

# Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

## Undergraduate program 2023-24

Name of Institution: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Rodney D. Bennett

Name of Unit: College of Journalism and Mass Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: Shari R. Veil

Date of 2022-2023 Accrediting Visit: Nov. 12-15, 2023

Date of the previous accrediting visit: Feb. 5-8, 2017

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

### **Recommendation by 2022-2023 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation**

#### **Team Chair**

Name and Title: Marie Hardin, Dean, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications  
Organization/School: Penn State University

*Signature*



#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: Kenn Gaither, Dean, School of Communications  
Organization/School: Elon University

*Signature*



#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: Joanna Hernandez, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, College of Journalism and Communications

Organization/School: University of Florida

*Signature*



#### **Team Member**

Name and Title: Andrea Miller, Dean & Professor, Frank W. & Sue Mayborn School of Journalism  
Organization/School: University of North Texas

*Signature*



## PART I: General information

**Name of Institution:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Name of Unit:** College of Journalism and Mass Communications

**Year of Visit:** 2023-2024

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

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission on Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges
- 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. 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 Nebraska State Legislature enacted legislation in 1869 establishing the University of Nebraska as a comprehensive, public, land-grant university. The university was designated as a land-grant institution under the Morrill Act of 1862.

### 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 full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit:** 2017

### 5. When was the unit or sequences within the unit first accredited by ACEJMC? 1954

### 6. Insert here the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

We nurture curious and creative minds to thrive in the ever-changing media and communication professions. Our inclusive "do from day one" experience is rooted in hard work, collaborative problem-solving and the ethical pursuit of truth to uphold democracy.

Adopted May 14, 2021

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

Number of weeks in a semester: 16

Number of weeks in a quarter:

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 3, 5 and 8

Number of weeks in intersessions: 3

**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.**

Bachelor's of Journalism

- Advertising and Public Relations
- Broadcasting
- Journalism
- Sports Media and Communication

**10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree:** 120 semester credit hours (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

**11. Give the number of credit hours students may earn for internship experience.** 3 (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

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

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Person in Charge (in 2022-23)
Advertising and Public Relations	Jemalyn Griffin
Broadcasting	Rick Alloway
Journalism	Matt Waite
Sports Media and Communication	John Shrader

**13. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:** 23,805

**14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed.**

Major	Fall 2022 Undergraduate Students
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Advertising and Public Relations	391
Broadcasting	128
Journalism	137
Sports Media and Communication	289

**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 for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2024 visits. 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.)**

<b>Fall 2023 Skills Course</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
ADPR 221.3 Strategic Writing	19
ADPR 221.4 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 221.5 Strategic Writing	16
ADPR 221.7 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 221.700 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 323.1 Copy & Concept	19
ADPR 333.1 Design & Layout	20
ADPR 358.1 UX/UI Design	13
BRDC 227.151 Audio Content Creation	15
BRDC 227.152 Audio Content Creation	15
BRDC 260.1 Media Writing & Content Development	20
BRDC 260.2 Media Writing & Content Development	6
BRDC 269.1 Video Production	20
BRDC 269.2 Video Production	20
BRDC 359.1 Cinematography-Videography	12
BRDC 372.1 News Writing for Audio	19
BRDC 375.1 Sports Broadcasting	10
BRDC 427.1 Podcasting	15
JOMC 131.1 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.2 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.3 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.4 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.5 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.6 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.7 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.8 Visual Communication Core Modules I	15
JOMC 131.11 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.951 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.952 Visual Communication Core Modules I	19
JOMC 131.953 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.954 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20

JOMC 132.7 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.8 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.951 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.952 Visual Communication Core Modules II	18
JOMC 132.953 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.954 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 133.1 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.2 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.3 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.4 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	18
JOMC 133.7 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.8 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.11 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.12 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	18
JOMC 133.13 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.951 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	19
JOMC 134.1 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.2 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.3 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.4 Visual Communication Project	9
JOMC 134.6 Visual Communication Project	17
JOMC 134.7 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.10 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.12 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.14 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.951 Visual Communication Project	19
JOMC 306.1 Visual Communications in Photojournalism & Multimedia	14
JOUR 200A.2 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.3 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.5 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.6 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.700 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.701 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	8
JOUR 200B.1 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting II	17
JOUR 200B.4 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting II	20
JOUR 304.1 Multimedia Journalism	20
JOUR 326.1 Sports Writing & Reporting	9
JOUR 346.1 Nebraska Mosaic	14
JOUR 490A.1 Global Eyewitness	10
SPMC 250.1 Beginning Sports Writing	20
SPMC 250.2 Beginning Sports Writing	20
SPMC 250.3 Beginning Sports Writing	20
SPMC 250.4 Beginning Sports Writing	13

