semester hours outside of the major; 100 percent had 65 or more semester hours in liberal arts and science courses.

- (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.

The curriculum has expanded since the last site visit: in 2008, two majors (Journalism and Communications) became four: Journalism, Strategic Communications, Media Arts and Entertainment, and Communication Science. By Fall 2011, three of those majors were in the top 12 based on campus-wide enrollment: Strategic Communications, Media Arts and Entertainment, and Journalism.

Courses were strategically defined to reflect ACEJMC's professional values and competencies and feature *six core courses*: an opening conceptual course (Communications in a Global Age); a writing course (Media Writing); a production course (Digital Media Convergence); an advanced conceptual course (Media Law and Ethics); an experiential course (Communications Internship); and a capstone course (Great Ideas).

Students take at least five additional courses specific to their major, as well as a selection of electives that challenge them to master breadth and depth of focus. The electives round out curricular themes: to inform, to persuade, to entertain and to discover. In identifying courses for the new majors, faculty redefined the level of the course to complement the level of competency: awareness, understanding and application. Electives also allow students to create an area of interest such as writing, advertising, photojournalism, documentary, audio recording, sports communication and international communications.

Each of the School's four majors requires the six core courses, with the first three listed above being in the opening core and the last three listed above being in the advanced core. The opening and advanced core "bookend" the courses required in each major. The symmetry is impressively logical and well conceived.

The revised curriculum also requires a minor outside of Communications, a double major, or a study- abroad opportunity. If a student elects to do the double major, only 44 hours are required, instead of 52. About 10 percent of Communications students elect the double major each year.

Many of the courses reflect the university's commitment to the community and to society. Reporting for the Public Good, Broadcasting in the Public Interest, and Public Relations and Civic Responsibility are just a few. Additionally, the student organizations (American Advertising Federation, Live Oak Communications, *The Pendulum* newspaper, *Phoenix14News* and Public Relations Student Society of America) provide real-world experience. Courses in the School are open to majors and non-majors alike, and there is a 20-credit minor available.

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

The Communication Science major, whose predominant theme is "to discover...by analyzing media and communication in society," is the smallest of the school's four majors. In addition to the three courses in the opening core and three courses in the advanced core, Communication Science majors must take the Process of Communication; Media History, Media Today; Persuasion; Communication Research; and Communication Internship, plus electives to total 52 COM hours. According to career services at Elon, "Communication Science students are primed for roles involving communication research, organizational development, information resources, communications strategy, or for graduate or law school."

JOURNALISM

Print/Online News Sequence: Students in this concentration, once through the initial core, take a range of classes focused on preparing them for the professional workplace. This includes Media History, Reporting for the Public Good, Editing and Design, Web Publishing, plus electives. Reporting for the Public Good is a writing and reporting course that requires students to work in the public interest and incorporates concepts such as watchdog journalism, ethical practices and civic journalism. A range of electives are offered that include courses on religion and media, sports and media, politics and media, and feature writing.

Students are excited about a magazine production course to be offered in spring term. The Religion and Media class includes a requirement that students attend a service at a denomination other than their own and that they conduct interviews and write about their experience. It is eye-opening for many.

In general, journalism students are pleased with the courses they have available and praise the integration of digital media into courses such as Editing and Design (which still includes the basics of AP style and headline writing for print, but also includes how to write search-engine optimized headlines for the Web). Some expressed concern that a great deal of time was spent in classes teaching software, specifically the Adobe Suite, as compared to teaching the *application* of the software. Some noted they learned the software in high school, but others had not. Journalism students suggest some refresher in use of software to close the gap between the completion of Digital Media Convergence in the beginning core and upper-division courses such as Web Publishing (a software-driven course) and Multimedia Journalism. Some argue for more digital in the introductory COM 100 course.

Broadcast News Sequence: After the initial core, students in the Broadcast News sequence take a series of classes aimed at acquainting them with the world of broadcast media. The courses, each building on the prior class, are Broadcasting in the Public Interest, Broadcast News Writing, Television Production, Television News Reporting and Multimedia Journalism. Broadcasting in the Public Interest emphasizes that broadcasting was conceived and is regulated to serve the public interest and offers a philosophical, historical, technological and social overview of the broadcast and electronic media industries. It incorporates economics, audience analysis, management, programming, media effects, governmental policy and FCC regulation. Broadcast News Writing teaches writing for the ear. Television Production explores the principles and techniques in television broadcasting and other video media. Television News Reporting is a well-crafted course focused on writing, editing and producing television news packages and newscasts and exposing students to various television production roles, including that of producers, reporters, anchors, editors, videographers and studio production crew assignments.

MEDIA ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Students in this major focus on creative storytelling through broadcast, cinema and new media – both in fact and fiction. They explore approaches to communication through words, sounds, images, actions and music. Media Arts and Entertainment students choose between two sequences – Broadcast & New Media and Cinema.

Broadcast and New Media students, after completing the initial core, turn to a sequence of courses aimed at preparing them to write for electronic media, master interactive media and

produce for broadcast and new media. They round out their sequence via their choice of an interactive media course, a media management and sales class, or a communications research class, and have a number of electives available beyond the main sequence.

Cinema students, in addition to the core sequence, take courses on the Development and Influence of Cinema, Screenwriting, Cinema Production, Cinema Aesthetics (or Documentary) and producing Narrative (or Documentary). Electives available beyond the core include International Cinema, which looks at cinema as a reflection of societies, cultures and the times and surveys the development and evolution of selected international cinemas and movements. Other courses offered include Audio for Visual Media, Audio for Sound Media, Editing the Moving Image, Narrative Directing and Film Theory, Genres and Auteurs.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

In Fall 2011, Strategic Communications was the largest major across the campus with 386 students. Students cite the challenging curriculum, innovative teaching and workplace opportunities as reasons for selecting the major.

In addition to the core courses, students study Public Relations, Strategic Writing, Communications Research, Strategic Campaigns and one course selected from Corporate Publishing, Corporate Video or Web Publishing.

Courses fuse skills with scholarship; research with practicality. One employer reported an Elon graduate “arrived with a solid set of skills and two excellent internships that prepared her for the workplace. I promoted her last summer and she is currently editor of *National Geographic’s* intranet.”

In their Communications Research course, students must mesh their writing and analytical skills. They explore public opinion polling, do marketing research, conduct content analysis and focus groups, and develop digital media strategy.

Faculty are using creative ways to add instruction in digital marketing and technology in American Advertising Federation chapter-sponsored workshops that feature speakers from the industry.

(c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.

Teaching is priority No. 1 at Elon. From its mission statement to the university’s *Faculty Handbook*, emphasis is placed on the quality of teaching and learning. According to students and various university measures of teaching effectiveness, the School of Communications faculty members excel in this category.

Students cited examples of faculty dependability and accessibility. In reviewing syllabi and visits to classes, team members observed innovative instruction, student engagement and genuine enthusiasm. While the official university teaching load is six courses, many Communications faculty members teach five or fewer courses a year with the university’s reassigned-time plan.

A faculty *Course Handbook* spells out official course descriptions, course goals and primary course objectives. While faculty members have the freedom to determine how they will teach,

the *Handbook* provides the specificity to ensure uniformity of content across multiple-section courses.

In Fall 2006, the faculty adopted a “Teaching Enhancement and Evaluation” process that encourages them to be “current, knowledgeable and effective teachers.” It provides examples of faculty development programs, establishes peer mentoring opportunities and establishes teaching evaluation procedures. These multiple-measures for faculty training and development have helped achieve recognition and advancement across campus and nationally. Included in that recognition were six Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning grants, three Sustainability Faculty Scholar grants, four Diversity Infusion grants, five Teaching and Learning grants, five Service Learning Faculty Scholars grants, three Community Partnership Initiative grants, one Interdisciplinary Committee on Course-Based Alcohol Education grant, one African/ African-American Studies grant and three Technology grants.

