APPENDIX PT. II-D

2020 Faculty-Staff Survey

2020 Hussman Faculty and Staff Pre-Accreditation/Program

Review Survey Results

Prepared by Institutional Research and Assessment

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Survey Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to gain feedback from faculty and staff about the Hussman School in preparation for review by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) and review of the school's graduate programs by the University.

Instrument

The survey contained 67 Likert-type questions in several areas about the Hussman School as a whole and about specific degree programs.

Hussman School areas included:
1. Culture
2. Communication
3. Diversity
4. Resources
5. Direction

Degree Programs included:
6. Undergraduate Program
7. Journalism Professional Master's Program
8. Strategic Communication Professional Master's Program
9. Online Master's Program in Digital Communication
10. Theory and Research Master's Program
11. Doctoral Program

The Likert-type questions were answered on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Somewhat agree, 5 = Strongly agree). Sections 4 and 5 also allowed respondents to answer, "Do not have adequate information to respond." These responses were treated as missing. All items were worded such that higher ratings indicated more favorable responses. Additionally, 12 open-ended questions invited respondents to share their ideas and suggestions about each area.

Both faculty and staff answered questions about the School as a whole (sections 1-5), but only faculty answered the questions about degree programs (sections 6-11). The final survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Administration

All 81 Hussman School faculty and staff were invited to participate via email on January 7, 2020. The contact list originated with the Hussman School. Reminder emails were sent on January 10, January 14, and January 28. There were 61 respondents for a response rate of 75

Summary of Survey Results

Respondents

Of the 61 respondents, about 51% (*n* = 31) were tenured or tenure-track faculty, 8% (*n* = 5) were fixed-term faculty, and 41% (*n* = 25) were staff. In the school ratings section that follows, analyses compared faculty (including both tenured/tenure-track and fixed-term) to staff.
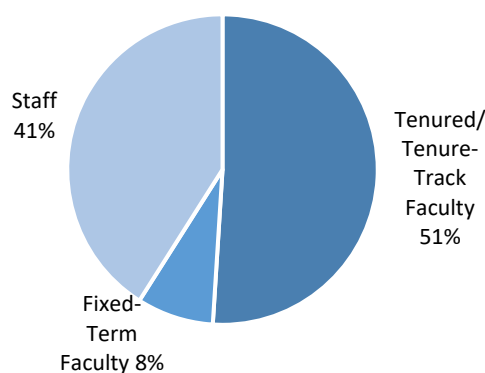

School Ratings

Response distributions and means for sections 1-5 and individual items are displayed in Table 1. Mean ratings for all respondents, for faculty only, and for staff only are displayed in the figure to the right. Means for all areas were positive, falling above the midpoint (3 = Neither agree nor disagree). The highest mean was for communication, whereas the lowest mean was for resources. For most items, the majority of respondents agreed (by endorsing somewhat agree or strongly agree).

