

# **Report of Evaluation**

Undergraduate

2021–2022 Site Visits

Accrediting Council on Education  
in Journalism and Mass Communications

## Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

### Undergraduate program

2021–2022

Name of Institution: **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: **Kevin M. Guskiewicz. Chancellor**

Name of Unit: **Hussman School of Journalism and Media**

Name and Title of Administrator: **Susan King. Dean**

Date of 2021-2022 Accrediting Visit: **Oct. 10-13, 2021**

Date of the previous accrediting visit: **Feb. 8-11, 2015**

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: **Reaccreditation**

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: **Reaccreditation**

Recommendation by 2021-2022 Visiting Team: **Reaccreditation**

*Prepared and submitted by:*

#### **Team Chair**

Name and Title: **Peter Bhatia**

Organization/School: **Editor, Detroit Free Press**

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

#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: **Andy Alexander**

Organization/School: **Visiting Professional, E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University**

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

#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: **Marianne Barrett**

Organization/School: **Solheim Professor, Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University**

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

#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: **Del Galloway**

Organization/School: **Executive Vice President – Communications, Wells Fargo**

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

**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Earnest Perry**

Organization/School: **Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Missouri School of Journalism**

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

**Team Member**

Name and Title: **Amy Struthers**

Organization/School: **Professor Emerita, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

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

**All team members on site**

## PART I: General information

This general information section will be included in its entirety in the site team's report, and it must present the most current information available. Before the site visit, the unit should review its responses to the questions below and update them as necessary. The unit then should provide a copy of this updated section for each team member when they arrive on campus. A digital copy in **Word document format** of the updated responses also must be provided to the team chair to be included in the digital team report sent to the ACEJMC office.

In addition, if any significant changes not covered in this section have occurred since the original self-study report was submitted, the unit should describe and document those changes and present this new material to the team when members arrive.

**Name of Institution:** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Name of Unit:** Hussman School of Journalism and Media

**Year of Visit:** 2021 (rescheduled from 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic)

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

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

*If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:*

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

- Private
- Public
- Other (specify)

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

The act establishing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was passed by the state General Assembly in 1789 and can be found here: [docsouth.unc.edu/unc/unc01-08/unc01-08.html](https://docsouth.unc.edu/unc/unc01-08/unc01-08.html)

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

Yes  
 No

**If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit:** February 8 – 11, 2015

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

1958

**6. Provide the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.**

The mission of the school is to prepare students to ignite the public conversation in our state, the nation and the world, and to understand the role of communication in fostering democracy. We prepare students to become leaders in news, committed to informing communities and ready to invent modern communications and innovate new ways to engage audiences.

We prepare students to become skilled and ethical advocates for public and private sector causes, focused on reaching key audiences with persuasive messages that advance critical ideas. We prepare students to become leaders in marketing communications, able to position, brand and market ideas, policies and products through research, storytelling, design and business principles.

We prepare doctoral and master's students to conduct cutting-edge research that improves the health of citizens in our state, the nation and the world; shapes public debate over democracy, media and civic life; explores the impact and interaction of law and policy on free expression rights; contributes to our shared body of knowledge about psychological and social processes; and helps news and media organizations and firms better understand their audiences and customers.

*(Adopted Spring 2014)*

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

Semesters of 15 weeks  
Quarters of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
Summer sessions of 5 weeks  
Intersessions of 2 weeks

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

Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree  
 Ph.D. degree

**9. List the specific undergraduate degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. \*Indicate online degrees.**

B.A. in Media and Journalism

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)**

B.A. in Media and Journalism: 120 semester hours

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

1 credit hour per semester. As many as 3 credits during their time in the school.

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty Person in Charge

Advertising/Public Relations John Sweeney

Journalism Laura Ruel

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

# in undergraduate programs	# in graduate programs	# in professional programs	Total
19,845	9,313	2,483	31,641

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Undergraduate majors
Journalism	334
Advertising/Public Relations	419
Pre-major	250
Total	1,003

**15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Include a separate**

**list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)**

Course Title	Catalog Number	Class Section		Spring 2021		Fall 2021
Intro To Digital Storytelling	121	001		17		-
	121	002		16		18
	121	003		19		19
	121	004		-		18
	121	005		17		19
	121	006		18		17
	121	007		16		19
	121	008		20		16
	121	009		19		17
	121	010		17		19
	121	011		13		16
	121	012		18		11
	121	013		18		15
	121	014		18		16
Sports Xtra	129	001		19		17
Writing And Reporting	153	001		15		16
	153	002		-		18
	153	003		15		19
	153	004		20		18
	153	005		19		17
	153	006		16		16
	153	007		17		17
	153	008		19		17
	153	009		15		17
	153	010		17		18
	153	011		18		16
	153	012		18		18
	153	013		16		-
	153	014		-		14
News Editing	157	-		-		-
Foundations Of Photo	180	001		20		17
	180	002		-		18
	180	003		18		17
Foundations Of Graphic Design	182	001		19		17
	182	002		18		18
	182	003		19		16
Found Of Interactive Media	187	001		16		16
	187	002		17		18
	187	003		16		15
	187	004		-		-

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Audio Journalism	252	001		19		20
	252	002		19		19
	252	003		-		18
Public Affairs Reporting	253	002		17		18
Public Relations Writing	332	001		17		17
	332	002		20		17
	332	003		18		17
	332	004		18		16
	332	005		18		13
Presentation Design	334	001		-		19
	334	002		-		20
Feature Writing	356	001		20		20
	356	002		20		18
Opinion Writing	358	001		-		-
Advertising Creative	371	001		20		19
	371	002		20		15
	371	003		20		19
	371	004		20		17
	371	005		20		19
	371	006		-		20
Spcl Skills in Mass Comm	390	001		-		13
Tv Reporting and Producing	421	001		17		16
Radio And Podcasts	426	001		6		7
News Lab	463	001		18		18
Info Graphics	484	001		13		13
Intermediate Interactive Media	487	001		-		10
Photo, Light & Busi Techniques	489	001		9		9
Prod Tv News	522	001		17		7
Broadcast News & Prod Mgmt	523	-		-		-
Crisis Communication	533	001		18		16
Environmental & Science Tv	562	001		-		-
Data Driven Journalism	570	-		-		14
Photo Stories	580	001		10		-
Adv Doc Video Storytelling	582	001		-		16
	582	002		-		-
3d Design Studio	585	001		-		13
Motion Graphics	589	001		14		16
Media Hub	625	-		-		-
Business News Wire	630	-		-		-
Business Journalism Management	631	001		-		-
Social Marketing Campaigns	671	-		-		7
Ad Campaigns*	673	001		23		18
Magazine Design	683	001		-		14
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,045</b>		<b>1,181</b>



*\*Campaigns courses are exempt from the 20–1 ratio according to ACEJMC rules.*

**16. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2020–2021 academic year: \$10,614,533**

**Give percentage increase or decrease in three years: 17.5%\***

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$4,637,814**

*\*Significant increase attributed to \$1.8 million projected one-time equipment purchases for Curtis Media Center. Removing that one-time expenditure would result in a 2.3% decrease in expenditures. That decrease is attributed to suspended travel and hiring lags.*

**17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit in Fall 2021. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.**

#### **Full Professors**

- Pat Davison
- Francesca Dillman Carpentier, W. Horace Carter Distinguished Professor
- Rhonda Gibson
- Heidi Hennink-Kaminski, Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Hugh Morton Distinguished Professor
- Susan King, Dean, John Thomas Kerr Distinguished Professor
- Daniel Kreiss, Edgar Thomas Cato Distinguished Professor
- Tom Linden, Director - M.A. Program, Glaxo Wellcome Distinguished Professor of Medical Journalism
- Seth Noar, James Howard and Hallie McLean Parker Distinguished Professor
- Terence Oliver, Walter Spearman Distinguished Professor
- John Sweeney, Distinguished Professor in Sports Communication, Director – Advertising/Public Relations
- Charlie Tuggle, Senior Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, John H. Stembler Jr. Distinguished Professor

#### **Associate Professors**

- Deb Aikat
- Lucinda Austin, Director – Ph.D. Program
- Spencer Barnes
- Andy Bechtel, Director – M.A.D.C. Program
- Lois Boynton
- Nori Comello
- Paul Cuadros
- Joe Czabovsky
- Tori Ekstrand, Caroline H. and Thomas S. Royster Distinguished Professor of Graduate Education
- Deen Freelon
- Barbara Friedman
- Chad Heartwood
- Joe Bob Hester

- Steven King
- Allison Lazard, Reese Felts Distinguished Scholar
- Suman Lee
- Trevy McDonald, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Julian Scheer Term Professor
- Amanda Reid
- Laura Ruel, Director – Journalism, James H. Shumaker Term Professor
- Ryan Thornburg

**Assistant Professors**

- Shannon McGregor
- Erin Siegal McIntyre
- Lee McGuigan
- Lisa Villamil
- Eva Zhao

**Full-time Fixed Term Faculty**

- Julie Dixon
- Valerie Fields
- Livis Freeman
- Gary Kayye
- Dana McMahan
- Lynn Owens
- Kate Sheppard

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2021. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2021.**

**Fall 2021**

- Allen Bosworth
- Steve Bouser
- Erik Brooks\*
- Josh Carlton
- Alicia Carter
- Marshale Carter
- Meredith Collins\*
- Tim Crothers
- Peter Doyle
- Deborah Dwyer\*
- Melissa Eggleston
- David Francis
- Melissa Eggleston
- Scott Geier
- Tamara Gibbs
- Hailey Grace\*
- Angelia Herrin
- Adam Hochberg

- Dane Huffman
- Heesoo Jang\*
- Lou Killefer
- Katie King
- Chris Kirkman
- Sophia Kiser\*
- Naz Knudsen
- Autumn Linford\*
- Gary McElroy
- Lee Meredith
- Maggie Moffett
- Andrea Nenque\*
- Naomi Newman
- Kriste Patrow\*
- Contia' Prince\*
- Tamara Rice
- Sheyenne Rodriguez
- John Robinson
- Andrew Sipes
- Heather Stevenson
- Stephen Stock
- Mark Sutter
- Teresa Tackett\*
- Najuma Thorpe
- Jeannette Tyson
- Matt White

*\*Graduate student*

### **Spring 2021**

- Allen Bosworth
- Steve Bouser
- Teagan Bratcher\*
- Mark Briggs
- Marshale Carter
- Tim Crothers
- Peter Doyle
- Davis Francis
- Scott Geier
- Caroline Graybeal
- Angelia Herrin
- Lou Killefer
- Chris Kirkman
- Naz Knudsen
- Alex Kresovich\*
- Autumn Linford\*
- Mike MacMillan
- Carolyn Martin

- Gary McElroy
- Lee Meredith
- Yan Qu\*
- Tamara Rice
- Andrew Sipes
- Kelly Smith
- Heather Stevenson
- Mark Sutter
- Jacob Thompson\*
- Caroline Tidwell
- Matt White
- Joseph Williams
- Kelly Williamson

\*Graduate student

**19. Schools on the semester system:**

**For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 72 or more semester hours outside of journalism and mass communications.**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Total MEJO Graduates</b>	<b>Number who earned 72 or more semester hours outside MEJO</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2020 - 2021	441	441	100%
2019 - 2020	408	408	100%

## PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The University of North Carolina is the nation's first public university -- admitting its first class in 1793. Journalism was first taught in the Department of English in 1909. A Department of Journalism was formed in 1924 and became a school in 1950. A master's program was added in 1955 and Ph.D. program in 1965. Public relations courses followed in the '80s as did a PR specialization and separate sequence later that decade.