One Communications faculty member was named Elon’s first Faculty Fellow for Technology; one is the university president’s Faculty Administrative Fellow for Diversity and Global Engagement; and two others received Project Pericles grants, designed to help faculty members increase civic engagement and a sense of social responsibility among students. Faculty members have received local and national recognition from such organizations as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the African/ African-American Studies program, College Media Advisers, the International Communication Association and the Ward Family Foundation.

Faculty members have participated in teaching and learning workshops sponsored by the university and professional organizations. Many have taught the professional development workshops for others. This is a collegial, talented, goal-oriented faculty with a strong commitment to teaching, learning and professional development.

Additionally, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning supports that commitment in a unique way by paying when faculty members take a student to lunch; it also funds faculty members who meet for lunch to enhance their development as teacher/scholars.

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

Faculty members from several programs in the School teach courses in the Communication Science major, with a focus on the impact of media on society. The courses have a research-based foundation and are taught by professors who possess quantitative and qualitative expertise.

JOURNALISM

Print/Online News Sequence: Students emphasize that the curriculum is rigorous but fair and prepares them for the digital workplace while enforcing the core values of reporting and writing. They praise the faculty for its dedication, commitment and willingness to be available. To paraphrase one student: though there were times when the coursework was difficult and not very much fun, after the fact it was very clear as to its value, especially in terms of starting a career. As one faculty member put it: “We fire with live ammunition around here,” meaning bureaucracy is limited and faculty can innovate quickly in course work and the classroom.

Broadcast News Sequence: Students praised the broadcast news sequence's progression and its emphasis on hands-on reporting, production and editing, which several students said had prepared them well for internships and professional-level work.

MEDIA ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Students in Media Arts and Entertainment generally praised the versatility of the faculty, the individualized attention offered to their class projects and the faculty's knowledge of the world of broadcast, film and cinema.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Students cite the real-world activities in classes that allow them to partner with campus and community organizations to create plans and proposals, to conduct media outreach and to implement strategy. They say they are able to accomplish this because of the savvy and dedication of the faculty.

- (d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1.

Small classes are a hallmark of this program. Skills classes and labs are limited to no more than 18 students; and theory courses are generally limited to 33, depending on classroom space.

- (e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit.

The School maintains a large and much-acclaimed internship program. In the 2010-11 academic year, 268 students took internships for 445 credit hours. More than 80 percent were during the summer. (Some 257 had internships in 2009-10; 237 in 2008-09.) Students may earn one or two credits for an internship. One internship credit is required for graduation. Eighty hours of work are required per credit. Students can get up to four credits for internships, equal to one course and thus within ACEJMC guidelines. The School maintains extensive contacts with a variety of sites across the industries, and students have landed positions overseas and in New York, Los Angeles, Washington and elsewhere, as well as within North Carolina. (Elon has summer programs in New York and Los Angeles that the School administers.)

The program is led by a dynamic director who works to maintain contacts with organizations, publishes a regular hot list of opportunities and signs off on every internship for the student to receive credit. She calls her job the best in the university. (Her list of recent accomplishments fills a page in the self-study.) She also grades student performance on internships through a portfolio of work, mid-term and final reflections, a case study of the organization, workplace supervisor evaluation and a presentation/debriefing. Generally, students must be through their sophomore year and have a 2.0 GPA to qualify for the program. All the requirements are carefully detailed and explained in writing. Students (whether they found their own internships or did so with the School's help) said the internship experience was an essential part of their time at Elon and important preparation for their desired careers. They also note they were extremely well-prepared for internships and, in one major newspaper newsroom,

had more advanced multimedia skills than colleagues from other universities. Some said the internship program was a primary attraction to the School. Some complained that the various required assignments require too much effort for a single credit and detract from the work experience. Assessment tools indicate a high degree of satisfaction by supervisors of the work done by interns and that the interns found their experiences germane and helpful to their intended career paths.

Most common intern sites (2010-11) were TV stations and networks (19 percent); non-profits (17 percent); PR, advertising and marketing agencies (15 percent); for-profit companies (13 percent); photo/video/TV/film distribution companies (10 percent). Newspapers, radio station, sports teams, government and many others followed.

The list of sites ranges from "60 Minutes" to "The Colbert Report" to ESPN, *GQ* and many more: CBS Radio, WBAL-TV, NBC, Discovery Communications, Martha Stewart Omnimedia, Al Jazeera English, the American Chemical Society, Major League Baseball-Japan, E!Entertainment and *Reader's Digest*, to name just a few. One employer said, "All three students I've hired have been excellent writers...Elon's emphasis on media writing sets it apart." Another said her intern "arrived with a solid set of skills and two excellent internships that prepared her for the workforce."

The School aggressively recruits and facilitates internships through "TGIF" -- Three Great Internship Fridays -- each April. These sessions include how to work in a professional setting and how to put together a successful portfolio or reel. TGIF is required for first-time interns.

In addition to the traditional credits offered for supervised internships, students can earn Service Learning credits by working on community partnerships with clients as part of skills courses designated university Service Learning courses. In Fall 2011 four courses were designated Service Learning (SL); in Spring 2011 there were five.

For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:

Indicator:

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

Evidence:

Course syllabi and other documents demonstrating that the unit has a professional graduate curriculum that prepares master's degree graduates for significant professional careers that provide leadership and influence.

Graduate student records and transcripts

Undergraduate student records and transcripts demonstrating student experience equivalent to liberal arts education.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The self-study notes that 21 hours of the required coursework in the master's program are in professional skills courses; a review of syllabi for those courses (listed in the self-study) confirms that these are, indeed, skills-focused. All graduate students who earned master's degrees during the 2010-11 academic year completed at least half of their required 36 hours of coursework in skills courses.

The curriculum for the School's professional master's program (iMedia) is a 36-credit program spread across a fall semester, winter term, and spring semester. Students without a JMC undergraduate degree must arrive early to take short courses in Media Writing and in Media Law and Ethics before the fall semester. Students take eight required courses, two electives, and a capstone. Most courses are skills-focused. Three conceptual courses are required, and others are offered as electives. The courses work together to teach students how to think intelligently, strategically and critically about the professions and to equip them with practical skills to succeed on the job market 10 months after they start the program.

Students said they were pleased with the courses, the instruction, and the overall program, which they believed would provide them with a highly marketable degree. They said the compressed nature of the program and the fact that none of the courses were cross-listed at the undergraduate level were strengths of the curriculum. They saw it as sufficiently rigorous for graduate work; they used terms such as "fast-paced" and "intense" to describe it.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

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

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.
- (b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- (c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and provides an environment that supports their retention, progress and success.
- (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.
- (e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.

Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Evidence:

A written plan

Syllabi and other course materials

Records and statistics on faculty and staff hiring and on promotion and tenure decisions

Records and statistics on student recruitment, retention and graduation

Records on part-time and visiting faculty and speakers

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.

In 2010, the School revised a Diversity Plan adopted by the faculty in 2004. The updated plan lays out how the School will build a "diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects a global society." The components of that quest include steps to build a diverse faculty and student body, to create an inclusive curriculum and to foster an environment supporting diversity.

The last accreditation team pointed at the lack of student racial and ethnic diversity on campus and in the School as a weakness. By 2010, the School's progress and innovation in diversity had earned it the national Equity and Diversity Award from AEJMC. The award recognizes the School's progress and innovation in racial, gender and ethnic equity and diversity in

faculty hiring, school initiatives, achieving a supportive climate for women and minorities, and institutional support for diversity goals.

AEJMC praised the School for “building a faculty that is more than 25 percent minority, for its commitment to salary equity by gender, for its participation in national diversity programs, for securing \$200,000 from the Hearst Foundation to endow minority student scholarships, for twice engaging in an innovative teacher exchange with historically black North Carolina A&T, and for faculty scholarship in the realm of diversity.”