Generally, there were not statistically significant differences between faculty ratings and staff ratings. Means for each area did not differ significantly, nor did means on individual items, except for one item in the communication section: "The School's website is a valuable resource for information about activities and accomplishments in the School." On average, staff agreed with this statement more than faculty. It should be noted that the small sample size limited statistical power for inferential comparisons between faculty and staff.
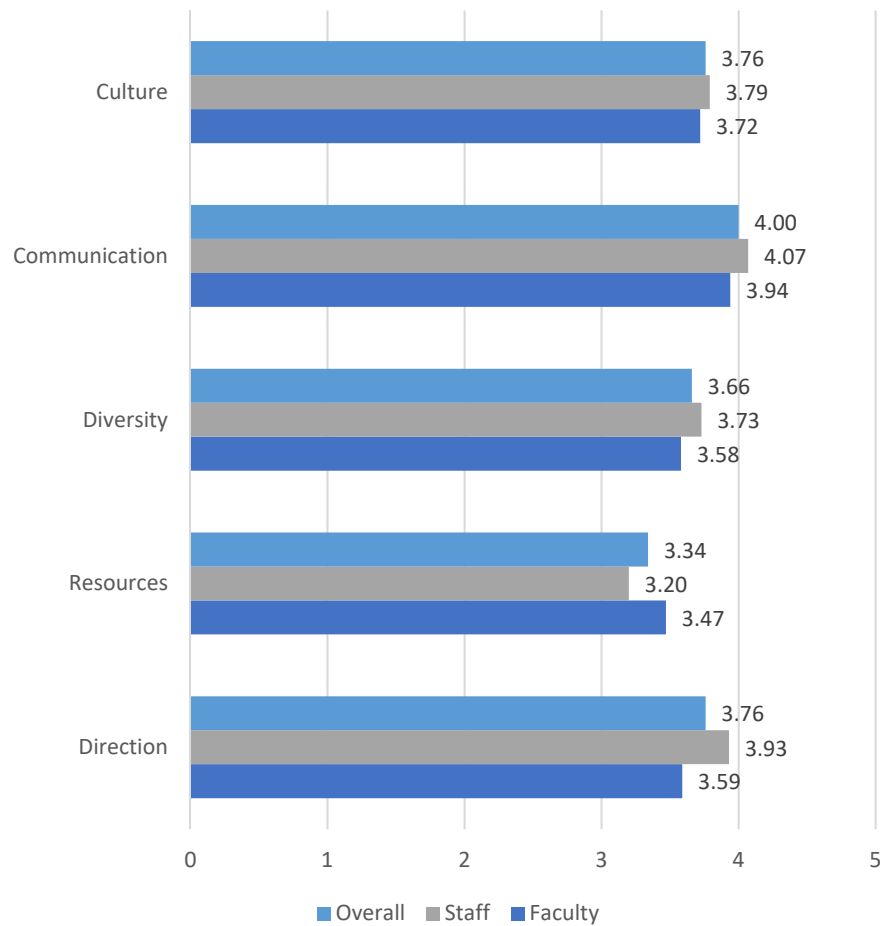
These results suggest that, relative to other areas, the School is excelling at communication. Resources and diversity are two areas on which improvement efforts might fruitfully be focused. Indeed, needs for resources and diversity were mentioned often in open-ended responses as well. Next, results for each area are discussed in more detail.

Culture

Results are supportive of a positive culture in the School, with more than half of faculty and staff agreeing with all statements but one. The exception was that less than half of staff believed there is effective communication between faculty and staff.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "There is a collegial and supportive culture among staff in the School."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "There is effective communication between faculty and staff in the school."

Themes from open-ended responses

Is there anything you would like to share about the culture and environment within the Hussman School?

- **Strengths:** Some respondents praised staff and faculty in general, said they liked working in the School, and found it to be a supportive place. A few respondents mentioned that they have seen improvements in the culture of the School.
- **Areas for improvement:** Multiple respondents mentioned that faculty, and especially staff, are over-worked. This is in part because hiring does not keep up with turnover and increased enrollment. Some said that culture would benefit from shared goals among administration, faculty, and staff. Some faculty are siloed, and staff feel undervalued by some members of faculty and administration. The competitive environment in the School may also be problematic for its culture.
- **Sample comments:**
    - Our staff are hardworking, accessible, and approachable, and overall I feel our faculty/staff climate is good. Our faculty is full of amazing mentors and colleagues that truly do care about the mission of our school and our students.
    - Our staff are the unsung heroes; unfortunately, their workload only grows more... it seems some people are doing the jobs are at least 2 people, which may contribute to turnover.
    - The school has made important strides in recent years in spreading knowledge within faculty of what each other is doing and accomplishing. Still it remains evident that faculty are mostly independent entities whose contributions to public service and teaching quality may or may not be fully recognized.
    - To increase effectiveness and entrepreneurial thinking, I wish there were a strong collegiality among administration - faculty - staff - with a vision and shared goals.

Communication

Results indicate that faculty and staff believe it is important for them to be informed about activities and accomplishments across the School, and they are particularly well-informed about the accomplishments of faculty and students. They are less informed about staff activities and accomplishments and policy, development, and other administrative activities and accomplishments. Additionally, communication from School leadership could be clearer and more thorough.

- Respondents tended to agree most with the several statements that it is important for them to be informed about activities and accomplishments in the school.
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "I am adequately informed about policy, development, and other administrative activities and accomplishments."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about how we could improve INTERNAL communication WITHIN the Hussman School?
- **Strengths:** Several respondents mentioned the Dean's Update as a good source of information and appreciate the work that goes into putting that together regularly.
- **Areas for improvement:** Respondents suggested that internal communication could be improved with more transparency from managers/administrators, more information provided about policy changes, and a centralized location for all news, policies, and a calendar of events.
- **Sample comments:**
    - The dean's update is really helpful. It consolidates news in one place instead of everything coming in as separate emails. It would be great to have a school-wide calendar so it was easy to see what's happening at any given time. Having policies, procedures, forms and important news posted in one spot online would be amazing.
    - Sometimes I find out about school initiatives after the fact. It would be good to know more about deliberations before they become policy.
    - All managers should be encouraged to be open and transparent with employees.