The program has been accredited by ACEJMC since 1958.

In 1990, the school was renamed the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. When the university's Department of Radio, Television and Motion Pictures was eliminated in 1993, the school added broadcast media (and absorbed that faculty).

In 2015, the school changed its name to the School of Media and Journalism to better reflect the times.

Two major gifts have profoundly helped the school in recent years and, it says, its strategic ambitions and priorities.

- One, \$10 million from Don Curtis (class of '62) is supporting the under-construction Curtis Media Center, a new space adjacent to the school's home. It will house broadcast and podcasting studios and collaborative spaces designed to enhance learning.
- The other more well-known and recently controversial donation is an unrestricted \$25 million naming gift from newspaper owner and editor Walter Hussman '68 and his family in 2019. The school touts the Hussman gift as providing independence for the school from the vagaries of state funding and as an investment in faculty and staff. A key tenet of the Hussman gift, which was negotiated by the University's Office of Development, is that the journalism values that he prints in all his papers be etched in granite at the school. For the moment, they are posted on wallpaper in the lobby of Carroll Hall, which houses the UNC Hussman School.

Here are those values:

*Impartiality means reporting, editing, and delivering the news honestly, fairly, objectively, and without personal opinion or bias.*

*Credibility is the greatest asset of any news medium, and impartiality is the greatest source of credibility.*

*To provide the most complete report, a news organization must not just cover the news, but uncover it. It must follow the story wherever it leads, regardless of any preconceived ideas on what might be most newsworthy.*

*The pursuit of truth is a noble goal of journalism. But the truth is not always apparent or known immediately. Journalists' role is therefore not to determine what they believe at that time to be the truth and reveal only that to their readers, but rather to report as completely and impartially as possible all verifiable facts so that readers can, based on their own knowledge and experience, determine what they believe to be the truth.*

*When a newspaper delivers both news and opinions, the impartiality and credibility of the news organization can be questioned. To minimize this as much as possible there needs to be a sharp and clear distinction between news and opinion, both to those providing and consuming the news.*

While these values will never go out of style to some degree, they have caused controversy in a time of widespread disinformation and outright lying by national leaders, and during which journalism has undergone soul-searching about its responsibility to more aggressively challenge the falsehoods permeating our society. In short, many find Walter Hussman's manifesto naïve or exemplary of a time now past. Some faculty see it as giving Walter Hussman undue influence in the school.

It is important to note that the Hussman gift and change in the name of the school to the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media, while announced suddenly and with no advance warning due to the confidentiality required by the university (causing some consternation about transparency with the faculty), met with little initial blowback. Donor agreements are rarely public (this one was leaked to the Raleigh News & Observer later) and the dean says she saw no need to tell the faculty and school that Walter Hussman's donation came without strings as far as hiring and setting policy at the school. This was especially true, she said, since he was already a million-dollar donor to the school with a professorship in his name.

More recently, the university and school have found themselves embroiled in controversies around politics and race, most famously the Nikole Hannah-Jones tenure case from summer of 2021. At a time when most institutions were wrestling with COVID and the return to campus (UNC had its own problems there), the UNC Hussman School found itself in the center of a national controversy. To recap, the dean had long been recruiting Hannah-Jones, author of the New York Times' 1619 project, which reframed early American history in a context dating to the first slaves arriving on our shores, for the school's Knight Chair in Race and Investigative Journalism. All previous holders of the Knight Chair at the school had been granted tenure and Hannah-Jones participated in a tenure review process that led to the UNC Hussman School's Promotion and Tenure committee voting on Sept. 25, 2020 to recommend tenure, the UNC Hussman School's full professors voting on Sept. 30 to recommend tenure, the dean endorsing the recommendations in her Oct. 9, 2020 tenure recommendation letter to the university's provost, and the university's Appointments, Promotion and Tenure committee voting on Nov. 4, 2020 to recommend tenure. Having been endorsed at all successive levels of faculty review, her tenure package was then in the hands of the university's provost to send to the UNC Board of Trustees, the campus governing board appointed by the state's legislature, for a final decision.

Hannah-Jones' tenure package was on track to be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at its November 2020 meeting, and Hannah-Jones and the school had planned for her to begin teaching in January 2021. But prior to that November meeting, the provost informed the dean that Hannah-Jones' tenure package was to be held over to the January 2021 Board of Trustees meeting along with all of the tenure packages that were originally planned to be taken up by the board in November. Then, following the January 2021 meeting, the provost informed the dean that the board had "set aside" Hannah-Jones' package. The provost proposed a five-year fixed-term appointment to bypass the board's "reluctance" to grant tenure for Hannah-Jones. The dean understood this at the time to be a bold move by university leadership to salvage the appointment. Hannah-Jones accepted the university's fixed-term offer. On the heels of the April 2021 announcement of the hire, it became known that the Board of Trustees had neither approved nor reviewed the tenure package of Hannah-Jones, a UNC J-school master's alumna. She subsequently said she would not accept the position without the tenure previous Knight Chairs at the school had received.

Walter Hussman himself had indicated to the trustees his concern with the appointment of Hannah-Jones, citing the nature of the Pulitzer prize-winning 1619 project. He later denied trying to influence any decision by the trustees, but there is no doubt that he meddled in the process, according to emails made available to the site team. The combination of Walter Hussman's influence and the trustees' unwillingness to give Hannah-Jones tenure blew up quickly into a national controversy about Hannah-Jones being treated as a second-class citizen as well as further concerns about Walter Hussman's influence on the school.

Ultimately, the university's board of trustees did vote 9-4 on June 30, 2021 at a protest-filled meeting to grant tenure to Hannah-Jones. A few days later she said she would not be coming to UNC and was accepting a similar Knight chair she had negotiated at Howard University.

It is important to note that Hannah-Jones was effusive in her praise for the dean throughout the process and handled the situation with substantial grace. The faculty at UNC Hussman reacted with anger with a majority signing a letter stating the trustees' action -- or more accurately, delay of action -- smacked of racism.

Today, it is an understatement to say a cloud still hangs over the UNC Hussman School and the university as a result of the controversy. Faculty members called the experience humbling. Some students, while focused on their studies, find it a stressful distraction.

Nonetheless, prominent alumni of the school praise the dean for fighting for the school's independence. The work to bring Hannah-Jones to campus "if anything speaks to (the dean's) vision," one said. "(She) walked a tightrope of supporting the independence of the school while at the same time being thrown under the bus by the university," another said.

The long-term impact of the controversy remains to be seen. A prominent Black chemist recruited to the university said she wasn't coming amid the controversy. Faculty today worry about the ability to recruit students and faculty of color to Chapel Hill.

Hannah-Jones, the dean, the school and the university were caught up in the national debate over race and, arguably, the increasing politicization of higher education. 1619 has become part of the critical race theory debate. Politicization appears to be particularly true in North Carolina where recent appointees are thought to be less willing to accept longstanding practices of academic freedom and faculty governance and where recent reports suggest the UNC chancellor's job was endangered (subsequently denied by trustees) because of his support for Hannah-Jones.

Quoting from the dean's August 24, 2021 cover memo to the site team here:

"I expect that the response to the pandemic elevated the cynicism of those who were already uncomfortable with the university's leadership and the frayed relationship between UNC-Chapel Hill and the governing bodies of the university. The UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees is appointed by the UNC System Board of Governors, which is appointed by the North Carolina state legislature. Currently, the Republican party dominates the legislature. When Roy Cooper, a Democrat, was elected to his first term as the state's governor in 2016, the legislature voted post-election and prior to inauguration to remove a governor's ability to nominate any Board of Trustees members.

"The 2020 election increased the Republican margin in the state legislature and also turned it more conservative. Like many public universities, the governance system is not something we as a campus

can change. The strained relations between the university and its governing bodies is expected to continue for some time and has elevated the stakes around the university's present administration ... .”

Speaking of COVID, UNC has had problems there as well. Quoting the dean's cover memo again:

“A false start in Fall of 2020 forced UNC to send thousands of students home within two weeks of opening after clusters of the virus erupted on campus. That embarrassed many faculty members, who felt university leadership had not made enough preparations to warrant the return to campus for a Fall 2020. Faculty coined the phrase “toxic positivity” to describe the public relations/communications from UNC.

“Despite the setbacks and large-scale frustration, faculty within our school successfully supported students who were dealing with Zoom life and a new set of stressors that came with the remote college experience.”

Walter Hussman's role in the Hannah-Jones situation has galvanized faculty criticism and anger about his gift and influence at the school, especially among journalism professors. Many say the gift should be returned. The dean remains steadfast in the aftermath of the controversies. She notes the dean's job is to bring in resources, at which she has been resoundingly successful.

The provost told the site team that a key part of accepting donations is “properly socializing” the gift to the faculty. “The fallout (on Hussman) resembles what we are seeing.”

The dean, who has announced she is stepping down, says she has given everything she has over her decade at the school. “Until I'm out of here, I'll do everything I can to bring the school together.” No doubt the intensity of the current times has been exacerbated by COVID and all its ramifications. But, as another put it, a “culture of complaint” has grown at the school. Faculties are a family, a big dysfunctional family, one faculty member said, “and we have to work together to fix the dysfunction.”

An interim dean was named in early November 2021. She will begin in January 2022.

While the role of accreditation includes leadership and diversity issues that this case raises so emphatically, the site team also notes that much of the situation discussed here occurred during a small slice of the six-year (seven, because of COVID) review period and goes beyond our responsibility as accreditors dedicated to making sure the students of the UNC Hussman School are being well-served. There is little doubt of the quality of education UNC Hussman students are receiving as measured by numerous indicators, not the least of which are recent dominance of the Hearst awards, high placement rates and assessment indicators.

Yet, the school faces significant challenges with its dean, senior associate dean for undergraduate studies, provost and others returning soon to the faculty. It is not an overstatement to say the university and the school face major challenges that could be seen as a microcosm of some of the issues facing higher education. These include the influence of donors, the overt intrusion of politics into public universities, and, of course, issues around diversity and inclusion.

As noted, UNC the institution (as compared to the school) has had to deal with all three (there was a controversy over a Confederate statue before the Hannah-Jones situation) and, it can be said it is widely viewed as having made a mess of it.



While the UNC Hussman School retains an important role in preparing the next generation of journalists and practitioners, the new dean will face extraordinary challenges internally in the school and university, and externally. One note of concern related to the above discussions: A member of the Board of Trustees will be for the first time on the search committee for the new dean.