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

The importance of diversity to accurate and fair media work is underscored in the School’s Diversity Plan, which calls for class discussion of “the importance of communicating with a diversity of audiences, as well as the historic and current contribution of diverse voices in society.”

Curricular efforts that reflect this emphasis on diversity in reading assignments, class discussions and assignments are visible in a number of syllabi, beginning with the School’s opening course, *Communications in a Global Age*. The School does not offer a stand-alone course on diversity issues, instead seeking “natural points of entry so that diversity is discussed in courses in organic, less self-conscious ways,” according to the self-study.

The self-study points at a range of approaches faculty use to foster a better understanding of diversity issues and diverse perspectives, including:

- In *Media Writing*, students complete an out-of-class diversity writing assignment, often involving a campus speaker who addresses issues of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or economic diversity.
- In *Digital Media Convergence*, students research the different ways that multiculturalism is defined and produced multicultural poster projects that became part of a traveling exhibit titled “Visualizing Multiculturalism.”
- In *Reporting for the Public Good*, students review style guides of minority journalist associations such as the Asian American Journalists Association and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender Association to sensitize students to think about media portrayals.
- In *Writing for Broadcast and New Media*, students use the Rosa Parks story as a building block for a video assignment.
- In *Television News Reporting*, students are asked to “get comfortable with being uncomfortable” by finding a story in a population group or place outside their comfort zone.
- In *Environmental Communications*, students discuss environmental justice and sustainable development that includes the disproportionate distribution of environmental pollution in minority and poorer communities.

- In Communications Research, students conduct focus groups with four groups of students in minority situations (African Americans, international students, those with diverse religious backgrounds and male Communications students) to determine how the School could better meet the needs of diverse students.
- In Sport and Media, students studied how female athletes are depicted in the media and how different waves of feminist thought have dealt with athletes and their bodies.
- In Interactive Project for the Public Good, graduate students worked with a Panama organization that serves the blind and created mirror websites in English and Spanish.
- In Interactive Media Management and Economics, graduate students brought their MP3 players to class, explored the level of ethnic and gender diversity in their music choices, and assessed the music industry's ethics regarding misogynistic, racist and homophobic content.
- In Virtual Environments, graduate students recreated the International Civil Rights Museum and Center in Greensboro in the online platform Second Life, exploring how to simulate the experience of racism.

Faculty members teaching undergraduate courses said they routinely urge students to expand the diversity of their source base in assignments and encourage discussions that emphasize how diversity relates to fairness and accuracy. Several students said they were compelled by class assignments to learn about people from demographic groups they knew little about before enrolling at the School.

A review of syllabi for courses in the graduate program indicates that diversity is a stated learning objective. For example, the Theory and Audience Analysis course indicates that to “examine gender, equity, cultural implications and other issues pertinent to diverse audiences” is one such objective. Syllabi and classroom visits did not indicate whether such objectives materialize into substantive material. Interviews with faculty and students indicated that, generally, they did not. However, the “fly-in” winter semester course, Interactive Project for the Public Good, provides an immersion experience for students in non-U.S. cultures that fosters an understanding of global diversity.

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

The School appoints a faculty diversity committee each year to monitor progress and to consider initiatives toward achieving diversity goals. The committee’s latest assessment, presented in August 2011, notes steady progress in the results of efforts to recruit women and minority faculty.

The School’s Diversity Plan unambiguously calls for the recruitment of faculty from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds and commits to including in each search committee a “diversity advocate” to point at best practices in building diverse applicant pools. The results have been notable since the last accreditation visit.

In 2006, the School's 28-person faculty included 10 women, or 36 percent of the total. In 2011, 18 of the 41 faculty members, or 44 percent, were women. In 2006, the School's faculty included five minority individuals, or 17 percent of the total. By 2011, the number of minority faculty had more than doubled, constituting 11 of the 41-person faculty, or 27 percent.

(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.

At the time of the 2006 accreditation assessment, when the visiting team identified the lack of student racial and ethnic diversity on campus as a weakness for the School, only 8.4 percent of the School's enrollment came from under-represented backgrounds. Since then, the School has expanded and strengthened its efforts to attract minority students and to infuse its curriculum with experiences that reflect the multicultural realities students will meet when leaving campus. In 2011, the proportion of undergraduate students from under-represented groups had increased to nearly 12 percent.

The School's Diversity Plan commits to creating faculty exchanges with historically black institutions with strong communications programs. It identifies steps to diversifying the School's student body, ranging from multicultural weekends on campus, to supportive ties with a university college-access program aimed at under-represented high school students, to working with campus media organizations to diversify their staffs and to seek content that reflects diverse perspectives.

Both the School and the university have increased activities aimed at reflecting openness to diversity. Communications faculty and students are active in the Elon Academy, a college access and success program for academically promising high school students with no family history of college and/or who face financial need. One School professor is a Faculty Fellow in the president's office, focusing on helping create a welcoming campus environment for students from diverse backgrounds.

In 2009, the School obtained its second \$100,000 Hearst Foundation grant to support endowed scholarships for under-represented students. The Triad Foundation and other donors also provided resources for need-based scholarships. Some of the recipients are minority juniors or seniors.

In summer 2011, the School was a co-sponsor of "Journalism that Matters: Create or Die," a Greensboro gathering organized by a faculty member in the School and characterized in the self-study as "the unconference by and for people of color to reimagine the future of journalism."

The number of women and minority guest speakers invited to classes and campus events also has grown over the years.

University students are allowed to move freely from major to major, and student retention rates are maintained for the university, rather than the schools. The university reports strong retention rates for African American students – 86.6 percent of those who entered in Fall 2007 had either graduated or are still enrolled, compared to 81.7 percent for white students. The

rate for Hispanic students was a more modest 71.4 percent.

The School provides special scholarship assistance in emergency situations and also nominates and encourages minority students to apply for outside scholarships. The School also supports the travel of students to professional conferences. Some of these travel grants are diversity-related, such as those for students attending the National Association of Black Journalists convention each year.

At the graduate level, the self-study indicates – and interviews with the dean and graduate program director confirm – that recruiting and retaining a diverse student population has not been a priority. This is not to say that each of the three cohorts has not been without diversity – in geographic origin, race and ethnicity, for instance. But the diversity has really been a matter of chance. Of the 37 students in the 2010 class, seven were racial/ethnic minorities; in the 2011 class, three of the 37 students were minorities; and in the most recent class, five of 41 students were minorities. The program has had one international student (an Asian student, in the most recent cohort) since it launched.

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

Upon arriving at the university, students sign an agreement to abide by the university's honor code that requires honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect.

A university coordinator of disabilities services arranges accommodations for students with disabilities, ranging from note-taking in classes to providing testing rooms and proctoring. The coordinator works with units on specific needs. For instance, when a student with severe auditory disabilities and using a wheelchair enrolled in a Communications course, the School rearranged its main-floor computer lab for the semester to accommodate the student's instructional needs.

The School reports only one instance of inappropriate faculty behavior reported in its history, involving a faculty member who has since moved on.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

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

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

Indicators:

- (a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.
- (b) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity 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.
- (d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.
- (e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.

Evidence:

Faculty and staff manuals or relevant policy procedural documents

Vitae for full-time and part-time faculty

Course evaluations and other methods of determining teaching effectiveness

Evaluation process for annual review of faculty contributions and performance

Search and hiring records

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 Faculty Handbook details expectations for faculty and instructional staff. By October of each year, the dean requests positions from the provost and president. Once the approval has been given, the positions can be advertised.