SPMC 326.1 Sports Writing & Reporting	5
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<b>Spring 2022 Skills Courses</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
ADPR 221.3 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 221.4 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 221.700 Strategic Writing	20
ADPR 323.1 Copy & Concept	21
ADPR 333.1 Design & Layout	20
ADPR 433.1 Art Direction	10
BRDC 227.150 Audio Content Creation	14
BRDC 227.151 Audio Content Creation	12
BRDC 227.152 Audio Content Creation	2
BRDC 260.2 Media Writing & Content Development	20
BRDC 269.2 Video Production	21
BRDC 359.1 Cinematography-Videography	7
BRDC 433.1 Digital Motion Graphics	8
JOMC 131.2 Visual Communication Core Modules I	18
JOMC 131.5 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.6 Visual Communication Core Modules I	16
JOMC 131.7 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.951 Visual Communication Core Modules I	19
JOMC 131.952 Visual Communication Core Modules I	20
JOMC 131.953 Visual Communication Core Modules I	18
JOMC 132.1 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.2 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.3 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.4 Visual Communication Core Modules II	19
JOMC 132.6 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.8 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.9 Visual Communication Core Modules II	17
JOMC 132.12 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.951 Visual Communication Core Modules II	18
JOMC 132.952 Visual Communication Core Modules II	20
JOMC 132.953 Visual Communication Core Modules II	17
JOMC 133.2 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.3 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20
JOMC 133.5 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	15
JOMC 133.8 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	18
JOMC 133.9 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	20

JOMC 133.951 Visual Communication Advanced Modules	9
JOMC 134.2 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.3 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 134.5 Visual Communication Project	9
JOMC 134.6 Visual Communication Project	15
JOMC 134.8 Visual Communication Project	19
JOMC 134.10 Visual Communication Project	20
JOMC 306.1 Visual Communications in Photojournalism & Multimedia	11
JOUR 200A.1 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.2 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.3 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.4 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.7 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.8 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.10 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	19
JOUR 200A.12 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200A.700 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	21
JOUR 200A.701 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting I	20
JOUR 200B.1 Fundamentals of Editing & Reporting II	16
JOUR 303.700 Editing for Digital Media	20
JOUR 490A.1 Global Eyewitness	6
SPMC 250.1 Beginning Sports Writing	14
SPMC 250.2 Beginning Sports Writing	7

**16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2023–2024 academic year: \$5,715,907**

**Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: \$2,916,348**

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

**Assistant Professors (Tenure-Track)**

- Kelli Boling, Ph.D.
- Ciera Kirkpatrick, Ph.D.
- Michael Park, Ph.D. (Starting in January 2024)
- Brian Petrotta, Ph.D.
- Jason Stamm, Ph.D.
- Ryan Tan, Ph.D.
- Jessica Walsh, M.A.
- Linda White, Ph.D.

**Assistant Professors of Practice**

- Kristian Anderson, B.A.
- Sharon Baldinelli, Ph.D.
- Jemalyn Griffin, M.A.
- Chris Graves, B.A.
- Kenneth Fischer, M.A.
- Brian Hubbard, B.S.
- Dave Remund, Ph.D.
- Kaci Richter, M.A.
- Jill Martin, M.A.
- Shoun Hill, M.A.

**Associate Professors**

- Richard Alloway, M.A.
- Valerie Jones, Ph.D. (Fulbright in Spring 2023)
- Dane Kiambi, Ph.D.
- John Shrader, M.S.
- Adam Wagler, Ph.D.
- Bryan Wang, Ph.D.
- Changmin Yan, Ph.D.

**Associate Professors of Practice**

- Alan Eno, M.A.
- Michelle Hassler, M.A. (reduced to half-time in phased retirement in Fall 2023)

**Professors**

- Cory Armstrong, Ph.D.
- Frauke Hachtmann, Ph.D.
- Laurie Lee, Ph.D.
- Maria Marron, Ph.D.
- Bernard McCoy, M.S. (Sabbatical in Fall 2023)
- Shari Veil, Ph.D.

**Professors of Practice**

- Matt Waite

**Lecturers**

- Bill Doleman, B.J.
- Ahman Green, B.A.
- Rick Griffin, M.S.
- Madeline Wiseman, Ph.D.