As the site team left campus, a new controversy with Walter Hussman was brewing. He was coming to visit and was hoping to meet with the faculty. The school did a survey of faculty to ask how they would like to engage with Walter Hussman. Most responding said they were interested in an “honest dialogue with the goals of clarification and mutual understanding.” As of this writing, the meeting was going forward, but off campus, just with five faculty members, who planned to share the survey with him. As for complaints about transparency the dean had talked about the coming Hussman meeting twice in the weekly newsletters she sends to the faculty and staff and in faculty and staff meetings

Finally, it is important to separate the school from the university and trustees in the controversy over Hannah-Jones. The school and its administration had embraced and championed her hiring and wanted her at UNC. The delays occurred at higher levels.

#### **Unit performance with regard to indicators:**

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

The mission statement (with a particularly strong opening clause):

*The mission of the school is to prepare students to ignite the public conversation in our state, the nation and the world, and to understand the role of communication in fostering democracy. We prepare students to become leaders in news, committed to informing communities and ready to invent modern communications and innovate new ways to engage audiences.*

*We prepare students to become skilled and ethical advocates for public and private sector causes, focused on reaching key audiences with persuasive messages that advance critical ideas.*

*We prepare students to become leaders in marketing communications, able to position, brand and market ideas, policies and products through research, storytelling, design and business principles.*

*We prepare doctoral and master’s students to conduct cutting-edge research that improves the health of citizens in our state, the nation and the world; shapes public debate over democracy, media and civic life; explores the impact and interaction of law and policy on free expression rights; contributes to our shared body of knowledge about psychological and social processes; and helps news and media organizations and firms better understand their audiences and customers.*

The school operated on a strategic plan, titled *A Path Forward*, from 2013-2018. During that time, the undergraduate curriculum was revised, capstone classes were established, and administrative changes in leadership were implemented. In early 2018 work began on a new strategic plan to guide the school’s next five years. Listening sessions were followed by a day-and-a-half retreat in August 2018. The retreat resulted in follow-up committees throughout Fall 2018 that considered undergraduate curriculum, M.A. program changes and the direction of faculty scholarship.

*Envisioning Tomorrow*, a new strategic plan, was finalized with a school vote in August 2019.

The plan reflects input from the faculty and staff, as well as insights from alumni, members of the school's Board of Advisers and student leaders. The plan includes a unique structure that moves through a continuum of overarching principles, strategic priorities, curricular competencies and major initiatives. Task forces that represent the plan's four intersecting areas of initiative – Public Life, Healthy Communities, Storytelling Innovations and Audience Analysis – continue to work as the school moves forward on classes and curricula. It is a work in progress at this time, as COVID has slowed its implementation. But school leaders expect significant progress within two years.

As the school put it in the self-study: A strategic plan is not the end of a school's vision but more a beginning.

The database posting was updated in 2020.

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

Faculty governance is a point of contention with many members of the faculty who, basically, say: "What faculty governance?" Part of this stems from a relatively ad hoc committee system that can change as leadership wishes. A committee has been formed to create formal bylaws that will help govern a standing committee system. (The university's extensive faculty handbook has been the de facto replacement for bylaws.)

The school has operated for 71 years without bylaws.

Faculty and students have voiced their frustration, and at times anger, at school administrators for their perceived lack of transparency. In response to a question about the school's current and aspirational shared governance, a faculty member responded, "Currently, there isn't much shared governance. Looking forward, we have a big opportunity." In retrospect, some faculty have suggested that had there been more open, transparent and collaborative communication, expectations could have been managed and the recent controversy less explosive. Recent events have eroded trust in school administrators and fed suspicion among some faculty about the university administration's intent related to shared governance and commitment to address racial issues.

Still, recent job descriptions for open lines were written by the faculty and approved by the dean. The dean says she has been reticent to do other than accept hiring recommendations from the faculty.

Among other things, the handbook specifies the role of administration and faculty governance, the expectations for faculty, academic freedom, and personnel policies, including appointment and promotion and tenure guidelines.

At a university level, an elected Faculty Council legislates on behalf of the faculty and faculty committees. Currently, a UNC Hussman School faculty member serves on the Faculty Council and another serves on the Faculty Executive Committee. As described in the university handbook: "While many decisions about academic policy are made at the campus or system even through the structures outlined above [in the handbook], much of the work of faculty governance happens locally, within the

schools and departments, all of which have their own policies, guidelines and standards, and internal committees.”

The UNC Hussman School Faculty Handbook, last updated in September 2019 to reflect the naming of the school, provides guidance for faculty regarding policies, procedures and governance. The school’s handbook articulates the mission of the school, its internal structure and policies, procedures for conducting faculty searches, appointment and reappointment, and promotion and tenure for tenure-track and fixed-term faculty. In addition, the UNC Hussman School’s handbook provides guidance regarding faculty mentoring, workload and buyout policies, and research assignments.

The faculty typically meets nine times an academic year.

**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.**

As the above narrative indicates, the dean has had a rocky road at times, particularly driven by recent events. The dean is an engaging, strong personality who says what she thinks and, as noted, has fought passionately for the school’s ongoing independence. She takes pride that a delayed 2020 commencement exercise on the day the site team arrived had 247 graduates returning to campus for the ceremonies. There is a vocal minority of the faculty that is vehemently opposed to the dean, for a variety of perceived reasons: pay and teaching inequities, lack of commitment to diversity, unwillingness to be more transparent about how and why decisions are made. The dean acknowledges the school culture is frayed right now. University colleagues and members of the school’s advisory board were supportive of both UNC Hussman and the dean.

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

The dean is appointed by the chancellor and the provost after a search committee narrows the applicants and presents a slate of candidates. The university’s Board of Trustees and the UNC System’s Board of Governors must also sign off on the selection of the dean. The dean is appointed for five years.

Annual reviews are conducted by the provost and a university committee conducts formal five-year reviews in the fourth year of the dean’s term. The current dean has served under three provosts and three different sets of review criteria.

For five-year reviews, the provost appoints another sitting dean to chair the review and an email is sent to the entire university community, soliciting input on the performance of the dean. The provost’s committee consults with faculty and staff members in the school, as well as with students and outside constituents. The current dean is finishing her second five-year term.

Inside the school, the dean appoints faculty administrators and hires non-faculty direct reports. All non-faculty direct reports are reviewed by the dean annually within a required university evaluation system.

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

Faculty members may use the Ombuds Office, Equal Opportunity/ADA Office and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the Faculty Hearings Committee and the Faculty Grievance Committee for complaints. More often, faculty members, depending on the nature of the issue, may choose to consult with the dean; senior associate dean of undergraduate studies; senior associate dean of graduate studies; the director of diversity, equity and inclusion; the school's human resources consultant, or a member of the dean's cabinet.

Student concerns are typically related to grades and course registration. Students are encouraged to discuss course grade concerns with the individual faculty member, who may make changes to the final grade until the last day of the following term. Students may request a review of grade decisions by the school's administrative board should the discussion with the individual faculty member not resolve the issue. The university has grade appeal procedures.

Staff members are encouraged to work with their direct supervisors when issues arise. However, the school's human resources consultant is always available for initial or additional guidance, and the Ombuds Office, Equal Opportunity/ADA Office and Office of Diversity and Inclusion are resources as well.

Any issues that cannot be resolved within the school's constructs are handled at the university level.

#### **SUMMARY:**

If ACEJMC's charge was to accredit boards of trustees and senior university administrators, this would be a clear non-compliance. With full acknowledgment of the recent crises and loud discontent of a minority of faculty members who have issues with the dean's style and perceived lack of transparency, the fact is the UNC Hussman School is a successful enterprise, staffed with leaders and teachers committed to their students and supported by facts ranging from Hearst award dominance to high graduation and retention rates, and high placement rates of students. There are new challenges ahead with the search for a new dean getting under way.

#### **Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:**

#### **COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a). The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution.**

The UNC Hussman School offers two undergraduate areas of study – Journalism and Advertising/Public Relations – and students in each need a minimum of 120 credit hours to graduate. Of that total, students must complete a minimum of 39 credit hours within the unit.

The self-study, as initially submitted, indicated that all students must achieve at least 72 hours outside of the unit’s curriculum. Since that initial submission, however, the 72-hour requirement has been replaced with a *recommendation* of 72-to-81 hours outside the unit’s curriculum. The change took effect for students entering the School for the Fall 2021 semester. In the two academic years preceding the site visit, 100 percent of graduating students had met the 72-credit hour requirement.

Two other noteworthy curriculum changes have taken place since the initial submission of the self-study. First, students must earn a grade of at least a “C” (as opposed to the previous “C-“) for courses counting toward the required 39 credit hours within the unit. Second, the unit eliminated a requirement that at least nine of the “outside” 72-81 credit hours must be for courses in one subject area.

Overall, the unit’s curriculum has undergone significant structural revisions since the 2014-15 ACEJMC Site Team Report. Eight curriculum sequences were replaced with the two new areas of study (Journalism and Advertising/Public Relations). Each area of study has its own director. Students are now required to take a capstone class; no such requirement existed at the time of the previous re-accreditation review. And as a condition for graduation, all students must achieve a score of 70 or higher on the school’s grammar and usage test.

To declare a Journalism and Media major, UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduate students must apply and be accepted by the UNC Hussman School. Applicants must have completed 45 or more cumulative hours and be in good academic standing in the semester during which they apply.

**b). The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.**

The school’s curriculum provides a well-balanced mix of theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills. Classes have been identified as falling into one of five categories: core, conceptual, concentration, capstone and choice. Degree planning worksheets specific to each of the two areas (journalism and advertising/public relations) guide students in progressing through their degree program and ensure that all requirements are met. A well-conceived curriculum matrix provided by the program indicates how each class addresses particular competencies.

### Journalism

In this area of study, students must earn nine credit hours by passing three core courses, each worth three hours. They include:

- Introduction to Digital Storytelling
- Writing and Reporting
- Media Law

Journalism track students must earn an additional 21 credits from a mix of “Concentration” courses, including:

- 6 credits from an offering of a half-dozen Level 1 courses (Sports Xtra; Foundations of Photography; Foundations of Graphic Design; Foundations of Interactive Media; Audio Journalism, and; Public Affairs Reporting).
- 6 credits from an offering of 17 Level 2 courses (examples: Feature Writing; Opinion Writing; TV News Reporting; Interactive Media)
- 6 credits from an offering of 18 Level 3 courses (examples: Broadcast News Management; News Editing; Advanced Interactive Media, Data Journalism).
- 3 credits from a Capstone course. Offerings include 10 options for individual study courses.

In order to earn the minimum 39 credit hours required within the unit, students in the Journalism sequence must earn an additional nine credit hours, including:

- 6 credit hours from an offering of nearly 50 “Conceptual” courses (examples: Gender, Class, Race; Freedom of Expression; Social Media Analytics; History of Media).
- 3 credit hours from the “Choice” course list, which includes a variety of elective offerings.