Searches are strategic; the School casts a wide net using print and electronic means of disseminating the position announcements. A faculty search committee is appointed and includes a "diversity advocate" to ensure full consideration of qualified women and minority applicants. The committee reviews all applications and recommends those to be invited to campus. Candidates spend a day on campus meeting with faculty, teaching a class, and presenting their research or creative activity. All faculty provide feedback to the search committee; students provide feedback from their class with the candidate. The dean meets with the search committee to discuss and review their feedback and determines whether to extend an offer to the candidate.

Part-time faculty and instructional staff are hired without advertising; part-time faculty are evaluated only in the area of teaching.

The Faculty Handbook (Sec. II-8) provides the process for evaluating the performance of teaching faculty. It defines who is involved and seven different levels of review (beginning

with an annual review and ending with long-range professional development review). It includes the evaluation system for tenure and promotion, evaluating faculty on continuing track or lecture-track appointments, and evaluating tenured and tenure-track faculty. It also includes evaluation of visiting and limited term appointments.

(b) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service. Elon's Teacher-Scholar model defines teaching as the first criterion for faculty, and professional activity (research) and contributions to the life of the university (service) as co-equal second criteria.

During the past three academic years, full-time faculty had major responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service. Full-time faculty members taught 92 percent of courses during the 2010-11 school year; 85 percent of courses in 2009-10; and 94 percent of courses in 2008-09.

(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. Of the 41 full-time faculty members, 25 have the doctoral degree; one is completing the Ph.D., six have a Master of Fine Arts or equivalent, one has a Juris Doctor degree, seven have a master's degree and one has a bachelor's degree (and a Pulitzer Prize). Elon considers both the MFA and the JD as terminal degrees; 80 percent of the School's faculty have a terminal degree.

Faculty members average 10 years of professional experience and 12 years of university teaching. During the past year, five faculty members had teaching sabbaticals to conduct research or professional activities; for 2011-2012, two have teaching sabbaticals.

Elon may be unique in the amount of funding provided for professional development. In addition to course releases for administrative duties, special projects, advising student media, or for new faculty in their first semester to get acclimated to the campus community, the university also provides course release for faculty members who assume important service roles on campus. Two faculty members had such releases during 2010-2011. Communications faculty members have also been successful in obtaining competitive Faculty Research and Development (FR&D) grants. The university also began in 2004 to offer reassigned time through departments based on the number of permanent faculty positions. In 2010-11, Communications had 36 full-time faculty members and received 18 reassigned times. Faculty members apply for the one-course reassignments to enhance teaching, conduct research or provide additional time for service.

(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input. Multiple measures are used to evaluate instruction. The university evaluates all classes each Fall using a 5-point scale. Communications faculty scored 4.21 for instructional effectiveness (compared to 4.31 university-wide); 4.15 for effort required in course (compared to 3.89 university-wide); and 3.09 for overall GPA in classes (compared to 3.17 university-wide).

Because the university does not evaluate Spring terms, the School gathers feedback. Spring 2011 scores were 4.24 for class is well-prepared and well-organized and 4.24 for effort required in course.

Each full-time faculty member submits an annual report to the department chair for discussion about teaching, contributions to the life of the university and professional activity. There is also a mentor program that provides seasoned faculty to observe teaching.

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

In meetings with faculty and administrators across campus there was high praise for the quality of and achievements by the School's faculty and administrators. The School's faculty members play important roles, serving on every major standing and ad hoc committee across the university, including the Academic Council, Student Communications Media Board, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Research and Development Committee, General Studies Council, Presidential Diversity Council, Promotions and Tenure Committee, Graduate Council, Study Abroad Committee, International Studies Advisory Committee, Academic Standing Committee, Academic Service Learning Advisory Committee, Institutional Review Board, Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning Faculty Advisory Committee, Fellows Program and Scholarship Committee, Honors Program Advisory Committee, Interdisciplinary Writing Committee, Lumen Prize Advisory Committee, Lyceum Committee, Admissions Committee, Multifaith Center Committee, Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee, Student Life Committee, Tenure and Promotion Hearing Board, and Women's and Gender Studies Advisory Committee.

External faculty, staff, community leaders and alumni have high regard for the education and service being provided by the School.

For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:

Indicator:

- (a) Full-time faculty meet the university's requirements for graduate faculty and teach the majority of professional graduate courses.
- (b) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.

Evidence:

Faculty vitae demonstrate a clearly defined graduate faculty who meet the criteria for graduate instruction at the university
Course evaluations and other methods of determining teaching effectiveness

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- (a) Full-time faculty meet the university's requirements for graduate faculty and teach the majority of the professional graduate courses.

The university's *Faculty Handbook* stipulates that faculty teaching graduate classes have a terminal degree in the field in which they will teach, have taught full-time for two years and have evidence of productive scholarship. However, there is no oversight of the appointment of

graduate faculty at the university level, leaving ultimate authority over these appointments at the School level. Of the 14 faculty members teaching in the professional master's program during the 2011-2012 year, most – but not all – met the university criteria. Two were new hires with doctorates (without the full-time teaching experience) and one did not hold a terminal degree, but has been recognized at the university level for his expertise in technology.

(b) The unit regularly evaluates graduate instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.

Faculty members who teach in the professional master's program describe evaluation of instruction in classes and across the program as frequent. Formal meeting and informal hallway conversations among faculty members that focus on instruction and outcomes are the norm. Student input is provided both informally and formally to the director of the graduate program.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

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

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

Indicators:

- (a) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity.
- (b) The unit specifies expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity in criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure.
- (c) Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition account for and acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members' professional as well as scholarly specializations.
- (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.
- (e) The unit fosters a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, critical analysis and the expression of differing points of view.

Evidence:

Faculty guides or manuals on tenure and promotion
Records of sabbatical and other leaves, travel funds and grant support
Records on faculty promotion, tenure and other forms of recognition
Faculty vitae and unit reports on research and creative and professional activities

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School, in line with the university, defines "professional activity" broadly, clearly articulating the expectation that such activity is required. It also supports and rewards activity in a number of ways. The requirement is in the Institutional Statement, "The Elon Teacher-Scholar," and is also in the School's "Scholarship and Peer Review as a Form of Professional Activity." The School systematically supports professional activity of its new, tenure-track faculty members in two specific ways: through strategically timed course releases, and through Hultquist Awards, available through the university, to support summer activity by first-year faculty members. Course releases, travel funding, and summer research funding are used to support and reward all faculty for such activity. One tenure-track faculty member characterized the support as "extraordinary."

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

Two documents define activity recognized at the university and in the School: “The Elon Teacher-Scholar” and the School’s “Scholarship and Peer Review as a Form of Professional Activity.” The university’s “Teacher-Scholar” document broadly defines professional activity and specifies that peer-reviewed scholarship is “the most fundamental form of professional activity.” The document describes “tangible results” of such activity, including “pedagogical innovations” and “works of synthesis.” The School’s document clarifies “peer review” in relationship to academic (e.g., journal publication) and professional (textbooks, journalism, documentaries, etc.) work by faculty.

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

In documents spelling out evaluation criteria, university and School requirements account for a broad array of professional activity, including (but not limited to) research for traditional outlets such as journal articles or book chapters, the production of articles for the trade press, and the creation of documentaries, screenplays, new media, professional manuals, exhibits, and pedagogical innovations such as textbooks and “experiential activities.”

- (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.

Productivity across a variety of academic, creative and professional venues by the 41-member Elon faculty is impressive. The self-study lists more than 1,000 works, from internal and external grants to articles in trade publications and top academic journals such as the *Journal of Communication* and *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. The number of books/textbooks authored or co-authored between 2005 and 2011 is also impressive: 21. Furthermore, Elon faculty have a presence at some of the field’s largest annual conferences, including that of AEJMC. It is clear from the list of work by full-time faculty members that many have developed a stream of research and activity that lends itself very well to Elon’s teaching mission. For instance, several faculty members have distinguished themselves with books, book chapters, journal articles and conference presentations on trends and issues in digital media. Faculty members are also distinguishing themselves with work in important areas such as mass communications pedagogy and disability studies.