**18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2023. Also, list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2023. (If your school has its accreditation visit in spring 2024, also provide the spring 2024 adjunct list in the updated information.)**

**Fall 2023**

Aksamit, Brandon  
 Bender, John  
 Benes, Mitch  
 Cox, Mollie  
 Dant, Kern  
 Dolan, Colby  
 Essex, Randy



Farley, Michaela  
Farris, Lauren  
Hernandez, Derek  
Higgins, Lauryn  
Jones, Allie  
McClure, Rhett  
Mitchell, Nancy  
Petersen, Victoria  
Peterson, Kelley  
Rowley, Ethan  
Schumacher, Paul  
Shipp, Stephanie  
Sims, Anna  
Sorensen, Erin  
Tarte, Nora  
Thiemann, David  
Thomas, Tyler  
Vickers, Elizabeth  
Wheaton, Daniel

**19. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates from the unit.**

2022-23 academic year: 336

2021-22 academic year: 323

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

The College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Nebraska -Lincoln has roots in the late 1800s, when the university offered its first course in journalism. In the 1920s, the School of Journalism was founded, and the School started a noteworthy expansion after World War II, with new quarters, broadcast news classes (in cooperation with the Speech Department), and courses in advertising, in partnership with the business school. That expansion continued through the 1960s, and, according to the College's [website](#), “[b]roadcasting and advertising majors joined the news-editorial majors as approved for [initial] accreditation in 1972.” The school’s FM radio station, KRNU, was granted an FCC license in 1970. The school became a stand-alone unit in 1979, was named the College of Journalism in 1985, and adopted its full name (College of Journalism and Mass Communications) in the 1990s. Will Norton, who became dean in 1990, led efforts to acquire a high-profile footprint on campus, and the former Security Mutual Life building was renamed Harold and Marian Andersen Hall. He was dean until 2009. Since then, a series of deans and interim deans led the College (five in the ensuing decade). Shari Veil has been dean since 2020. As the self-study notes, “The College of Journalism and Mass Communications is the third smallest in student enrollment among the eight undergraduate colleges at UNL. Despite its size, the college is vital in nurturing aspiring journalists and communication professionals, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to excel in their respective fields.” The College, which acts as a whole to offer four undergraduate majors and additional master’s degrees (not under review), was last reaccredited in 2017.

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

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

The College’s bylaws, updated in 2022, provide the following mission statement: “We nurture curious and creative minds to thrive in the ever-changing media and communication professions. As a national leader in experiential journalism and mass communications education, our inclusive ‘do from day one’ experience is rooted in hard work, collaborative problem solving, and the ethical pursuit of truth to uphold democracy.”

The College also has a five-year strategic plan, which was drafted in 2020 in a collaborative process that involved faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It was adopted in 2021. It has eight aims, which include launching an experiential learning lab, emphasizing research, prioritizing community in a way that recognizes and celebrates diversity, and engaging alumni, donors and the community more closely with the College.

**The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.**

Yes. <https://journalism.unl.edu/strategic-plan-2>

**Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented, plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?**

A Strategic Planning Committee oversees implementation of the plan. It meets regularly to discuss progress and assess ongoing priorities. The committee is led by the dean and includes faculty members and the Director of Business and Operations. The College has published several annual reports that outline the College's progress toward its aims, with detail about its targets. For instance, the 2022-23 report provides targets for Aim 1 (Launch a College-Wide Experience Lab) that includes an objective to "Increase four-year graduation rate from 54.4% to 57% by 2025-26. This is one of multiple targets related to Aim 1.

**(b) 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.**

**Characterize in depth the leadership of the unit as an agent for progress, advocate for the unit's fields of study within the university and aggressive connector with alumni. What significant achievements can be attributed to the leader? Has the leader built partnerships within the university? Is the leader seen as a strong advocate on matters of diversity, inclusion and equity? Is faculty and student diversity improving? Do scholars and professionals work collaboratively? Is creativity in curriculum, teaching and research sought and rewarded? Is the leader driving forward the curriculum (while respecting faculty governance and required process) to keep up with a rapidly changing media world?**

During the accrediting period under review, the College has been led by two deans and an interim dean. Since 2020, however, the College has been led by Shari Veil, chosen through a national search conducted by the university. The College's self-study reports that faculty see Dean Veil as "an innovator," "focused," "a go-getter," "strong leadership and creative ideas," "great networker" and "outstanding job on fundraising." The executive vice chancellor praised Dean Veil for uniting the College after a period of uncertainty under revolving leadership, then raising its profile and its contribution to the university and the disciplines. Other administrators at the university also praised her – and her administrative team – for their work with other units on such programs as media training, collaborative research as part of the university's Grand Challenges Initiative, and academic partnerships such as an NIL-related course with Athletics and the College of Business. See other standards in this site-team report for the College's progress on diversity and on curricular initiatives.