#### Advertising/Public Relations

Students in this area of study complete the same three core courses, totaling nine credit hours:

- Introduction to Digital Storytelling
- Writing and Reporting
- Media Law

Advertising/Public Relations track students must earn an additional 21 credits from a mix of “Concentration” courses, including:

- 3 credits Principles of Advertising and Public Relations (required)
- 3 credits Advertising and Public Relations Research (required)
- 6 credits from an offering of 9 Level 2 courses (Examples: PR Writing; Visual Design; Ad Creative; Account Planning)
- 6 credits from an offering of 21 Level 3 courses (Examples: Concepts of Marketing; Cause Communications; Case Studies in PR; Crisis Communications)
- 3 credits from Capstone (Multiple offerings)

Finally, to complete their 39 credit hours required within the unit, students must complete nine credit hours that include:

- 6 credits from the list of “Conceptual” courses
- 6 credits from the list of “Choice” courses

Note that the Media Ethics course, formerly required, is no longer specifically required of students in either of the programs of study; rather, students can choose to fulfill the requirement from among other classes across campus. However, the majority of the school’s majors do select the Media Ethics class to complete this mandatory part of their degree program.

**c). Instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in**

## **teaching and learning are recognized and valued.**

The school's faculty has been hard at work revising the curriculum since the last site visit, guided by assessment and the strategic plan. Course offerings are responsive to the ever-changing media landscape in the Digital Age. A review of course descriptions shows a range of classes aimed at providing students with skills that will equip them to adapt and thrive in modern day advertising/public relations and journalism.

With respect to evolving tools and technologies, the self-study lists several curricular changes since the last accreditation review. Among them:

- “offering a school-wide core course that delivers instruction in basic video, web, and graphics skills for all majors.”
- “inserting lessons in numerical concepts and audience analysis into existing courses to improve numeracy and data literacy.”
- “developing new courses that improve knowledge and use of new tools and technologies for investigation while also introducing concepts in computational thinking.”

The new school-wide core course (Introduction to Digital Storytelling) provides a foundation for more advanced courses in the increasingly important digital, technological and multimedia competencies. According to the course description, it “introduces students to the tools needed to engage in quality news-oriented storytelling with audio, video and multimedia. Students will learn to deliver news stories using multiple platforms, taking advantage of the strengths of each.”

It should be noted that in addition to journalism students' need to learn “news-oriented storytelling” in this course and to “deliver news stories using multiple platforms,” advertising/public relations students, who in spring 2021 represented 594 of the school's majors as opposed to 415 majors in journalism, need these skills as applied to the rapidly changing world of strategic communications. Examples of applications of the tools and technologies beyond news stories will be increasingly important.

For journalism students, a variety of other courses offer more granular instruction in “UX” (User Experience) design, digital analytics, business modeling, data analytics and the use of multimedia programming languages (Advanced Interactive Media). The new curriculum allows students wide latitude in choosing non-core courses. But several journalism faculty members said this permits students to jump to higher level courses without fully mastering basic skills. The result, one said, is that some students who “were allowed to pick and choose” lower level skills courses end up performing poorly in advanced reporting classes.

For advertising/public relations students, courses cover timely topics such as social media analytics, usability and multimedia design, motion graphics, and the use of voice-activated devices (Advertising in the Age of Alexa).

Banners celebrating student achievements in national competitions such as PRSA's Bateman and the Hearst awards are prominent in the school's hallways, as are awards displayed in cases throughout the building that contribute to recognition of excellence in teaching and learning.

**d). Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.**

The 2014-2015 site visit team report cited oversubscription of skills courses as a weakness. A review by the unit determined that a number of conceptual courses – not subject to a 20-student maximum – had mistakenly been listed as skills courses. Thus, the unit stated, oversubscription of skills classes was not a systemic problem. But its review “did confirm that the school was out of enrollment compliance in three skills courses.”

The unit took steps to ensure that student-faculty classroom ratios are now in compliance. The 20-student cap has been exceeded only once – and by only one student - for the three skills courses cited in the last site team report. The lapse was attributed to an instructor who “was subsequently counseled to not admit more than 20 students in the course.”

That said, Advertising/Public Relations faculty pointed out that classes in their area that once were limited to 15 students now enroll up to 30 students, effectively eliminating some of the learning experiences, such as individual presentations, and increasing the teaching load on that faculty. Thus, the impact of shifting the identification of classes from “skills” to “conceptual” may have the cost of adding to the burden described as “unseen labor” consistently reported by the Advertising/Public Relations faculty.

For the third accrediting cycle in a row, the lack of adequate faculty in the Advertising and Public Relations area is a concern. The 2014-15 site team visit report noted that while Public Relations students represented 32% of all majors in the school, there were only five faculty members, or 10% of the faculty, and that the same issue was raised in the site team report *prior* to 2014-15. With Public Relations and Advertising now combined, the faculty in that area report feeling exhausted, doing an inordinate amount of “unseen labor,” a phrase consistently used during interviews. A quick calculation of current faculty/student ratios shows Advertising/Public Relations with 594 majors to 18 faculty, 33 students per faculty member, while Journalism, with 415 majors and 19 faculty, has 21 students per faculty member. The need for more faculty in the Advertising/Public Relations area persists.

**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 unit does not require that students complete an internship as a condition of graduation, but the self-study asserts that “at least one internship is highly recommended for all students.” For the 2019-20 academic year, students completed 71 internships for credit. Students may have completed many more internships for which they did not register for credit.

Students receive academic credit for internships by registering for a course titled “Journalism and Media Internship.” The pass/fail internship course offers one credit hour in the Fall and Spring semesters, as well as the second session of summer school. However, the one credit does not count toward the minimum 39 credit hours required by the unit for graduation.

Students must arrange the internship on their own. The self-study notes that the “vast majority” of internships for the Fall and Spring semesters are with employers in the so-called “Research Triangle” encompassing Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill.



At the conclusion of the internship, the student must complete an online survey about what they learned and accomplished. A section of the survey requires self-assessment of “traits or abilities” such as dependability, initiative, creativity and enthusiasm.

At the same time, the worksite supervisor completes an online evaluation of each student’s performance, including many of the same “traits or abilities” indicators, thus offering valuable comparisons from the perspective of the intern and their employer. Supervisors also are asked to rate interns on “professional values and competencies” such as written and spoken communication skills, meeting deadlines, and their ability to interact with “individuals and groups diverse in gender, race and ethnicity.”

**SUMMARY:**

The school has made great strides in curriculum since the last accrediting review, resulting in a simplified structure of two broad areas of study, dynamic and constantly evolving instruction, opportunities for applying theory in hands-on skills classes, and capstone courses that challenge students to pull together all they have learned. The unit pivoted quickly and effectively to online learning due to the pandemic. The dean noted that in surveys and course evaluations, students praised faculty for maintaining a high quality of instruction.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a). The unit has a written diversity plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit's definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.**

The UNC Hussman School has a written diversity plan that includes its mission and vision statements, how it defines diversity and six overarching goals. The school has had a plan since the 1990s and the current version, with the help of an outside consultant, integrates input from multiple stakeholders.

However, the UNC Hussman School is dealing with an existential crisis both internally and externally. The controversy surrounding the decision by Nikole Hannah-Jones to turn down a tenured, endowed chair at the school exposed long-standing problems. Many stem from inconsistencies in executing the goals in the 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Goal 1 was to “clearly define and publicize the school’s commitment to diversity.” The school did an effective job of visibly identifying courses, highlighting diversity in syllabi, activities and research, but comments from students and faculty indicate that much of it has been superficial. Several students referred to many of the diversity initiatives as going through the motions. However, in the months after the Hannah-Jones incident, the school’s diversity committee, renamed the Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity committee (ABIDE), has taken on this issue and others related to diversity and inclusion.

Goal 2 of the 2016 diversity plan addresses the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, students and administrators. The numbers indicate a slight increase in minority faculty, but only increased from four to six among African American faculty members. The previous site team report stated that students and faculty “bemoaned the lack of diversity.” Similar comments were made during this site visit. One junior student heading into his senior year said he had never been taught by a faculty member of color. Several faculty members complained that recruiting faculty of color has been haphazard and ineffective. They also voiced concern about the selection of search committee members. Several minority faculty members said they are reluctant to recruit people of color to the school because of the climate. However, faculty members recently approved a requirement that all new applicants provide a diversity statement. In the area of student recruitment, the director of diversity and inclusion said there has been marginal success (up 10 points), but recent racial issues on campus and in the school may have had a negative impact on enrollment. One current minority student said, “If I could go back, I would not be in Hussman.”

The school has been effective in providing diversity training for faculty and staff under Goal 3, but it is on a voluntary basis unless you are new to campus or a member of a search committee. Those required programs are offered through the university. About 25 percent of the faculty and staff have participated in campus trainings. The school also has partnerships with professional organizations that offer training to students. There are strong diversity-related courses in the curriculum that are popular with students, but diversity and inclusion is lacking in many of the required courses. Several students complained that the introductory skills classes utilize examples that are what one described as “culturally insensitive, bordering on racist.” Many faculty members said that more work is needed to diversify the curriculum.

A subcommittee of ABIDE is developing a plan to address the issue, but the DEI director voiced concern about getting adjunct faculty members, who teach most of the introductory skills courses, to implement curriculum changes.

Goal 4, which addresses climate, is the most problematic. Throughout the site visit, faculty and students acknowledged the damage caused by the Hannah-Jones decision. Some faculty members and school leaders said it brought them together. Others said it brought to light DEI issues that had been dormant for years. Faculty and students of color said they were not surprised by her decision not to come to UNC Hussman. One senior minority student said, “I expected to experience racism when I came here, but not to this extent.” Every student interviewed said the educational experience at UNC Hussman is invaluable, but for students of color it comes with a price. Several said they are expected to shoulder the burden of teaching diversity and inclusion. Often, they are the only person of color in class and in those rare instances when race or culture is the topic, they are called on to respond. “Teachers are lackluster about learning other cultures. It is not our responsibility.” Several majority students also spoke of having to press for conversations about diversity. “Oftentimes, we bring it up. It’s not a part of the curriculum. It’s more organic.” Several faculty members of color also voiced their frustration with shouldering the burden of educating faculty and students on DEI issues, counseling students who are traumatized by cultural insensitivity while worrying about their own futures in the school and university. The DEI committee has identified some of these issues, but it is going to take a focused, sustained effort by everyone in the school, alumni and supporters to build an inclusive climate.

**b). The unit’s curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit’s curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

UNC Hussman has several elective courses and programs that deal with diversity: The Black Press and United States History; Diversity and Communication; Gender, Class, Race and Mass Media; Latino Media Studies; Global Communication and Comparative Journalism; International Media Studies: Mexico; Sexual Minorities and the Media; and Poverty and Plurality and the Media.

Students also have opportunities for diversity-related education that connects to the professions. UNC Hussman sponsors 12 seniors or graduate students from underrepresented groups for the CBC-UNC Diversity Fellowship Program in partnership with Capitol Broadcasting Company’s WRAL-TV in Raleigh, N.C. The school has also partnered with Bloomberg News to provide the Bloomberg-UNC Business Journalism Diversity Programs.

The school also has two classes and several global immersion courses that include study abroad opportunities for students to take what they learn in the class into the field. The Recoding the Boys’ Club: Women vs. the Political Tech Ceiling is a nice compliment to the more established Irina Project in providing diversity and inclusion experiences to students that deal with important issues that connect with underserved communities.

Several faculty members expressed excitement that faculty were discussing and developing ways to implement diversity and inclusion into the curriculum. However, several minority faculty members were concerned about the school’s ability to hire faculty in the future, especially faculty of color, and how that would interfere with positive curricular changes. They also expressed a need to recruit more part-time faculty members of color.

