

of On-Site Evaluation

Environmental & Safety Institute (ESI) 2014

Part of the program is available at www.esi.org

Undergraduate program

Team Chair



PART I: General information

Name of Institution:

Name of Unit:

Year of Visit:

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

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

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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.



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7. What are the type and length of terms?

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

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9. List the specific undergraduate and professional master's degrees being reviewed by ACEJMC.
*Indicate online degrees.



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



Online Skills Course


Number of Students

Fall 2015

Skills Course

Number of Students

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Faculty, students, alumni, university leaders and other department chairs universally praise the leadership of the department.

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

When the university began a formalized chair structure in 2009, the JMS chair began being evaluated annually by the departmental evaluation committee and by the College of Arts & Sciences dean. The selection process for a new chair is based on a recommendation by the faculty and approval of the dean.

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

The unit has never had a faculty grievance. Student complaints are handled by the chair. The university does have policies for formal avenues of complaints, but to date no student, faculty member or staff



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PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:


(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. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet these requirements.

The Journalism and Media Studies Department at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg offers a single undergraduate degree, the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications. It also offers an undergraduate minor, also in Mass Communications.

To be eligible for the major, prospective students must successfully complete a three-course, nine-credit pre-core, have satisfied their general education requirements or taken 45 credit hours of courses with at least a 2.75 GPA.

Students in the 124-credit-hour degree program are required to complete between 44 and 52 hours in journalism and mass communications and 72-80 credit hours outside the department. Of the hours taken outside the department, 65 must be in liberal arts. Additional degree requirements include ANT 2410 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology and at least two courses from a list that includes Micro Economics, Environmentalon

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In our conversations with them, students repeatedly told us how accessible and involved the faculty are. Comments such as “everyone cares about whether we succeed” were common. Students also frequently mentioned faculty members by name and said interactions with them “changes the way you think.”

(e) The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter credit hours).

Although it doesn't require students to complete an internship it encourages students to do so and has a structured and well-designed internship program. A designated faculty member coordinates the internships, develops new opportunities, holds monthly face-to-face seminars for interns and provides feedback to the students' online weekly updates.

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PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

The unit has an inclusive program that values domestic and global diversity, and serves and reflects society.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The 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 department's current wr







(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-



(g) Graduate faculty teach the majority of professional master's courses.

Graduate faculty have taught the majority of the professional master's courses over the past three years.

Overall evaluation (professional master's program): COMPLIANCE

[REDACTED]

(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.

All of the unit's faculty members have active programs of research, creative and/or professional activity, regularly present their work at journalism, mass communication and other conferences and publish books, journal articles and pieces in trade publications.

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

Meetings with the university's senior leadership underscored the institution's support of intellectual and creative activity that is wide ranging.

Three of the department's faculty members were mentioned by name and one was lauded for being entrepreneurial. One university administrator said "the quality of their scholarship sets them apart."

As a result of retirements, the unexpected death of a senior faculty member and the resignation of a recently tenured associate professor, the scholarly and creative output of the department is down slightly from the previous site visit. The department has been able to replace those faculty members with new assistant professors all of whom have active programs of research.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program): COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program): COMPLIANCE



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PART II — Standard 6: Student Services


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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The department has substantially improved its student advising in recent years. Three layers of advising are available to students:


- The USFSP Office of Academic Advising has assigned an adviser to serve the JMS program and majors.
- Starting in fall 2012, the department created the position of undergraduate coordinator to serve as an adviser to all undergraduate students in the department. The coordinator organizes regular advising sessions with all the undergraduate students in the department at least once a semester and works with individual students to resolve problems. The coordinator works with the rest of the faculty to inform and educate them on existing and changing undergraduate rules, policies, requirements, etc., and develops forms, guides and other materials required to advise students, faculty and other interested parties at the college and university level.
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(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.

Students write, shoot and edit *The Crow's Nest*, USFSP's weekly student newspaper funded by student government. Students enrolled in MMC 4203 Media Ethics have the opportunity to argue controversial





units on campus, which helps boost departmental revenue. One concern of the department is that the funding for VideoWorks is unstable, which could impact the plans to expand into areas of student production.

Students say they have plenty of access to the equipment necessary for their multi-media classes. Even local online students say they have been able to borrow equipment.

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

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg Poynter Library has a designated fund for purchase of JMS materials.

The department also has access to the Poynter Institute's library.

Overall evaluation (undergraduate program):



PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

The unit and its faculty advance journalism and mass communication professions and fulfill obligations to community, alumni and the greater public.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg's Department of Journalism and Media Studies keeps in contact with its alumni in a variety of ways including social media platforms, emails and informal communication between faculty members and individual alumni.

The department recently launched a Digifolio.me website as a way to keep in touch with alumni and as a

[REDACTED]

(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.

Each full-time faculty member receives from the department \$750 in travel funds that enables them to present their work at academic and professional conferences. When necessary the department chair supplements those funds. One faculty member reported she never had a request for support turned down.

(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 University of South Florida St. Petersburg's Department of Journalism and Media Studies contributes to its communities through a number of initiatives and programs, the most significant of which is its Neighborhood News Bureau. Based in St. Petersburg's Midtown section, the bureau partners with local media and community groups to report on the city's underserved populations.

Undergraduate students are now required to spend at least a semester working in the bureau and Journalism and Media Studies master's students are strongly encouraged to do so.

In fall 2015 the department hired a full-time assistant professor who became the bureau's first permanent director and created an advisory board to expand its community connections.

The department has two additional advisory boards, Culinary Communication and Community Journalism, both of which have representation from alumni, local professionals and community members.

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

The department supports scholastic journalism in a number of ways. It teaches skills-based classes at magnet elementary, middle and high schools in St. Petersburg, offers enrichment programs at community centers and has had an almost 20-year relationship with scholastic journalism boards.

During the review period, JMS students volunteered at an area elementary school and the department partnered with the Tampa Bay Times to provide journalism training for students at John Hopkins Middle School. The resulting publication, the JHop Times, has been recognized with a number of Pacemaker



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assigning each of the competencies to an ALC category.





(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.

The unit was previously out of compliance on assessment because the assessment plan failed to clearly describe multiple direct and indirect measures and the unit was inconsistent in collecting and reporting results. Learning assessments and improvements were also not conducted systematically.

Since the last visit, the unit began formally mapping competencies to each of its undergraduate courses, refining and expanding the assessment procedure to include direct and indirect measures and collected and reported results to the faculty.

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

The self-study was well written, succinct and easy to follow. Given that the self-study was put together by the entire faculty, the department should be applauded for such a consistent and smooth read.



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

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

Strengths:

Strong and innovative leadership over the two graduate programs

An entrepreneurial spirit among the faculty that informed the creation of the new online program

Availability and accessibility to grad students seeking help


Weaknesses:

Some DJD students would like more flexibility in designing a program with more advanced skills

Better documentation that the unit has been able to close the loop on graduate program assessment

(2) List the standards with which the unit is not in compliance. None

(3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that should



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