Is there anything you would like to share about how we could improve EXTERNAL communication ABOUT the Hussman School?
- **Strengths:** Many respondents provided very positive comments and believed that the School's external communication is well done.
- **Areas for improvement:** The main suggestion was that the website should be improved.
- **Sample comments:**
    - External communication is always well done. The communications department consistently produces high quality materials.

- To my eyes, the School's website is considerably lacking. We lack dynamic content, links to student work, and at the graduate level there is a lack of bios of students.
- Our website needs to be better: With more engaging content written as much for a student audience as well as alumni, faculty and donors.

Diversity

Results suggest that staff and faculty are aware of the School's efforts in this area, but are less sure that these efforts will pay off.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "I am aware of the school's initiatives to foster diversity and inclusion among faculty, staff and students."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "The School's current diversity and inclusion plan has improved diversity and inclusion within the curriculum."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about diversity and inclusion within the Hussman School?
- **Strengths:** Faculty and staff recognize and appreciate that there are efforts and initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion, such as speaker series and events.
- **Areas for improvement:** Respondents emphasized that following through on current efforts and integrating appreciation for diversity in the fundamental cultures and actions of the School is important. They suggested recruiting more diverse faculty, staff, and students, providing more training regarding discussing diversity and inclusion in all classes, and also training for faculty/staff to help them recognize and mitigate biases.
- **Sample comments:**
  - I feel that we have an intentional focus now on diversity and inclusion and appreciate that we are making strides toward this.
  - I would recommend the school hire a diversity and inclusion officer to lead initiatives in a strategic manner.
  - The Ida B. Wells initiative is a big step in the right direction. I would like to see more faculty of color within the school as well as more students of color.
  - Actively recruiting tenure-track minority faculty (and paying them what the market demands) would be a good step. Actively recruiting minority students already on campus would also help.

Resources

Resources were perceived to be greatest in terms of having faculty and staff to achieve pre-eminence in communication research and in the doctoral program. Professional master's programs and non-personnel resources were perceived as lacking.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "We have the faculty and staff necessary to take the doctoral program to national pre-eminence."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "We have the faculty and staff necessary to take the professional master's programs to national pre-eminence."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about the School's resources?
- **Strengths:** Many respondents mentioned the School's highly regarded faculty as a major strength.
- **Areas for improvement:** A need for more faculty and staff, improved grants personnel and infrastructure, and funding in general were given as factors that could improve resources.
- **Sample comments:**
    - We do not have enough faculty and staff to meet student needs… I think that we have high caliber staff and that the faculty are doing top-notch research just need more of them.
    - Our faculty and staff are wonderful, but we don't have enough faculty to serve all of our students, particularly when it comes to teaching ad/PR courses and filling out master's committees.
    - Recent faculty hires have been impressive. How those faculty are incorporated into the school -- and their expertise nurtured -- needs attention.

Direction

Encouragingly, more than half of respondents agreed with the direction items. Means, however, were generally lower than 4, suggesting that confidence in the School's direction could be higher.