**c). The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.**

UNC Hussman hired 10 full-time faculty in the past three years, seven women and three minority. The school had 84 part-time positions available during that same time, 30.3 percent were women and 21.8 percent were minority. The overall number of full-time women faculty increased from 44 percent to 51 percent since the previous accreditation visit. The percentage of minority faculty increased from 23 percent to 33 percent. The percentage of African American faculty improved from 8.5 percent to 13.3 percent, but that is only six full-time positions out of 45 in AY 2020-2021. There are no African American part-time faculty, though the overall percentage of minority part-time faculty overall has increased since the previous accreditation visit from 8.3 percent to 16 percent. At the time of the previous accreditation visit, the school reported two African American part-time faculty members and one Hispanic/Latino faculty member. At this accreditation visit, the school reported two Asian part-time faculty members, one Hispanic/Latino part-time faculty member, two multi-racial part-time faculty members and three Other race part-time faculty members. The lack of African American part-time faculty members was a concern addressed in the previous accreditation and several faculty members voiced concerns during this site visit. There was significant recruitment of women and minority applicants during the previous three years, but faculty voiced concerns about future recruiting and retention considering recent controversial issues on race, faculty hiring and donor interference. One faculty member of color indicated he was reluctant to recruit minority faculty because of recent events.

**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.**

The total number of minority students is 344 out of 1088 undergraduate students enrolled, a 31.6 percent increase from the previous self-study. The school has a nearly identical percentage of African American students, 8.46 to 8.5, compared to the university. This is an improvement from the previous study by 2 percent, in contrast to the university numbers that have remained static at 8.5. African Americans make up 22 percent of the state's population and 13 percent of the country. Considering this analysis, not much has changed since the previous study.

To address diversity and inclusion, the school appointed its first-ever diversity and inclusion director. The initiative is now named Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity or ABIDE with the goal of providing access and a sense of belonging to minority students in the school. The Chuck Stone Program for Diversity in Education and Media continues to draw students to UNC, but there are no definitive numbers on how many are admitted to UNC Hussman. The Durham VOICE, a collaboration with North Carolina Central, an HBCU, was created and led by one of the school's fixed-term faculty members from 2009 – 2020 as part of the Community Journalism course. The collaboration ended when that faculty member retired. The school does sponsor a breakfast for students and alumni at the National Association of Black Journalists annual convention. The event connects students with mentors who can help guide them in their careers.

Other efforts include the CBC-UNC Diversity Fellows program (established in 2013), the Bloomberg-UNC Business Journalism Diversity Program (established in 2017), the school's response to the

Diversity, Ethics & Inclusion student task force report (2018), the Barry Saunders Visiting Professional program (established in 2018), the student chapter of NAHJ (established in 2020), the designation of a meditation room in Carroll Hall to provide Muslim and other students a private space for prayer (established in 2020), the ABIDE committee student advisory board (established in 2021), and the work currently underway to establish a student chapter of AAJA.

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

The campus Office of Diversity and Inclusion provides training sessions for faculty and staff members. The school's DEI committee worked with this office to develop the diversity statement and plan. There are DEI resource links listed on the school's website. The school also works with the Accessibility Resources and Service office on campus to make sure programs and facilities are accessible to students with disabilities. *Safe at UNC* is the university's main portal for resources and information about discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, interpersonal violence and stalking.

In addition, components of the school's communications and special programs are designed to showcase diversity. Examples include *The Siren*, a student-produced publication that promotes a feminist perspective on gender, identity, sexuality and human rights, *Carolina Ahora*, a Spanish-language counterpoint of the social media show *Carolina Now* and *Coulture* (coulture.org), a fashion and lifestyle magazine that challenges beauty standards by encouraging readers to accentuate their best features rather than conform with unrealistic societal expectations.

## **SUMMARY:**

Several faculty members and staff, in particular those of color, said morale is low and they are considering leaving the school. They said the Hannah-Jones decision and the aftermath is the latest in a series of incidents in which they have felt undervalued and not heard/understood. Faculty and students complained about the lack of resources, in particular funds for personnel, recruiting, curriculum development and programming. They also want time for training. Several students of color complained that the school takes credit for some of their accomplishments though they received little if any support from the program. "They want to showcase our diversity, but it's mainly superficial," one student said.

The previous site team stated that the school's faculty and students "aspire to be inclusive." Aspiration is not a strategy. The naming of a director and the recent work of the ABIDE committee is a step in the right direction. The group has conducted listening sessions with students and faculty, created an inclusive curriculum toolkit, worked with students to establish a Hispanic journalists association and LGBTQ student organization. It also has plans to update the diversity plan.

## **Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

**Table 6. Faculty Populations, Full-time and Part-time (AY 2020-2021)**

Full-time Faculty					Part-time/Adjunct Faculty				
Group	Female	% of full-time faculty	Male	% of full-time faculty	Group	Female	% of part-time faculty	Male	% of part-time faculty
Black/African American	2	4.44%	4	8.89%	Black/African American	-	-	-	-
White	15	33.33%	15	33.33%	White	17	34.69%	24	48.98%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	2.22%	-	-	American Indian / Alaskan Native	-	-	-	-
Asian	1	2.22%	2	4.44%	Asian	2	4.08%	-	1.72%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	2.22%	1	2.22%	Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	2.04%	-	-
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
Two or more races	1	2.22%	-	-	Two or more races	1	2.04%	1	2.04%
Other race	1	2.22%	-	-	Other race	2	4.08%	1	2.04%
International (any race)	1	2.22%	-	-	International (any race)	-	-	-	-

Source: HR Data Mart as of October 31, 2020 and February 26, 2021. Prepared by: Institutional Research and Assessment, April 6, 2021

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

### 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.**

In its hiring and evaluation practices, the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media follows the processes and procedures detailed in its faculty handbook. For full-time faculty searches, a committee that includes full-time tenure- and non-tenure track faculty and at least one student is appointed by the dean, develops a job description that is approved by a faculty vote and advertised in appropriate outlets. The committee reviews applications and identifies three or four candidates who are brought to campus where they meet with the dean, faculty and students. After the visit the search committee makes a recommendation to all faculty who vote on whether to recommend the candidate to the dean. If the dean accepts the recommendation, the candidate proceeds to university human resources and senior administration.

The school has 16 endowed professorships, 13 of which are currently filled. The school's faculty handbook also details the processes and procedures for selecting the school's two Knight Chairs as well as its term and internal distinguished professors. Faculty who hold the rank of professor participate in each of these searches.

Part-time faculty are hired by the senior associate dean for undergraduate studies who reviews curriculum vitae and resumes from interested parties. Typically part-time faculty are hired based on their professional expertise and teach specialized skills classes. Occasionally they are hired to cover the classes of faculty who are on leave or with course buyouts for research and study assignments.

Expectations for faculty in terms of teaching, research or creative and professional activity and service are specified in the university's code and policy manual and the Trustee Policies and Regulations Governing Academic Tenure as well as in the school's faculty handbook. Shortly before the site visit, the school approved changes to its appointment, tenure and promotion guidelines to ensure they are aligned with the university's recently revised standards. Junior faculty felt they had input into the process, saying it was transparent and they were satisfied the new guidelines are clear and equitable.

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

During the three years preceding the site visit, on average, about one-third of the school's core and required classes were taught by full-time faculty. Sixty percent of all classes typically are taught by full-time faculty. This is largely attributable to enrollment growth and the addition of a required digital storytelling course. Course buyouts, research and other leaves also contributed to the need for more part-time faculty. A full-time faculty course coordinator and common syllabi ensure consistency across sections of the digital storytelling course as well as others. The school sometimes has difficulty finding qualified part-time instructors to teach some of its required classes. At the time of the visit the school had five open faculty positions that required some faculty to take on additional teaching loads to ensure students were able to get the courses they needed to graduate. Some faculty expressed concerns regarding the school's ability to attract top talent given its recent controversy while others said they were stretched thin.

**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.**

Over half of the UNC Hussman School's full-time faculty have a terminal degree; 22 hold a Ph.D. two have an Ed.D., one has a J.D., one an M.D., one a Th.D. and one an MFA. Eleven faculty members have a master's degree and four non-tenure track teaching professors hold a bachelor's degree. With a few exceptions, all of the school's full-time faculty have professional experience, with some having more than 20 years of experience in journalism, advertising, public relations, health communications or a related field.

Faculty frequently attend and present workshops and training sessions on emerging trends in news design, computational research methods, multimedia and digital technologies. Several faculty have held leadership positions in associations such as AEJMC, the National Communication Association, the International Communication Association and the Online News Association and serve as manuscript reviewers on the editorial boards or as editors of the discipline's top journals.

To ensure students will have the critical skills needed to succeed in the media industry, each semester the school also hires a number of part-time faculty, all with professional experience to teach both skills and conceptual classes. It also invites top industry professionals to deliver guest lectures and each year hosts a professional-in-residence.

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

Each semester students in each of the school's classes are given the opportunity to complete a course evaluation form that includes questions about the clarity of learning objectives, the grading scheme, course content and the instructor's performance. Additional questions that vary by whether the course is skills-based or conceptual allow students to provide feedback and whether the course enhanced their skills or helped them develop their critical and analytical abilities.

The senior associate dean for undergraduate studies analyzes the results of the evaluations and as appropriate follows up with faculty members to discuss how they can improve. The mean scores for both the school's courses and its instructors consistently are above average with instructors receiving higher scores than the courses.

Teaching observations are conducted for tenure-track and fixed-term faculty during their first year in the school and in the year prior to their next review. Junior faculty hired over the last few years said they had not yet received teaching observations and expressed some confusion regarding who was responsible for arranging the observations. This is partly due to Covid-19 and the need to teach all of the school's classes remotely via Zoom and partly due to the decision to keep the academic dean's position open until a new dean is hired. With the return to in-person classes in fall 2021 it is likely the issue will be resolved.

Graduate students who are instructors of record and 20 percent of the part-time faculty, selected at



random, also are observed each semester. The results of the observations and, as necessary, areas of improvement are discussed with the instructor.

Several of the school's faculty have been recognized for their exemplary teaching by the school, the university and professional organizations including AEJMC.

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

Faculty and administrators from across the university uniformly expressed their admiration for the school, its faculty and its students. Many cited projects they were working on with members of the school's faculty and lauded the school for its ability to balance practice and scholarship. In reference to the recent controversy surrounding a faculty hire, one administrator said the "school is the crucible for dealing with the issues of our time."

**SUMMARY:**

The UNC Hussman School's faculty at the time of the site visit (Fall 2021) includes 43 tenured, tenure-track and fixed-term full-time members and numerous part-time faculty who typically teach specialized skills courses. (The total faculty for academic year 2020-2021 was 45.) With a few exceptions, all faculty have at least five years of professional experience as well as the academic credentials needed to provide high quality instruction across the full range of courses offered by the school. The school values traditional scholarship and professional and creative work as evidenced by the two routes to tenure it provides.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

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

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media has a long tradition of scholarly research and creative and professional activity with members of its faculty doing seminal work on the impact of the demise of local news and computational journalism. The research culture in the school is collaborative and interdisciplinary. Numerous faculty members are working on research projects with colleagues across the university with a few co-directing centers that are housed in other units. Tenure and tenure-track faculty are expected, on average, to spend 40 percent of their time conducting research or producing creative/professional work.