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

Evidence of the School’s pursuit of a climate that encourages intellectual curiosity and engagement among faculty members is in the number of projects in which faculty collaborate: on books, documentaries, grant-funded works, articles, papers and more. The School’s *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* is also evidence of a climate that encourages intellectual engagement. Interviews with faculty indicate that they believe the School fosters engagement and critical analysis in a collegial environment.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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

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.
- (b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.
- (c) The unit keeps students informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the unit.
- (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.
- (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.

Evidence:

Student records and files

Advising guides, manuals, newsletters and internal communication

Statistics on enrollment, scholarships, retention and graduation

Examples of student media and information about student professional organizations

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.

First-semester students take Elon 101, an orientation course that includes weekly meetings with a faculty or staff member designated as their first-year adviser. Communication faculty members are among the regular Elon 101 teachers.

The normal progression is for students to declare their major in their second year and then to move to a faculty adviser within their discipline. Each faculty member in the School has from roughly 15 to 30 advisees. In May 2011, the average was 20.6 students-to-adviser, a significant decline from as many as 60 a decade ago. New faculty members do not advise in Fall of their first year and have a small cohort in the Spring term. They assume a normal load in their second year.

Standard protocol is for students and advisers to meet one-on-one twice a year to plan registration and chart the student's progress. Students cannot sign up for classes until their adviser has cleared it. The university provides online check sheets and an unofficial degree audit.

Faculty advisers also are expected to provide career and graduate school advice but the School has an energetic career adviser on site (technically part of the university Career Services, but his office is in the School) who maintains extensive alumni contacts and job possibilities. His office (and that of the internship director across the hall) are popular spots. The Career Services adviser conducts workshops for students during the year on topics such as building a portfolio and ethics in a job search. He says Communication

students turn out in far larger numbers than other programs on campus. He calls himself part-teacher, part-cheerleader and takes pride in helping students who don't quite know what they want to do figure that out, as well as helping place those with clear paths in mind.

A May 2011 survey conducted at graduation found 98 percent of the School's seniors (230 of 234 respondents) had used Career Services in the School – an extraordinarily high number. Job placement statistics show Communication graduates outpacing the university as a whole (63 to 53 percent on 2009-10) and outpacing respondents to a similarly timed national survey by 14 percent.

Faculty can use an “e-warning” email to notify of student excessive absences or other course issues. Those emails go to the central Advising Center and come back to the student's adviser, who then is asked to contact the student.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Students praise the faculty for being both accessible and ready to help at any hour of the day. “One even organized study sessions on a Friday night,” a student said. Students also give kudos to the faculty for caring about them as individuals. “They want you to succeed, but personally, too.” Another cited a professor staying with the students into early-morning hours to finish a contest entry. Faculty members always know where to send them for answers to specific questions, the students also noted.

The 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement found 88 percent of Elon students reported healthy and sympathetic relationships with faculty members compared to 74 percent of students at the almost 600 other schools included in the study.

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

The School communicates extensively with students. It uses a listserv, Facebook and Twitter to make announcements and to notify students about special events. The School's website provides more information on topics such as student awards, faculty work and program initiatives. The lobby entrance to McEwen Hall includes an electronic billboard that promotes contemporary events and is used to promote student media. The School also makes regular announcements and handouts in classrooms.

(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.

Student media are not under the School's control. Nonetheless, it is engaged in all, including:

- *The Pendulum*, a weekly student newspaper, and its online operation (across the street from the School).

- *Phoenix14News*, a weekly student cable TV newcast staged in one of the School's studios.
- Elon Student Television, entertainment programming.
- WSOE (Sounds of Elon), the student radio station.
- *Phi Psi Cli*, the student yearbook.
- *Colonnades*, a student literary magazine.

Student media operate through a nine-member board that has at least two members from the School faculty and administration. The newspaper, TV productions and yearbook are advised by Communication faculty members. The coordinator of student media is a School staff member, and his office is at the student newspaper. He negotiates well the independence of student media while remaining part of the School, where he also teaches a section of media writing.

In addition, the School operates a student-run advertising agency, Live Oak Communications, also located across the street from the university. A faculty member serves as an adviser to the agency, which provides marketing, PR, media relations and event marketing services to the local community and the university.

Faculty members advise a full array of student organizations, including SPJ, RTNDA, PRSSA, AAF, NPPA, and so forth. Students praise the accessibility of student media and organizations to them from the moment they enter the School.

- (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.

Elon's four-year graduation rate is 77 percent. The six-year rate is 82 percent. Retention is high: 90 percent of Elon students return for their sophomore year. The dean estimates the School's retention numbers generally mirror the university's. Students in the School are known on campus for their focus on their desired career path. As one student said: "This all is to get you a job."

For units requesting evaluation of a professional graduate program:

Indicators:

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

Evidence:

Graduate student records, transcripts and files
Statistics on graduate enrollment, scholarships, retention and graduation
Documents and records demonstrating that the graduate program has appropriate admissions and retention policies

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Admission to the graduate program is rolling although cohorts are formed to start the program only once a year: each Fall. Students who meet minimum requirements for GRE and TOEFL (if applicable) exams and for an undergraduate GPA and who submit a complete application are accepted. The graduate director is sometimes consulted by the admissions office, which operates outside the School. The director has formed a committee to more closely consult with the admissions office as it screens applications so that faculty have more input in the admissions process.

Issues with retention are not as pronounced as they might be for other professional master's programs, primarily because the program is compressed into 10 months. In the first year, one of 37 students left. Of the 37-student class in year 2, four left and one was asked to leave; he returned as part of the newest cohort after completing remedial work. None of the 41 students enrolled in the 2011-12 class have left or been asked to withdraw; the graduate director and faculty members report that new students are coming in with a better understanding of the program's requirements. Faculty meet to assess student progress and to identify any students in the program who need extra help to succeed.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

Indicators:

- (a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.
- (b) The resources that the institution provides are fair in relation to those provided other units.
- (c) The facilities of the unit enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.
- (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.
- (e) The institution and the unit provide sufficient library and information resources to support faculty and student research and professional development.

Evidence:

A detailed budget
Inspection tour of buildings and equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School's annual expenditures clearly are related to its strategic plan. The School's 2011-12 estimated budget is \$4,820,000, an increase of 57 percent from \$3,074,800 in 2008-2009, and up more than four-fold from the \$1,115,800 of 10 years ago. This is as it should be. The faculty has quadrupled in size, the staff has grown, facilities have been expanded, programs have been added and equipment has become more sophisticated. The School is not awash in riches but, in this day and age, it stands among the few in our field whose budgets have grown dramatically—and consistently—during the past decade. The School is treated fairly compared to other units at the university—and most would say more than fairly. Annual increases to the School's budget have more than kept pace with its growth.

As is the case at virtually all programs across the country, the lion's share of the budget is spent on salaries—for full- and part-time faculty members and staff, which accounts for about 80 percent of annual expenditures. The travel budget for professional development is particularly good for a program that gives primacy status to teaching. The School also receives a benefit that is not common among ACEJMC-accredited programs: its equipment maintenance costs are funded centrally by the university.

The self-study outlines the budgeting process at Elon, noting that "the university has operated for years with a conservative budgeting model to protect against a precipitous decline in students or other emergency." The university budget, as is the case at most private institutions with modest permanent endowments, is driven by tuition. Each year, according to

the self-study, “the available budget basically is tuition multiplied by the number of estimated students, minus a savings cushion.”