- Other than the least-endorsed statement below, respondents agreed with the other statements about equally.
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "The School is receptive to change."
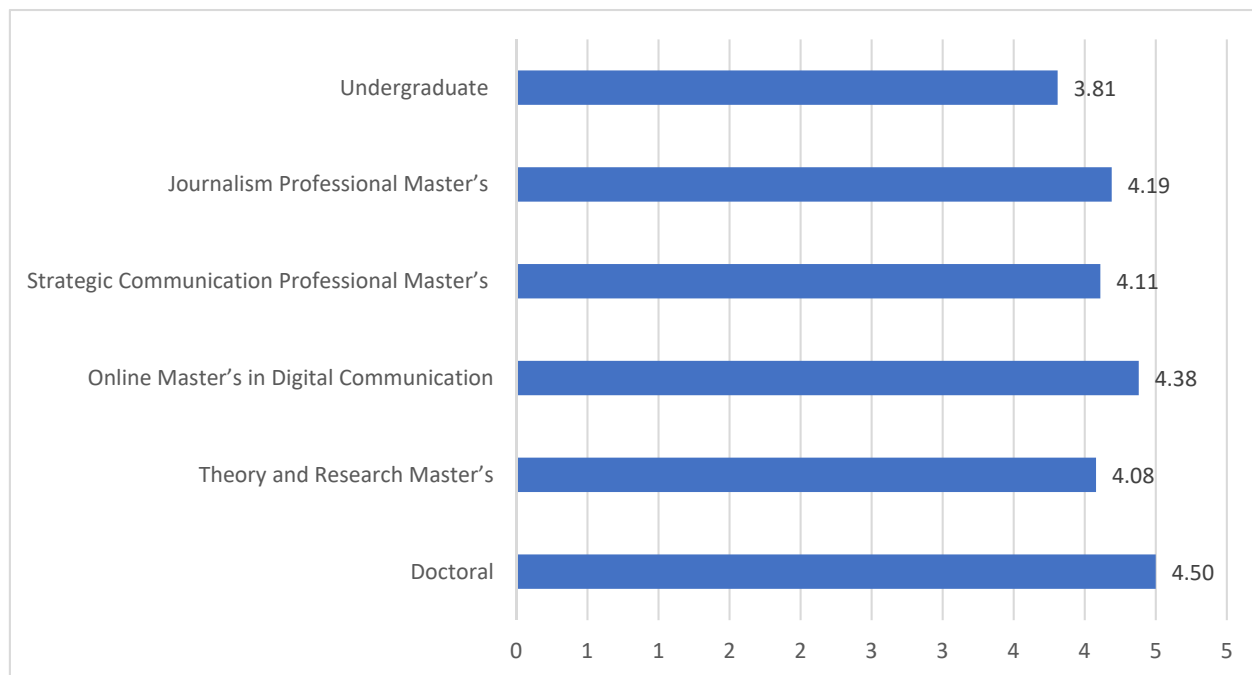
<u>**Themes from open-ended responses**</u>
Is there anything you would like to share about the strategic plan or the direction of the School?

- **Strengths:** Many respondents expressed support for the current strategic plan.
- **Areas for improvement:** They also expressed concern that it may be difficult to implement the strategic plan.
- **Sample comments:**
    - I think we are moving in the right direction but it's too early to say how the strategic plan will play out for the school.
    - I think the strategic plan is a compelling document and vision. It should guide hiring and curriculum. However, I think it often does not.
    - A strategic plan is only as effective as the culture of the employees and their buy-in. I'm not sure people are buying in. They are simply going along.

Degree Program Ratings

Response distributions and means for each degree program and the individual items are displayed in Table 2. Degree program means are displayed in the figure below. Means for all areas were positive, falling well above the midpoint (3 = Neither agree nor disagree). The doctoral program received the highest ratings and the undergraduate program received the lowest ratings. There was attrition as the survey progressed, either due to fatigue or reduced familiarity/knowledge about the programs.

Undergraduate	3.81
Journalism Professional Master's	4.19
Strategic Communication Professional Master's	4.11
Online Master's in Digital Communication	4.38
Theory and Research Master's	4.08
Doctoral	4.50

Undergraduate Program

Global and immersive programs and the student ambassadors program are perceived to be effective by faculty and staff. Undergraduate advising is an area of concern, with only 38.8% of respondents agreeing that the advising structure is effective.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "The current global and immersive programs structure is effective."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "The current undergraduate advising structure is effective."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about the undergraduate curriculum within the Hussman School?
- **Strengths:** Faculty and staff are praised for their effectiveness, particularly in the face of understaffing.
- **Areas for improvement:** One common theme was that growing enrollment places a strain on faculty and staff, including advising, student records and career services. Some

comments emphasized the need for opportunities to specialize, practice specializations, and be creative, as well as a need for formal evaluation of the current curriculum.

- **Sample comments:**
    - We have 2 great people in career services and they are doing great stuff. But, as enrollment continues to increase, they are stretched thin as well. And, we lack diversity in career services staff.
    - We need more Capstone courses. We are being asked to take more students in these courses than is ideal from a learning perspective. We seem to not have enough courses offered for the number of students who need to be served.
    - The implications of the curriculum change are not clear yet, so it should be a top priority to assess its success.