**(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).**

Yes.

**(d) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts them annually in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its websites.**

Yes.

**On indicators (e), (f) and (g) the site team should make sure the unit operates within accepted academic norms and need only report in detail on extraordinary situations, cases or variances from policy.**

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

Yes. They are outlined the College's Policies and Procedures, adopted in 2022.

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

Yes. Bylaws that include requirements for dean searches are on the website for the Office of the Chancellor.

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

There are multiple venues for such concerns to be expressed and addressed, depending on the issue. The university governs the process for faculty and staff; the College provides procedures for students as they relate to grade appeals.

**SUMMARY:**

After a period of uncertainty and unstable leadership, the College has a strong trajectory with a dynamic dean; strong and committed executive team; and faculty who are united (and excited) by a mission, vision and strategic plan that position it well in the university context and in relationship to its disciplines. It is poised for growth and continuing innovation.

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

## PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) Students in the unit complete academic requirements for a baccalaureate degree that meet the liberal arts and sciences/general education requirements of the institution. Programs may identify classes within the unit that contribute to a liberal arts and social sciences perspective for graduates from the unit.**

The university requirement of 120 hours to graduate includes 52 credit hours in the College and 60 hours elsewhere in the university to assure meeting the university's general education requirements known as "Achievement Centered Education," or ACE courses. Of the 60 hours under the ACE umbrella, CoJMC students must complete 27 hours of ACE courses outside the College, a minor outside the College or 12 more credit hours and the foreign language requirement.

**(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 values and competencies listed by the Council.**

The College demonstrates an appropriate range of courses among various theoretical, conceptual and skills courses. The required courses for all CoJMC majors melding theory and concepts include:

JOMC 101: Principles of Mass Media

JOMC 130: Introduction to Design Thinking

JOMC 222: Social Justice, Human Rights and the Media

JOMC 486: Mass Media Law

JOMC 487: Media, Ethics and Society

Within each major there are elective and required disciplinary-specific courses. A robust offering of topical electives augments each major, including courses in sports media relations and promotion, politics and media; race, gender and media and the social media landscape. There is some question among faculty and students regarding the current capstone offerings and whether they are varied enough or consistent with opportunities across academic areas. Broadcasting students wanted a more focused culminating experience, and designating the Experience Lab's Nebraska Nightly as a capstone course was cited more than once as a potential solution.

The College's curriculum map visually configures courses through a core-major, core-electives-core funnel model by the following academic sequences in the unit:

**Sports Media and Communication:** The Sports Media and Communication Major, the newest major in the College, is a mix of theoretical, conceptual and skills courses. Students in the major must complete general-education courses ("ACE" courses), along with a minor of their choosing and a foreign language requirement, as do other majors in the College. Major-specific courses provide a mix of concept courses, from a 100-level introduction course through a 400-level capstone. Courses cover writing, data visualization and analytics, media relations and promotions, and issues in sports media. The capstone course requires the completion of major media-related projects. Courses are designed to address most, if not all, of the ACEJMC values and competencies to varying degrees. There is a strong emphasis on writing for a variety of platforms in the major.

**Journalism and Broadcast News:** CoJMC students in journalism and broadcast receive various theoretical instruction in required courses such as JOUR 107 Information Gathering and JOUR 200b Fundamentals of Editing and Reporting II. Broadcasting and Journalism majors have also evolved to align the reporting curriculum while creating additional media production avenues for students. The program is balanced with professional skills courses that build on theory and concepts and help build students skill sets with hands-on learning through required courses such as multi-semester offerings of JOMC 197/297/397 Experience Lab. The Experience Lab is open to students starting their first year. Students work with student leads, faculty liaisons and professional mentors in the Experience Lab to build their skills while exploring professional interests in one of the College's media outlets or agencies.

**Broadcast Media Production:** The integration of journalism, broadcast news and broadcast production provides students with options to select electives that offer an integration of concepts and skills. Both Broadcast News and Broadcast Production students take the conceptual courses JOMC 486 Mass Media Law and JOMC 487 Media, Ethics and Society. Required skills courses include JOUR 107 Information Gathering and JOUR 200b Fundamentals of Editing and Reporting II. Students in each area then integrate concepts and skills in the capstone course now offered, JOUR 400 The Newslab, and through the now required JOMC 197/297/397 Experience Lab, as well as in the Data Journalism elective JOUR 307.