That conservative approach has served the university—and the School—well. By lowballing projected enrollment each year by 5 to 7 percent (and the tuition dollars that would be generated), Elon has consistently created healthy year-end contingency funds, which the university then distributes as one-time expenditures. The self-study notes that the School “has benefited significantly over the years from end-of-year allocations, such as constructing additional digital media labs and funding interior renovations . . . [including] an end-of-year allocation in summer 2011 [that] funded the high-definition conversion of the television studios, control room and engineering areas.”

By all accounts, the School is well supported by the institution, and its salaries for new faculty positions generally are higher than those in programs other than the School of Business. The School contends, though, that it could attract an even stronger cohort of Communications Fellows each year—the unit’s equivalent of an honors program class—if it had a larger number of university-based scholarships to award.

School-focused private fundraising is in its embryonic stages. Elon has a centralized development office, with an assigned liaison to each school. That position currently is vacant. The School, though, is making good progress. In 2010-2011, it received \$60,855 in annual and endowed funds, nearly double the amount of the previous year. The School also got a boost when the university, for the first time, invited alumni to designate their giving to specific academic units. The School’s scholarship funds are modest. In 2010-2011, it awarded \$22,000. But 279 of the School’s students received some \$1.5 million in scholarship support from the university.

Demographics add to the challenge of raising funds from graduates, as Communications has the youngest alumni base, by far, of the university’s free-standing academic programs.

The School has this goal in its strategic plan: “Attract significant gifts and endowment to double need-based undergraduate scholarships in the School, enhance program quality and build a new School facility.”

Overall, the School is in a more stable budget position than most of its ACEJMC peers.

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

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

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

In the decade since it evolved from department status in 2000, the School has gone from sharing with several other programs a former library building, McEwen Hall, to occupying all of McEwen, and then some. By Fall 2011, the School had outgrown McEwen. Several adjunct faculty now have offices elsewhere on campus and two School units, including the entire

graduate program, are housed on the second floor of the university's administration building, Powell Hall.

The last site team in 2005 pointed at the School facilities and equipment as a strength of the program. Since then, by all accounts, facilities have been improved and the equipment it houses has kept pace nicely with state-of-the-art media production and instructional technology and software. Nonetheless, space remains at a premium as the School continues to add faculty and programs.

When the School faculty was asked during the self-study process to identify needs for space or equipment, they pointed at space. The university now has plans to build a new School of Communications building in the coming years. The goal would be to provide additional faculty offices, classrooms, collaborative student spaces, a reading room, employer recruiting spaces, reception area, studio storage and a convergence student media center with a dedicated student television newsroom. The provost told the visiting team that fundraising for construction of an 82,000-square-foot facility expected to cost \$25 million is the top priority for the university.

Meanwhile, faculty and students say that McEwen Hall, a well-appointed, clean, brightly painted three-story structure, serves the School's current needs quite suitably. In 2000, the former library was gutted and renovated. Because the building was constructed with load-bearing columns to hold thousands of books, no space existed in the building for television studios without the interference of columns. As a result, the university constructed an addition to the building's south end to house two television studios.

The building houses five labs outfitted with Macs for writing, production and multimedia design courses. They include:

- McEwen 002, a lower floor multimedia design, audio production, and video production lab with 19 iMac workstations and 27-inch displays.
- McEwen 108, a main floor multimedia design and video production lab with 20 Mac Pro Quad-Core tower workstations.
- McEwen 205, a second floor multimedia design and video production lab with 20 Mac Pro Quad-Core tower workstations.
- McEwen 207, a second floor writing and multimedia design lab with 19 iMac workstations and 21.5-inch displays.
- McEwen 209, a second floor writing and multimedia design lab with 19 iMac workstations and 27-inch displays.

All classrooms and labs are equipped with a teacher's station, HD video projector and screen, and control unit to provide faculty with audio and video technologies. In addition, McEwen 002 and 108 each have multiple wall-mounted 42-inch flat screen monitors. Students gain access around the clock with their electronic student ID cards.

The School uses every opportunity in McEwen to display and promote examples of excellent media and to promote the achievements of faculty, students and alumni in a variety of attractive displays. In the lobby, visitors can watch a brief video introduction to the School before walking to their destinations. At other times, the entrance video alternates among CNN, Fox and MSNBC programming. Other displays and hallway walls provide glimpses of

internship options, introductions to alumni and distinguished visitors, student work, examples of excellent photojournalism and information on special activities.

The M.A. in Interactive Media (iMedia) program is located in the heart of campus, on the second floor of historic Powell Building, just upstairs from the president's office. The school gained use of the space in 2009. The facilities consist of a classroom, a digital media lab, five editing suites, a student commons area, a program office and offices for 11 faculty and staff members who work with iMedia students. The second floor of Powell also houses the Sport & Event Management Department, which became part of the School in 2010.

The Powell facilities include Room 213, a multimedia design, audio production, and video production lab equipped with 21 Mac Pro Quad-Core tower workstations. The lab is equipped with a shared desktop monitor between each computer workstation. Each edit suite – large enough to accommodate student teams -- contains a Mac Pro Quad-Core tower workstation with dual monitors. All iMedia computers are equipped with Adobe CS 5.5 Master Collection Design Premium titles plus Premiere Pro, After Effects, Audition, OnLocation, Encore and Contribute.

The School does not administer student media, but faculty and staff members serve as student media advisers. Elon Student Television (ESTV) has an office in McEwen that serves both the news and entertainment staffs. *The Pendulum* student newspaper is located across the street from McEwen, on the third floor of a new structure built to house a Barnes & Noble bookstore. The university yearbook, *Phi Psi Cli*, is also housed across the street from McEwen, along with Live Oak Communications, the School's student-run agency. Radio station WSOE-FM is located on the second floor of Moseley, the student center.

(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.

All computers are replaced by the university on a four-year rotation cycle. In survey responses, faculty members instead cited the value of a three-year computer replacement cycle to keep abreast of fast evolving technology and memory demands from ever-larger software. The surveyed faculty also saw a need for mobile devices to test websites and applications, the development of 3-D capability, better studio lighting and iPads for student checkout. In Fall 2010, the School presented the entire faculty with iPads, which many have used since to explore emerging applications and to prepare presentations.

For advanced students, a video editing suite with 13 edit bays is located on the lower floor. Each bay contains a Mac Pro Quad-Core tower workstation with dual monitors, speakers and VCR. A common area in the suite serves as a student lounge with a large flat-screen monitor for reviewing projects. The lower floor also houses a digital recording studio with shared studio space. One control room is equipped with a Digidesign 24-track control surface and Avid Pro Tools HD, and the other is equipped with a Digidesign 8-track control surface with Avid Pro Tools 9. A film screening room with theater-style seating for 71 people also is located on the lower floor. This room features HD projection with 7.1 surround sound. It is equipped with a Blu-ray DVD player.

McEwen is equipped with a modern HD production facility with a control room, two studios, engineering section, set storage wing with loading dock and student newsroom. Studio A contains a fixed set for student newscast *Phoenix14News*. Studio B is a large multi-purpose

space used for a variety of student programs such as *Elon Phoenix Weekly* (a sports magazine show airing weekly on ESPN2 in the state), *Win Stuff* (game show), *One on One Sports* (talk show) and *Newsbreakers* (sitcom).

In 2011, the School transitioned from standard-definition (NTSC) to high-definition, making it possible for students to shoot and edit entirely in HD using tapeless workflows for field and studio production. The School maintains a large inventory of video and film production equipment for free checkout to students. Students can reserve equipment or change an existing reservation through WebCheckout, the school's online equipment reservation system.

Television Services maintains 68 tapeless HD video camcorders. Students have access to 55 Sony NX70s and 13 Panasonic HMC-150s. All of these cameras record full HD video to Class 4 (or higher) SDHC memory cards. Each camera package comes equipped with a portable field case, battery, tripod and handheld or lavalier microphones. For extended checkouts, students can reserve additional batteries and/or a battery charger.