At the time of the site visit, 13 of the school's faculty members held endowed or term professorships; the school has three additional endowed professorships for which it is conducting searches. The professorships provide annual allotments to support travel for conferences, paper presentations and panels. Tenure-track faculty annually receive \$2,500 to support research and travel, while tenured faculty without a professorship receive a \$1,500 allotment.

Three of the unit's faculty have secured funding through the university's highly competitive research grants program while three others received faculty development grants. As noted above, many faculty collaborate on research across campus. In many cases these faculty serve as co-principal investigators on multi-million dollar grants funded by organizations like the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society and the International Development Research Centre.

In addition to these programs, the school has an internal grants program that provides seed funding to encourage faculty to apply for external grants. All of the school's assistant professors and many of its associate professors have taken advantage of these opportunities. Funded projects have included multimedia presentations on Black migration in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of copyright law, health communication research, social media communication in natural disaster responses, and accessibility and disability rights. Some faculty expressed concern that their ability to apply for large grants is hampered by the lack of a dedicated grants person in the school.

Although the university doesn't offer sabbatical leaves, it does have a competitive program through which faculty can apply for a semester's paid leave after five years of service. On average, the university approves 20 of these leaves each year and during the accreditation cycle one UNC Hussman school faculty member was awarded one to study data-driven journalism.

In 2016 the UNC Hussman School's dean launched a research-study-leave program for tenure-track faculty who successfully completed their third-year review and subsequently launched a similar program for post-tenure leave. Numerous faculty have been granted leaves that allowed them to conduct research for a documentary series, refine and sharpen their professional practice as creative storytellers, and develop materials for workshops on environmental justice, white privilege and corporate power, privilege and identity.

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

The UNC Hussman School specifies its expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity and its criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure in its Faculty Handbook which is updated regularly. Job announcements and advertisements specify responsibilities (teaching area, research, public service and advising), desired qualifications, rank sought and materials needed for the application. Recent job announcements also contained language that emphasized the importance of research and professional activity.

Faculty members on the research track are expected to be productive scholars and build a national reputation in their field. The unit's guidelines note both quantity and quality of publications as well as the reputation, quality and relevance of the outlets in which the work is published will be considered in evaluating a tenure file.

As noted below, the expectations for creative and professional activity were less clear than those for traditional academic research. A recent revision to the handbook expanded the definition of this type of activity to include white papers, research and campaign reports, documentary films, books, websites, graphics, video or photographs, described the types of outlets in which the work should appear and emphasized the importance of noting the impact of the work.

The school's criteria also emphasize the importance of engaged scholarship and the importance of work that "influences, enriches and improves the lives of people in the community."

**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 keeping with its mission to prepare students for careers in journalism, advertising, public relations and other communication field, the UNC Hussman School frequently hires full-time faculty members with extensive industry experience. Recognizing the value of both traditional academic scholarship and creative work, the school has a dual tenure-track system: the research track and the professional track.

A lack of clarity regarding the expectations for faculty on the professional track was cited as a weakness by the previous accreditation site visit team. In the last six years the school has worked to develop guidelines that balance the need for clarity with the ability to consider a variety of types of creative and professional work. The first revision of those guidelines, prompted by the previous accreditation review findings, was approved by faculty in 2017. Subsequently, the university created a task force to review its policies and procedures regarding appointment, promotion and tenure with an increased emphasis on recognizing the value of work that does not neatly fit within the parameters of traditional academic scholarship. Units were directed to review and align their guidelines with those of the university. During the year prior to the site visit, the chair and members of the UNC Hussman School's promotion and tenure committee conducted surveys and held listening sessions to ensure faculty participation in the revision process. Shortly before the site team visit, the school's faculty voted unanimously to adopt the unit's significantly revised guidelines. At the time of the visit, the new guidelines were in the provost's office with approval expected within the following few weeks.

Members of the school's faculty, including those on the professional track said they were pleased with the work of the committee, feel comfortable with the result and complimented the chair for the transparency of the process.

**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.**

During the accreditation period the school's faculty published nine sole or co-authored scholarly books, nearly 300 refereed scholarly journal articles, 63 book chapters and presented over 400 conference papers. They produced over 200 juried or non-juried creative works and gave more than 400 talks.

Their work has been recognized with national and international awards and has appeared in the discipline's top journals including the Journal of Applied Communication Research, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Health Communication and Public Relations Review.

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

The curriculum vitae of the UNC Hussman School's full-time faculty reveal an impressive range and depth of inquiry into topics that include theorizing press censorship in India, a quantitative analysis of Coca-Cola's social media, the efficacy of motion graphics, how to engage audiences with curated newsletter content, ethical responsibilities in crisis communication, young adults' information-seeking following celebrity suicide, advertising gay- and lesbian-themed films to mainstream audiences, an immigration exhibit and the use of media to address mental health stigma.

#### **SUMMARY:**

In keeping with its long tradition of groundbreaking scholarship and creative work in journalism, public relations, visual journalism, digital media, and related fields, the UNC Hussman School encourages and rewards work that tackles some of the most complex, controversial and critical topics facing the discipline. The unit clearly values both traditional scholarship and creative and professional work. The site team was impressed by the depth, breadth and impact of their contributions to the field.

#### **Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

#### **COMPLIANCE**

## Scholarly, Research, Creative and Professional Productivity for the Past Six Years

August 2014 – June 15, 2020 | Ranks as of June 2020

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Individuals					Totals (43)
	Total from Unit*	Full Professors(11)	Associate Professors (18)	Assistant Professors (6)	Fixed Term Faculty (8)	
Awards and Honors	116	52	33	23	9	117
Grants Received Internal	80	18	29	25	9	81
Grants Received External	76	18	31	22	7	78
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	9	5	3	1	0	9
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	2	1	0	1	0	2
Books Edited	5	3	1	1	0	5
Book Chapters	60	14	39	9	1	63
Monographs	1	0	0	1	0	1
Articles in Refereed Journals	280	147	71	63	15	296
Refereed Conference Papers	380	192	91	121	15	419
Invited Academic Papers	75	18	30	11	16	75
Encyclopedia Entries	13	9	4	0	0	13
Book Reviews	10	1	9	0	0	10
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	352	13	33	27	279	352
Juried Creative and Professional Works	15	6	7	1	1	15
Non-juried Creative and Professional Works	195	115	46	11	29	201
Other: Invited Scholarly Talks and Presentations	438	238	150	41	17	446
	2107	850	577	358	398	2183

## PART II – Standard 6: Student Services

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

#### a). Faculty and/or professional advising staff ensure that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising.

The school has a variety of advising resources to ensure students are informed about and take action on requirements for graduation. Information is provided and monitored through:

- The General College, housed in the College of Arts and Sciences
- The school’s Office of Advising and Student Engagement; and,
- Faculty consultation

#### General College

An orientation program is presented to all first-year students of the university, covering course registration, advising and information on majors. In addition, students receive advising services through the College of Arts and Sciences each semester until 60 credit hours are earned, at which time students transition to advisers in the UNC Hussman School, if accepted.

#### Office of Advising and Student Engagement

Advisers in the Office of Advising and Student Engagement rely on a student worksheet to track progress of course requirements and completion toward graduation. Initially, the worksheets are created in the General College, and the information follows the student to their selected college. The worksheets are regularly updated.

Staff in the Office of Advising and Student Engagement, who collectively have more than 62 years experience in the college’s advising office, are well-known and well-liked by students throughout the college. According to the school’s senior survey, staff in the Office of Advising and Student engagement are recognized for their availability, as well as their student-centric, helpful delivery of services.

#### Faculty Consultation

In addition to the Office of Advising and Student Engagement, the school’s senior associate dean for undergraduate studies serves a key role in advising. He is a valued resource who – when problems arise – can make exceptions and resolve issues. He offers students multiple orientation sessions, including a special orientation for transfer students.

To further ensure students have ready access to advising services, all faculty serve as advisers, holding regular office hours for consultation. This includes adjunct faculty.

Since the last site-team report, the university moved to “Tar Heel Tracker,” an online Analysis of Academic Progress system, enabling students to monitor their progress toward graduation. The self-study reports that the Tar Heel Tracker has many inaccuracies, and students are encouraged not to rely on the system as the final word. The school posts a disclaimer on its website alerting students to potential errors.

In 2019 and 2020, 91% of students reported being “somewhat” or “very” satisfied with advising services – a 7% increase from 84% in 2018.

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

Based on student feedback and the various channels, faculty are readily available to advise and consult with students through face-to-face, Zoom, email, telephone. In addition, faculty and staff advisers hold regular, weekly office hours.

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

Proactive communications and other systems are in place through a variety of channels to ensure students are in a timely manner informed of academic and policy updates – including a weekly email newsletter, notices posted throughout the school and on the college’s website, as well as digital displays throughout.

**d). The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.**

The school offers a host of extracurricular programs and activities, including:

- **Ad Club:** An academic chapter affiliated with the American Advertising Federation, which regularly convenes featuring local and national professional speakers.
- **Carolina Association of Black Journalists:** Affiliated with the National Association of Black Journalists, the CABJ serves to promote journalism careers for minority students. The CABJ is open to any university student.
- **National Press Photographer Association:** The nation’s largest trade organization for photojournalists, the school’s student chapter offers a monthly speakers series, as well as an annual exhibition of student photography.
- **Online News Association:** This group hosts speaker events and networking opportunities. The school has received the ONA’s Student Journalism Award four times since the last accreditation review.
- **Public Relations Student Society of America:** PRSSA is part of the Public Relations Society of America, the world’s largest organization of public relations professionals. The school’s PRSSA chapter provides a monthly speaker series, as well as networking opportunities with local and national professionals – and it participates in the three professional chapters based in North Carolina.
- **Society for News Design:** The student chapter hosts workshops, field trips, portfolio reviews and an ongoing speaker series featuring area professionals. In 2020, students of the school received a third of 63 student awards presented by this international organization.
- **Kappa Tau Alpha:** This national honor society recognizes students for academic excellence. Since the last accreditation review, 125 students from the college have been inducted into the society.

To complement these student chapters of professional organizations, the school provides other

extracurricular opportunities, including:

- **Carolina Ahora:** A weekly Spanish-language newscast, produced by students.
- **Carolina Week:** A 30-minute live television newscast produced by students.
- **The Daily Tar Heel:** An independent student-run newspaper, continuously published since 1893.

**e). The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its website.**

As part of the school's Senior Survey, administered by email to all graduating seniors, the school annually evaluates advising and counseling services – which, as stated previously – receive high levels of student satisfaction. To ensure consistent and reliable delivery of advising and counseling services, the school tracks and analyzes graduation and retention rates, which are available on the school's website

#### **SUMMARY:**

The unit's Student Services are broad and robust. Students have the necessary academic advisement to fulfill graduation requirements – including the open and transparent publication of enrollment, retention and graduation rates – as well as a variety of relevant extracurricular and pre-professional programs and activities. A long-time, tenured faculty member describes Student Services as a "... department that has come a long way the past 15-20 years in terms of staff, experience and impact. It's a well-oiled machine that has a positive influence throughout the school."