Journalism Professional Master's Program

Results suggest that faculty and staff are supportive of changing the program by reducing credit hours required and providing practicum/portfolio development experiences rather than the standard thesis.

- Respondents agreed most with the statements, "I believe that offering a new 30-credit MA journalism program with a 15-month footprint is an important change to make," and, "I believe that a new 30-credit hour MA journalism program would enable the School to attract and enroll more journalism applicants."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "I believe that the current journalism MA program is effective in producing graduates who are ready for the changing industry."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about the journalism professional master's program?
- **Strengths:** Respondent comments focused on areas for improvement.
- **Areas for improvement:** More than one respondent mentioned concern about faculty resources as they relate to deciding whether to implement a practicum experience. They also recommended that the credit-hour requirement be dropped to 30 hours to be competitive.
- **Sample comments:**
    - It's imperative to drop the 36-credit hour requirement to 30 hours to be competitive with peer institutions.

- Do we have the faculty resources to support the program? Do we need to add faculty to help ensure the practicum or portfolio experience would be the best way to go?

Strategic Communication Professional Master's Program

On average, respondents were supportive of changing the program by reducing credit hours required and providing practicum/portfolio development experiences.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "I believe that offering a new 30-credit MA strategic communication program with a 15-month footprint provides ample time to develop mastery in MA students."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "I believe that the current strategic communication program is effective in producing graduates who are ready for the changing industry."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about the strategic communication professional master's program?
- **Strengths:** The comments for this program were exclusively about areas that need improvement.
- **Areas for improvement:** More than one comment expressed interest in a practicum option and the possibility that it might free up faculty resources, and uncertainty about what the practicum would look like.
- **Sample comments:**
  - I strongly feel we need to shift to a practicum or portfolio development option (away from the thesis), as this would be more helpful for these students and would free up faculty resources.
  - Although the portfolio and/or practicum approach would reduce committee service, I would guess it still requires faculty to lead/facilitate/chair that element of the program for each student?

Online Master's in Digital Communication Program

Means for all statements were above 4, indicating support for the program itself, the GRE waiver policy, and replacing the thesis project with practicum or portfolio development experiences.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "I am supportive of the newly approved GRE waiver policy for MADC applicants."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "I believe that moving from a three-person committee thesis project to a practicum experience would better serve our online MADC students."

Themes from open-ended responses
Is there anything you would like to share about the online master's program in digital communication, which serves working professionals?
- **Strengths:** Respondents praised the program and students in a broad sense.
- **Areas for improvement:** A few respondents expressed support for more hands-on/practicum experience for students.
- **Sample comments:**
  - Great program! Great professional students!
  - I strongly believe the shift should be made away from a thesis project for these students to better benefit them and to free up faculty resources.

Theory and Research Master's Program

Results suggest that faculty and staff believe highly in the effectiveness of this program and oppose admitting students without master's degrees.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "I believe that the current theory and communication MA program is effective in producing graduates who will be successful in doctoral programs."
- Respondents agreed least with the statement, "I believe we should admit students without master's degrees directly into our doctoral program."

Themes from open-ended responses (note that there were only three open-ended responses)
Is there anything you would like to share about the theory and research master's program?

- **Strengths:** The caliber of student attracted and produced by the program were praised.
- **Areas for improvement:** None.
- **Sample comment:**
  - Our students in this program are fantastic! Many of them do become PhD students here, and I think we should continue this program. I would definitely consider a BA to PhD, but like having the structure we do now for the timebeing.

Doctoral Program

The doctoral program is viewed as effective and support of changes (e.g., the revised doctoral program core and addition of new electives) is high.

- Respondents agreed most with the statement, "The current doctoral program is effective in producing graduates who will land jobs as tenure-track assistant professors."
- Respondents agreed least with the statements, "The current doctoral program is effective in producing graduates who will be successful in research-related industry positions," and, "I have opportunities to teach doctoral students should I desire to do so."

Themes from open-ended responses (note that there were only four open-ended responses)
Is there anything you would like to share about the doctoral program?
- **Strengths:** Respondents mentioned that the doctoral program was strong and has been improving, producing successful graduates.
- **Areas for improvement:** Reducing funding uncertainty should be an area of focus.
- **Sample comment:**
  - The doctoral program has been strengthened in recent years with stronger and stronger students. But we need to figure out the best funding model for the program going forward.