Students also have access to:

- 5 Nikon D80 DSLR still cameras.
- 13 Nikon D90 DSLR hybrid cameras (still image and HD video recording).
- 2 Nikon D300 DSLR hybrid cameras (still image and HD video recording).
- 28 Canon PowerShot G-series digital still cameras.
- 36 portable audio recorders.
- 8 single box-light kits.
- 6 basic multi-instrument light kits.
- 11 advanced multi-instrument light kits.
- Accessory items, including DSLR camera lenses, shotgun microphones and boom poles, portable audio mixers, portable video monitors, USB microphones, camera lights, grip equipment (sandbags, C-stands), portable jib, doorway dolly and track, and camera stabilizers (steadycam, car mounts).

A number of flat-screen HD video monitors are located in common areas for use by students and faculty. Each is equipped with cables for connecting a local Mac or Windows computer and is connected to the campus CATV system for viewing broadcast and cable programming. CATV is accessible in each office, lab and classroom in McEwen.

Every lab computer is equipped with Microsoft Office for Mac 2011 (MS Word for text editing, Excel for data management, and PowerPoint for presentation). A Mac or Windows version of Microsoft Office is provided free to all Elon faculty, staff and students. Lab computers are equipped with Adobe CS5.5 Design Premium (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash Catalyst, Flash Professional, Fireworks, Acrobat X Pro, Bridge, Device Central and Media Encoder). The video production labs and editing suites are equipped with Apple Final Cut Pro X, Motion 5 and Compressor 4 for video editing and motion graphics. The video editing bays also have Adobe Photoshop and After Effects. McEwen 002 is equipped with Avid Pro Tools 9 for audio editing and mixing. A lab also is equipped with Final Draft, Dramatica Pro and Movie Magic Screenwriter for broadcast or corporate scriptwriting, narrative screenwriting and film production classes.

Each full-time faculty member is issued a computer at the time of arrival. Faculty may choose Macintosh or PC, desktop or laptop. Faculty who teach lab courses are provided the same design or video editing software programs used in classes.

The iMedia program has an equipment room with 20 lockers, each containing a field production kit with a Canon EOS 7D DSLR Hybrid camera, tripod, shotgun mic and accessories. iMedia students also have access to WebCheckout to reserve items through Television Services. A card reader allows students unlimited access to the lab, edit suites and equipment room lockers.

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

The School has no reading room. The main campus Belk Library maintains a collection of communication journals related to journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, film and interactive media. All journals held by Belk, including more than 500 periodicals and newspapers, are accessible from the library home page

Belk Library subscribes to a number of interdisciplinary electronic databases that provide access to scholarly and popular: Academic Search Premiere (EBSCO), JSTOR, Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe, Project MUSE and ProQuest Research Library.

The library also subscribes to specialized databases available to Communications students. Basic Communication databases include Communication and Mass Media Complete, American Film Catalog, Film Index International, Reader's Guide Retrospective and Vanderbilt Television News Archive. Other useful databases include 19th Century U.S. Newspaper Archive, AAASS Newsnet Archive, Access World News, Accessible Archives, Early American Newspapers, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), Library Press Display, NewsBank Retrospective, Newspaper Source Plus, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, Roper Center and The Times of London Digital Archive.

Students and faculty have broad access to library materials. All online databases, journals, newspapers and e-books are available across campus and in the residence halls via both wired and wireless networks. Off-campus access is available via proxy server. The electronic course reserves system allows student access to class reserves via their Blackboard portal.

Belk Library is open and staffed with at least one reference librarian 111 hours per week during the academic year and offers 24-hour study space and computer access Sundays through Thursdays.

Faculty members say they are encouraged to request book or other media titles not in the library's inventory and that their requests are invariably honored.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

The graduate program is housed completely in facilities separate from those of the rest of the School and adequate for the number of students and faculty involved. Facilities for the graduate program include offices for the graduate program director, support staff, and faculty members who teach primarily in the program. A lab equipped with 21 student workstations is used for the skills classes; a traditional classroom, seating twice as many students, is used for the conceptual courses. Five editing bays and a commons area – where students can talk or work between classes -- line the main hallway. Faculty, staff and students in the program confirm that the facilities and equipment are up-to-date and accessible. Cutting-edge software is installed and updated as needed.

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.

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

Evidence:

Faculty vitae

Unit records, brochures and publications of public service activities related to its mission and strategic plan

Alumni newsletters, surveys, reunions and other activities

Travel and other support for faculty involvement in academic and professional organizations

Information about courses and services available to professionals and the 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's Imagining the Internet Center is a cutting-edge example of innovative work that focuses on the past, present and future of the Internet. Its Internet Predictions project website includes thousands of pages of video and predictions dating back to the '90s. The center's director has partnered with the Pew Internet & American Life Project director on a book series about the future of the Internet. Students are involved in the center's work, including attending Internet governance and policy forums around the world.

The School created two publications for national distribution to schools of journalism and mass communication. One, for the Accrediting Council, came after the School's accreditation in 2005-06. It offered guidance on the assessment standard, direct and indirect measures and how to implement them. In 2008, for ASJMC, the School produced "Diversity Revisited: Good Ideas for Your Diversity Plan."

The School's national advisory board is chaired by Brian Williams of NBC News, and its 25 members cross all the School's disciplines. Members come to campus once a semester to speak to classes and meet with faculty. The School is also a regular host for journalism association conferences, such as a regional SPJ gathering in 2012 and a Broadcast Education Association district conference in 2010.

- (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.

Most notably, the School houses the North Carolina Open Government Coalition and its educational arm, the Sunshine Center. The School organizes an annual statewide Sunshine Day focusing on open meetings and records. The School manages the coalition's website and a phone/email hotline for the public. The coalition raised \$250,000 for a matching grant from the Knight Foundation; the money resides in the Elon endowment. Four faculty members also received a grant to host a First Amendment Day on campus that included a variety of discussions and events, including the planting of a First Amendment tree.

- (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 and staff are deeply involved in a variety of organizations locally and nationally. The dean serves on the Accrediting Council and as president of ASJMC. Faculty participation includes serving on journal editorial boards, manuscript review, service on editorial boards, committee leadership within AEJMC, and countless presentations and speeches. A faculty member chaired the 2011 Pulitzer Prize jury for general nonfiction. Travel money is available to faculty for academic and professional association meetings.

- (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's internship program produces myriad connections within the local and North Carolina community. The highest number of intern placements is in North Carolina. The student media director, with help from a colleague and students, helped a local high school resurrect its student newspaper after it had been dormant for four years.

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

Elon's SPJ chapter has regular, sponsored workshops for high school journalism students. Faculty members have been involved in teaching workshops on reporting, writing and design. In 2010, the School sponsored a session on broadcast news basics for local high school students. The students produced their own news show. A faculty member regularly serves as a scholastic contest judge.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

Like the undergraduate program, the graduate program includes a “For the Public Good” course focused on service learning. Students in the graduate-level course travel each January to a location outside the U.S. (such as Costa Rica, Panama or Iceland) to complete interactive media projects for clients such as those serving adults with disabilities or working on environmental projects. Students and alumni describe the projects as a highlight of their learning experience. Four or five public-service projects are completed each winter by teams of graduate students. Some students also choose a non-profit client for their individual capstone project; the graduate director receives requests from agencies in the region to become clients.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Indicators:

- (a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council. (See 2. Curriculum and Instruction.)
- (b) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning.
- (c) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to gain feedback for improving curriculum and instruction.
- (d) The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.
- (e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and uses the data to improve curriculum and instruction.