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

#### **COMPLIANCE**



## PART II – Standard 7: Resources, Facilities 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 budget, which follows a year-round process involving senior staff and faculty representatives, is detailed and appropriately reflects the scope and breadth of the program, allowing the school to fulfill and advance its mission. Financially, the school's resources are adequate relative to other units on campus and to similar programs at other universities. Recent gifts from school alumni Don Curtis and Walter Hussman offer administrators, staff, faculty and students the benefit of short- and long-term funding, which was helpful in 2020-21 when the university required a \$300,000 cut in the unit's budget. The Curtis and Hussman gifts, along with grants and other revenue streams, help the school weather tough economic conditions and navigate political headwinds with the state legislature, which has not passed a state budget since 2018 – requiring the school to operate with the same budget allocation three years in a row.

Faculty, students and staff explain that resources – human and financial – are readily available to support their work, allowing them the freedom and flexibility to excel. Equipment, however, is a pain point. Faculty and students describe video and sound equipment as out-of-date, and often unavailable.

The self-study does not address a link between its budget and its long-range strategic plan. In an interview with the unit's assistant dean of finance, he explained that while he and the school's finance team have made significant progress in strengthening its operations and becoming "... a stabilizing force in the school," that there is work to do to strengthen the connectivity between the unit's strategic plan and its budgeting process, as well as a more robust feedback loop with faculty regarding investment in technology, equipment and services.

Meanwhile, the provost shared that the school's strategic plan successfully links to and complements that of the university.

In the summer of 2019, the school appointed an assistant dean for finance, who transitioned to the school from the university's College of Fine Arts & Sciences. He was immediately tasked with recreating the unit's finance office and its related processes and procedures. The assistant dean is considered a positive addition to staff – instilling confidence among those he serves – as reflected by administrator and faculty feedback. He is respected by the school's foundation, as well as faculty and staff. In addition to overseeing the unit's finances, he oversees the school's human resources program, which has a dedicated consultant.

As part of the "Campaign for Carolina," a \$4.25 billion fundraising initiative launched in 2017, the school raised more than \$80 million in donor and grant support, exceeding its fundraising goal.

Challenges the school anticipates following this accreditation review include how to best organize staff, which has been triggered by a critical vacancy of the senior associate dean for strategy and

administration, who oversees the school's finance and IT programs. In addition, the dean has placed emphasis on increasing compensation for senior faculty administrative leaders to attract and retain candidates for these time-consuming, stressful roles.

**b). The resources that the institution provides are adequate to achieve the unit's mission. The resources are fair in relation to those provided other units.**

School administrators have effectively navigated challenging dynamics, including cuts in state funding and the pandemic. Relative to other units at the university, the school is treated fairly by university administrators – no better and no worse. The provost's office recognizes the school's favorable national reputation and its strong standing in the state. It has provided the unit with supplemental funding for adjunct instructors. The school places an emphasis on faculty "entrepreneurism," encouraging the pursuit of research grants, which complement the unit's finances. Recent faculty research grant awards have increased the school's profile and reputation throughout the university and strengthened its position financially.

Faculty members describe the need for more funding for ABIDE – the Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee – including a dean-level position. They feel strongly this critical work is underfunded and that the work required can't be accomplished without more resources. It was suggested, too, that the school's current D&I leader does not have the resources and support of senior school officials as do those in similar roles in other schools on campus. In August 2021, the dean directed that the ABIDE committee receive an increased annual allocation of \$10,000 from the Nelson Fund to support committee activities and programming, a boost from the prior \$6,000 annual allocation. Because of the university's hiring freeze, the dean was not able to move the committee's July 28, 2021 request to upgrade the ABIDE director to a dean-level position. The new dean will have the opportunity to assess the committee's recommendation.

The school continues its strong relationship with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, holding two endowed Knight Chairs – only one of three universities in the U.S. with more than one Knight chair. Since its last accreditation review, the school received a \$3 million Knight grant to create the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, which received a \$1 million matching gift from the university's provost. The grant has since been renewed for \$2.3 million for three more years – through 2023.

The program's North Carolina Media and Journalism Hall of Fame has become a source of revenue. The Hall of Fame, which recognizes excellence in advertising, journalism and public relations by individuals with ties to the state, has generated more than \$450,000 since the unit's last accreditation review.

In 2018, the school received a \$10 million gift from the Curtis Foundation to create a state-of-the-art media center, designed to provide an immersive media experience. At the time, it was the unit's largest single gift. The gift was made by Don Curtis, an alum of the school who is chair and CEO of The Curtis Media Group, which owns a number of radio stations. Curtis is a former member of the university's board of trustees. The Curtis Media Center is scheduled to open in the spring of 2022. A tour of the soon-to-open facility revealed an exceptional experiential-learning environment, located in a high-trafficked pedestrian area of campus – directly adjacent to the school's home, Carroll Hall. The location and its glass-walled exposure to passersby will advance the democratic and journalistic ideals of openness and transparency, and will serve as a visible symbol of the vital role of journalism and media to a free-and-open society.

In 2019, the school received a \$25 million naming gift from school alumnus Walter Hussman Jr. and family – which is now the single largest gift in the school’s history.

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

The school is well-funded to invest in and offer facilities that advance scholarship, teaching and learning. The previously mentioned Curtis Media Center and Hussman naming gift are two primary examples, as is the program’s IT infrastructure, its media services and technology, research facilities and printing services.

Carroll Hall, which is under renovation to create a modern lecture facility that strengthens engagement and interaction of students and faculty, is home to:

- 16 classrooms
- Two non-classroom student labs
- A podcast studio, as well as student production and broadcast studios
- Two conference rooms
- Two event spaces; and,
- A 425-seat auditorium (currently under renovation; will be a 260-seat modern learning space upon completion)

The Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, which was relocated by its founders from Harvard University to UNC, trains investigative journalists of color. Wells, a nationally revered investigative journalist who documented lynchings of Blacks and rapes of Black women at the turn of the previous century, is attributed with the poignant and appropriate quote: *The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.*

The Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, funded by a grant from the Knight Foundation, is home for Table Stakes, which supports local news organizations in creating detailed strategies for sustainability in the areas of diverse audiences and finances.

The Reese Innovation Lab is now home to the unit’s first active-learning classroom, featuring a Nureva Span system offering virtual whiteboard collaboration.

**Technology and Infrastructure**

All facilities are appropriately equipped. Classrooms are designed around a consistent technological layout – driving collaboration and convenience. A 2016 infrastructure upgrade converted all classrooms to an all-digital format – which enables higher quality HD formats – and in 2017 Wi-Fi was installed throughout Carroll Hall, doubling access points. Audio and video upgrades took place in 2020 supporting hybrid teaching experiences, which proved invaluable during the pandemic and will advance future virtual learning.

Computer management and broadcast technologies are state-of-the art, as are research facilities, printing services and digital environmental signage throughout Carroll Hall, ensuring real-time delivery of information and teaching capabilities.

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

Faculty and students describe the school's more than 1,100 audio and video types of equipment (recorders, microphones), as well as cameras, computers, tablets, lighting and tripods as dated (nine to 15 years old), and often unavailable. New equipment for the visual communication program was the library director's top funding request for the current fiscal year and the school funded a \$26,995 purchase of new camera bodies, lenses, light stands and bags in June in response to that request. The broadcast curriculum manages its own equipment separately and has not had issues with availability or equipment age.

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

The school's Park Library, which is one of only a handful of in-unit libraries among journalism and media schools in the U.S., provides support to undergraduate and graduate students and faculty, as well as the school's visual communication curriculum. The library is staffed with a full-time director, library assistant and a staff of 10 students. It is a valued resource for students and faculty, who wish to ensure library funding and a commitment to its mission continue with school administrators – current and future.

The 5,000 square-foot Park Library houses more than 10,000 volumes of books and serials, as well as a variety of newspapers. Students and faculty also have access to the university library system, which has a robust collection of books and other information services. The Park family, which made the Park Library possible, has announced it no longer will fund its gift to the UNC Hussman School in support of graduate studies, citing a difference in priorities (effective 2023). This loss of funding is one the provost explains will be a challenge to replace, and one that the UNC Hussman school's new dean will be tasked to address. During its 25-year relationship with the Park family, the school has received more than \$40 million.

At the time of the last Park family grant renewal (2018), the dean requested and received permission from the Park family to support the Park Library's \$50,000 annual budget from the new grant. Starting this year, in anticipation of the sunset of the Park family funding, the school now funds the Park Library's full \$50,000 annual budget through state funds for personnel and through the school's Dean's Opportunity Fund, which covers the balance of the budget. In contrast, the university announced that it is cutting its libraries' budget university-wide by \$5 million as part of the effort to balance the overall budget: a \$2 million reduction in book purchases and journal subscriptions this year and a \$3 million reduction in operating expenses next year across the university's library system. The Park Library's budget is separate from that of the university library system.

**SUMMARY:**

The school is financially strong, with endowments, grants and other revenue sources that allow the unit to advance its mission, while successfully navigating budget head winds created by the state legislature. Administrators have invested in and maintained its facilities – classrooms, IT infrastructure and software– which continue to be updated and advanced to ensure students and faculty have the necessary

tools to grow academically and professionally, and to maintain a competitive edge. An area of concern voiced by faculty and students is outdated equipment that is often unavailable. Similarly, faculty voiced strong concern about the resources committed to support the work of its ABIDE Committee – Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. The school’s new investment policy overseen by the assistant dean of finance allows it to better manage its assets and strengthen its financial investments in programs and services throughout the unit. The soon-to-open Curtis Media Center and the state-of-the-art, hands-on learning experience it will offer strengthen the school’s already strong facilities and infrastructure, and will favorably advance the school’s reputation.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

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

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**a). The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni and is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching, whether on-site or online, current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The UNC Hussman School has a large and impressive Board of Advisers that includes a mix of journalists and communications professionals. The self-study put the size of the board at 48 members (although an accompanying list and the school's website show about 10 fewer). More than half are school alumni and the board's membership ranges from working journalists to strategic communication managers to top-level corporate executives. According to the self-study, board members meet twice a year to offer guidance on how to achieve the school's goals and to share insights about trends in their respective industries. The self-study says board members are "directly involved in the assessment of our classes and student learning."

In interviews with the site team, faculty members applauded the professional quality of the Board of Advisers and said members occasionally speak to classes or help assess the quality of graduates of the school. But several complained that they never learn what the board discusses in its meetings. "They're supposedly providing input on industry trends and how the school should be positioned, but we're never told what they say," said one. Another described this as a "missed opportunity" for faculty members to hear directly from those in industry. One instructor suggested that faculty be invited to sit in on Board of Advisers meetings or least be allowed to listen in on the meetings via Zoom.

A separate UNC Hussman School Alumni Board is actively engaged in assisting the unit in several ways, including a program that has helped mentor roughly 100 students a year.

The unit communicates with alumni through a variety of methods including its website, multiple social media platforms, and the Hussman eCommunicator, a digital newsletter featuring school updates and announcements that is emailed monthly to 12,500 alumni and friends. In addition, twice a year The Hussman Communicator is mailed to about 20,000 recipients including alumni, donors, prospective students and parents of current students. The print publication is a graphically pleasing, 10-page full-color booklet with recent news about the program while also promoting upcoming events.

In addition, the school has produced more than 50 editions of its *Start Here / Never Stop Podcast* since it was launched in 2016. The podcasts consist of conversations between the dean and alumni, providing insights and inspiration for Hussman students as they prepare to launch their professional careers.

The site team found the unit's website impressive with its depth and clarity of content, engaging graphical interface and ease of navigation. The self-study asserts that in the year ended June 1, 2020, the site drew 167,000 unique visitors – an 18 percent year-over-year increase. The school's presence on multiple social media platforms is robust, with each showing a steady increase in followers: LinkedIn (5,250), Facebook (5,861), Twitter (13,300) and Instagram (3,381). A review for each platform shows a steady stream of posts that are topical and timely; in many cases, there are new posts multiple times each day.

The unit's self-study highlights the importance of public service, saying it "originates in the classroom (and) inspires students to make a difference during their time at Carolina."

**b). The unit provides leadership in the development of high standards of professional practice through such activities as offering continuing education, promoting professional ethics, evaluating professional performance, and addressing communication issues of public consequence and concern.**

The Chuck Stone Program for Diversity in Education and Media helps to train and mentor high school journalists who wish to launch careers in news and media. Held each summer, it is a signature program that includes a multi-platform storytelling workshop. The program is named after Chuck Stone, a passionate advocate for diversity who was a noted journalist and activist before becoming a professor in the school. He died in 2014.

The school has hosted numerous delegations of foreign journalists through its participation in the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. International participants interact with students and faculty in discussions about press freedom and the ever-changing media landscape. The foreign journalists visit local news outlets and hear presentations about current events and North Carolina politics.

During the period covered by the self-study, faculty members served more than 40 times as reviewers for book manuscripts or submissions to scholarly or professional journals.

For several years, the school has offered professional training by partnering with a local television news outlet (ABC11/WTVD) to train station employees in how to create digital newsrooms. "The workshops focused on using digital media tools, innovation and media design, and writing for digital," the self-study says.

**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.**

Since the last site team visit, the UNC Hussman School dean and faculty have engaged in an impressive array of professional activities. These include contributing to scholarly journals, judging competitions, serving on industry and academic association boards, participating in numerous workshops and holding leadership positions in AEJMC and other organizations.

The faculty has made significant contributions to the improvement of journalism and mass communication. Three professional service initiatives stand out:

- The **Table Stakes** initiative, a partnership between Knight Foundation and the school's Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media. This program has helped dozens of media organizations with digital transformation and assisted them in crafting and developing sustainable business models.
- **U.S. News Deserts**, featuring seminal research documenting the loss of nearly a quarter of the nation's newspapers over a span of 15 years. This groundbreaking research sounded the national alarm over the spread of so-called "news deserts." Conducted through the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local News, the "news deserts" findings elevated the school's reputation for serious and significant research. At workshops and symposia around the country, "news deserts"

research was presented in discussions that about trust in local news. Its author made presentations on the state of local news to more than a dozen national and international nonprofit groups.

- **UNC Center for Media Law and Policy.** The work of this center, run jointly by the UNC Hussman School and the UNC School of Law, focuses on legal and policy issues. Its research is at the heart of rapidly evolving communication technologies and their impact on society.

**d). The unit contributes to its communities through unit-based service projects and events, service learning of its students and civic engagement of its faculty.**

The school's students, with faculty guidance, serve the immediate community and region through a variety of projects and initiatives.

For example, until it was recently suspended due to the faculty member who created and led the program retiring, UNC Hussman students created content for the VOICE, a community news outlet that serves Northeast Central Durham. The students also mentored urban teens to help them create content for the VOICE, an online start-up (with a monthly print version).

Each semester, UNC Hussman students also work on a pro bono basis to provide public relations expertise to area nonprofits and government agencies. An appendix to the self-study lists more than 70 "clients."

The school experiments with new products through its Reese Innovation Lab, which tests prototypes and business strategies for media. As an example, several years ago it created *Our Chatham*, an emailed newsletter to serve the unmet information needs of a "news desert" in Chatham County, located not far from UNC.

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

Few competitor programs match the UNC Hussman School's range and depth of lectures and workshops. Guest speakers include Pulitzer Prize recipients, noted scholars, nationally known political commentators and reporters, award-winning photographers, broadcast and new media executives, and industry leaders in strategic communication.

The 80-year-old North Carolina Scholastic Media Association has been housed in, and associated with, the school for 80 years. Its director serves on the school's ABIDE (Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity) Committee. NCSMA serves as a link to media throughout the state. Among other programs, it provides tuition-free training each summer for up to 10 high school journalism teachers. "The program allows us to advance journalism education in the state," the director told the site team. NCSMA also is home to the North Carolina College Media Association, which serves student media outlets at colleges throughout the state.

**SUMMARY:**

The UNC Hussman School has maintained its admirable record of professional and public service. Its research serves industry and its students are exposed to lectures and training from leaders in journalism



and strategic communication. The unit is actively engaged with its thousands of alumni and has an impressive Board of Advisers that helps guide the school by providing input on industry trends. A weakness, according to numerous faculty members, is that they rarely learn about this input; some suggest they be included in Board of Advisers meetings.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

## PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### 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 the Council.**

The school has defined the goals for learning that students must achieve which includes all 12 ACEJMC values and competencies. These are mapped to courses in a matrix included in the self-study. Leadership identified a team of two who together now lead assessment activities on an on-going basis. The previously mentioned and very thorough matrix visually links all courses to ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies. Syllabi are reviewed by the senior associate dean for undergraduate studies to ensure learning outcomes are stated in each syllabus and address the values and competencies appropriate for each course.

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

The unit does have a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning, with all student learning outcomes assessed each year in core classes.

Three direct measures are used:

- Knowledge pre-/post-test, 20 questions: administered to entry-level students in writing classes and again to graduating seniors in capstone classes.
- Aggregate internship evaluations: worksite supervisors complete a form that incorporates seven ACEJMC learning outcomes and aggregate student scores are calculated and reported.
- External capstone project review: Industry professionals including alums of the school review a random sample of senior capstone projects.
- 

Four indirect measures are used:

- Experience survey: every other year, graduating seniors complete a 35-question survey about their experience in the school, which includes questions on diversity and global programs.
- Internship self-reports: as students complete an internship, they are asked to complete a report assessing their own performance.
- Student awards: documented at the end of each academic year.
- Employment data: Surveys distributed in September and October to recent graduates.

These are effective for assessing ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies, as mapped in the matrix provided in the report. The school continues to examine its assessment plan as evidenced in a timeline depicting the evolution of the plan. Annual assessment findings are provided to faculty in a presentation and in a written report.

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

Data are collected as detailed above and analyzed by the school’s two-person assessment team, with help from the institution’s Office of Institution Research and Assessment, which does both qualitative and quantitative analyses based on instructions provided by the team.

Using the knowledge test as an example, the means of the incoming students' (pre-test) answers to each question are compared with those of the graduating students (post-test) to determine if there are statistically significant differences that indicate learning has occurred, according to the assessment team. "Because we have multiple test questions that relate to each competency, we also analyze by group," said the assessment team leaders. "On the knowledge test, our performance targets are post-test scores higher than pre-test scores and at least 70% of questions answered correctly." The results of each year's knowledge survey, as well as the results of the external reviews, are compared to previous years' results to ascertain whether actions overcame weaknesses.

Examples of competencies not mastered satisfactorily in recent assessment reports are #8 research and evaluation and #11 basic numerical and statistical concepts. Actions taken to remedy this include new courses that focus on audience analytics, marketing intelligence and investigative journalism, and three new hires to teach in these areas to address the research and evaluation weaknesses. To strengthen basic numerical and statistical concepts, several courses were developed such as Data-Driven Journalism (includes instruction on basic statistics and data literacy); Market Intelligence (teaches statistics, audience metrics, and market research to inform business decisions); and Digital Advertising and Marketing (instruction on applying statistics to strategic communication decisions). Existing courses were also revised to strengthen understanding of numerical concepts, per the team. Additional courses have been proposed to continue to strengthen these two competencies.

More broadly, based on assessment findings, the unit moved to a curriculum that is described in the self-study as "more integrated, multi-platform and multi-industry." The site visit confirmed this. The school's strategic plan further illustrates that assessment data are being used, informing the plan.

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

The school has numerous ways of involving alumni, including a Board of Advisers, the Foundation Board, and the Media and Journalism Alumni Association.

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

As noted above, the school reaches out to new alumni for information about their employment as one of the indirect measures. Alumni also participate in the review of capstone projects, one of the direct measures. The site team had the opportunity to meet virtually with some of the school's alumni and board members in a lively discussion. Participants were not only proud of the school but also exhibited a depth of knowledge about the curriculum that demonstrated their involvement.

**SUMMARY:**

The school has developed and implemented a robust and thoughtful assessment plan, led by two dedicated members of the faculty/staff. The plan continues to evolve as it should to keep pace with the needs of rapidly changing industries. The assessment team is now refining measures to accommodate curriculum changes that were made based on past assessment data, particularly in areas of diversity and numeracy. This demonstrated the evolving, dynamic and cyclic nature of effective assessment.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**

### PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

- **Strengths**

- A dean who has been “resoundingly successful” at acquiring resources for the school.
- A high quality of education for students, as measured by awards, high placement rates and assessment indicators.
- A simplified curriculum structure
- New ABIDE Committee on diversity
- Students are strong advocates for diversity and inclusion
- Strong student services. Praise from students for advising staff and faculty availability.
- Despite university-imposed budget reductions, the unit is financially strong (especially through recent major gifts)

- **Weaknesses**

- A faculty angered by controversies, resulting in what one called a “culture of complaint.”
- A fairly widespread faculty view there is insufficient shared governance.
- A growing concern about trustee involvement and threats to academic independence.
- Many faculty complaints there is need for more transparency by the dean and university leadership.
  - A need for more Advertising/Public Relations faculty to address an imbalance when compared to student/faculty ratio for Journalism.
  - Faculty/student complaints that video and sound equipment is out of date and often unavailable.

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

**Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusion**

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

**The school needs to work to match the diversity plan to ongoing initiatives in faculty and student recruitment and retention. In addition, the school needs to infuse diversity and inclusion throughout their curriculum and teaching.**

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

-- **Systemic oversubscription of skills courses. (This is no longer an issue, even with COVID.)**

-- **Lack of clarity on expectation for the tenure-track process for professional faculty. (This has been cleaned up.)**

7) The self-study is the heart of the accrediting process. Often the quality of that document determines the degree of success of the site visit. Summarize the team members' judgment of the self-study.

**The self-study was beautifully done. In fact, it was done twice. The school was ready to go when COVID shut down accreditation in fall of 2020. It found clever ways using shading to keep the original study but to show areas of update. It was clean, clear and cohesive and very easy to use, linking through nicely to the standards and appendices.**