Evidence:

A written statement on competencies

A written assessment plan

Alumni newsletters, surveys, reunions and other activities

Records on information collected from multiple measures of assessment and on the application of this information to course development and improvement of teaching

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 an excellent job of thoughtfully and systematically defining goals for student learning. As the self-study notes, “The Elon Eleven is the School’s distinctive way of expressing ACEJMC’s values and competencies.” Elon is no Johnny-come-lately to the assessment process. The undergraduate program long has been assessing learning outcomes. Indeed, ACEJMC was so impressed with The Elon Eleven at the time of the last accreditation review that it requested that the School produce a booklet about its assessment approach. The School has taken seriously the assessment of learning outcomes and has, through the years, approached the task carefully and innovatively. The School has assembled an impressive set of well-organized assessment materials—and has, year in and year out, diligently gathered information, analyzed it and acted upon it.

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

The program’s in-place written assessment plan is thorough and thoughtful. Data constantly are gathered and analyzed—and appropriate steps are taken to ensure student learning. The School has two direct assessment measures: a senior examination and aggregate internship evaluations. It uses three indirect measures: student surveys, student awards and an alumni survey. The School’s plan notes: “At its best, assessment has a transforming effect on education through the circular process of analyzing curriculum, instruction and student

learning—and then using those findings to improve future student learning. This process requires gathering information from multiple sources to analyze what students know, understand, and can do as a result of their educational experiences.”

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

The School clearly involves professionals and alumni in the assessment process. On the undergraduate level, internship evaluations are aggregately evaluated for program assessment. The School is aggressive in submitting student work to regional and national contests—and that work is evaluated by professionals. Members of the School’s national advisory board also provide constant feedback. Survey responses from alumni, the majority of whom are working professionals, also provide valuable feedback. There is ample evidence that the School processes input from its alumni and makes systematic efforts to, when appropriate, make programmatic—and curricular—adjustments in response.

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

As noted above, the School makes effective use of its national advisory board, just as it takes into consideration responses from alumni surveys and reviews the detailed evaluations of student performances by their internship supervisors.

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

The School justifiably takes great pride in the way it completes the loop in its assessment process. The self-study notes: “Programmatic change flows from many fountains—new initiatives at a university, the evolving interests of faculty and the arrival of new faculty, and a response to recognized shortcomings discovered through formal assessment of student learning.” The School points to five specific areas of programmatic improvement on the undergraduate level as a result of assessment: the decision to “deepen the academic experience” through a newly adopted curriculum in fall 2008 of four majors, with each having a culminating course, and, effective in fall 2011, the requirement that all students must complete a minor, double major or semester abroad “as a way of promoting academic depth;” the establishment of the *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* “to strengthen the emphasis on theory, research and numerical competency” (where the School’s students were clearly below the university’s mean); the strengthening of the required internship program, including the hiring of an internship director; the formation of a student agency in response to concern expressed by professionals “about the lack of extracurricular experiences on campus for corporate students;” and the beefing up of career services, including the appointment of an assistant director of career services.

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

- (a) The unit defines the goals for learning that professional graduate students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council.
- (b) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess graduate student learning and uses collected data to improve curriculum and instruction.

Evidence:

A written statement on competencies

A written assessment plan

Alumni newsletters, surveys, reunions and other activities

Records on information collected from multiple measures of assessment and on the application of this information to course development and improvement of teaching

Outcomes appropriate to a professional graduate program could include: a professional project, thesis or comprehensive exam that demonstrates that graduate students have developed analytical and critical thinking abilities appropriate to the profession

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit has not defined specific goals and competencies that graduate students must achieve; instead, it uses three key components from its mission statement to guide curriculum development and assessment: thinking strategically across media platforms, planning and creating interactive content, and managing digital information. The ACEJMC professional values and competencies (expressed through “The Elon Eleven”) are not explicitly integrated into assessment, according to the graduate director.

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

Although the program is new (less than three years old), an assessment plan has been drafted and implemented and has already been used to improve student learning. The plan includes three direct measures and two indirect measures. The graduate director and faculty acknowledge that the plan – especially the pre-test/ post-test component – needs more work. Yet the assessment process has already yielded positive changes in the curriculum. An example would be the use of Friday workshops (students are required to attend several each semester of their choosing) to shore up skill development in areas students have identified, such as video production. This change was made after exit interviews (an indirect measure) indicated that such workshops would be valuable.

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

COMPLIANCE

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

COMPLIANCE

**PART III: Summary by site visit team
(Undergraduate program)**

I) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

The program has several strengths:

- Focused mission and positive educational environment built upon mutual faculty-student respect and high expectations.
- Exemplary culture of collegiality and esprit de corps that permeates the faculty and staff.
- An admired dean whose personal and professional traits--and operating style--evoke an uncommonly high level of respect and loyalty from faculty and staff.
- Innovative, stable, effective and unselfish leadership *team* that sets the tone for the can-do spirit that envelops the program.
- Talented, hard-working faculty members who are dedicated to preparing students for communications positions and to be contributing members of society.
- Loyal faculty, staff and administrators who are admired across the campus for being engaged and positive university citizens.
- Impressive, articulate, enthusiastic and civil students who are proud of the education they receive and who appreciate the environment in which they live, work and study.
- Envable support—verbal and financial—from the central administration.
- Well-designed, well-kept, clean and airy facilities.
- Thoughtful assessment plan that ensures curricular nimbleness and programmatic evolution that has been cited as a model by ACEJMC.
- Broad-based scholarly and creative productivity by a faculty whose primary mission is teaching.

- Strong and caring academic advising by faculty, complemented by impressively dedicated staff-run internship and career services programs.

The program has some challenges:

- It needs to continue its efforts, with appropriate university support, to enhance its private fundraising, especially with the construction of a new building on the horizon.
- It needs to continue its efforts to increase university-generated financial support for its Communications Fellows (honors) program.
- It needs, as do many programs, to continue to wrestle with the effective and uniform integration of digital technology into the curriculum and with the teaching of software versus the teaching of its application.

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.

Three deficiencies were cited in the previous report.

- *Lack of student/ethnic diversity on campus and in the School.* At the time of the previous review, the School had an 8.4 percent minority student enrollment; today it stands at

12 percent. The Fall 2011 entering class is 17 percent minority. The School also has doubled its scholarship support for students of color since the last review.

- *Insufficient School-originated, regular communication with alumni.* At the time of the previous review, the School did not have a system of direct communication with its alumni, which was done centrally. Now, however, the School communicates with its alumni four times a year via an e-newsletter, which includes a dean's message, news and feature stories on students and alumni, and web and video links. The School claims 3,612 alumni, and Elon has e-mail addresses for 74 percent of them.
- *Structural weaknesses in the School's relationship with the student newspaper that result in a paper that is less professional and effective than it might be.* At the time of the previous review, the university viewed student media primarily as a vehicle for student participation, much like student clubs. Student media remain today under a campus-wide Media Board, but the School of Communications has created the position of coordinator of student media, which naturally has led to a much closer relationship and, in turn, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the quality of student media.

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 candid, thorough, contextual, clearly written, well-edited, well-organized, complete in virtually all respects and easy to navigate. In short, it was a model of completeness—and admirable succinctness. The administration and staff also were quick to respond to requests for information during the visit.

**PART III: Summary by site visit team
(Graduate program)**

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

The programs has several strengths:

- Dedicated facilities and coursework for graduate students; the master's program is not an "afterthought" or simply an add-on to the undergraduate programs.
- Energetic, qualified faculty, impressive facilities, up-to-date equipment and technology.
- A nimble, flexible curriculum.
- A strong built-in public-service component.
- Strong, systematic support for students in job placement after graduation.

The program has some challenges:

- It needs to shore up its focus on diversity as a priority in recruiting and creatively, effectively incorporate an awareness and understanding of diversity more broadly across the curriculum.
- It needs to develop well-defined *programmatic* learning objectives – explicitly incorporating the ACEJMC professional values and competencies beyond those implied in the mission statement -- to guide curriculum, assessment and strategic planning.

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.

See above in undergraduate program section.