**Advertising and Public Relations:** The 27 required hours in the major include an introductory course, strategic writing, strategic development, applied research and one of the following: ADPR 429 Jacht Student Ad Agency, ADPR 439 Student Competitions or ADPR 489 Advertising and Public Relations Campaigns. An additional 9 elective hours from ADPR are required in suggested focus areas of brand management; creative; media, data and analytics; public relations; and global/multicultural communication, plus three more hours of coursework from one of the College prefixes.

**(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, synchronous or asynchronous, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital and technological media competencies.**

The College has made significant strides since the last site team visit. In 2017, it added the sports media and communication (SPMC) major, which is now the fastest-growing area in the College and its second largest major. In the period of review, it has also added a trio of graduate certificates in public relations and social media, financial communications and sports promotion, along with a minor in advertising and public relations and recently approved 4+1 master's degree.

The 2016-2017 site team identified two weaknesses in the last report, one related to the College budget model and a more specific structural issue in broadcast and journalism majors that "inhibits curricular innovation." Since that report, the College has integrated the journalism and broadcast news curriculum while broadening broadcast production options for students in video, audio and multimedia. Broadcast faculty report they are continuing to adjust the curriculum. Prior to the curriculum reinvigoration, each area had a distinct curriculum, and the structure created silos between broadcast news, broadcast production and journalism. To break down the silos and be more reflective of industry expectations, the College took steps to integrate the curriculum by adding shared writing classes and a new capstone that includes both broadcast areas and Journalism. It also made some required courses part of elective choices.

The College simultaneously expanded broadcast production, which traditionally focused on television news production, to now include video, audio and multimedia options. Broadcast faculty touted the

addition of advanced audio courses that they say were much needed in the broadcast and communication design areas. The restructure also addressed the problem of having a larger number of students in Broadcast Production that created challenges for the College to deliver the curriculum effectively. The restructure has not only mediated the imbalance but has also helped increase enrollment in that area. Faculty in the broadcast area say they meet often to review the changes to ensure the students are receiving the most up-to-date instruction.

Courses in the SPMC are offered in residence and in synchronous mode. Faculty and students report that the instruction is aligned with current industry demands, as faculty regularly consult with industry professionals to keep their courses current.

The College also boasts an impressive array of courses reflecting digital and technological media competencies including ADPR 358: UX/UI Design, JOMC 317: Video Games & Society, BRDC 427: Podcasting and its innovative 1-hour “pop-up” courses such as “How to get your drone license,” “the influencer economy,” and “PR in your pocket: How your mobile device makes you your own PR firm,” among others. Special-topics courses are also offered in the majors. For instance, in Fall 2023, students could opt to take a course on “Sport Betting and the Media,” which included guest speakers to help students understand the landscape related to the impact of gaming on journalism, media relations and media production.

Students roundly praised the quality of instruction they receive, extolling the wealth of opportunities in the College and hands-on learning experiences. Faculty are viewed as committed and highly supportive. One student noted, “We are not told what to do, we’re shown what to do.”

**(d) The unit demonstrates efforts to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.**

The College’s strategic planning process and biannual review of the college curriculum instituted in 2021-2022 has strengthened connections to its respective industries. The College has collaborated with professional media organizations and launched the Experience Lab, where students partner with faculty, professionals-in-residence and other students on real-world projects and stories. From the most recent curricular review by industry professionals, the College identified emergent themes, such as navigating AI, bolstering research skills and the importance of DEI, and the College illustrates responsiveness to these needs with specific modifications to its programming. Faculty report their teaching interests are acknowledged and supported and there is ample opportunity for professional development.

All students are required to enroll in three one-credit courses through the Experience Lab. While this curricular innovation is applauded, it will require considerable oversight. Some students expressed frustration about getting into their preferred Experience Lab course, and others questioned the quality of the work they were doing. How the College will balance motivated students who learn through doing with those who require more supervision and instruction in this experiential coursework will demand thoughtful attention, especially as enrollment grows.

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

With minor aberrations not meriting concern, the College consistently meets the 20-1 ACEJMC

requirement for skills courses. Most courses are in double digits, with several courses in single digits for enrollment.

**(f) 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. Units 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 hours).**

**When students take courses for internship credit at appropriate professional organizations, the unit must show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.**

**Students may take up to nine semester credits (or their equivalent) at professional media outlets owned and operated by the institution where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.**

The College does not require internships but strongly encourages them. Students can earn up to three credits for internship experiences. To financially support student interns, the college provides competitive internship awards through named funds. The College provides resources for students to find internships through a Weekly Career Bulletin, through faculty contacts and from relationships spawned through the Experience Lab. The site team concurred all academic programs in the College promote internships and professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them in awarding academic credit.

Students have interned at major media industries across Nebraska and nationally, and sports has emerged as a prominent area for UNL interns for a variety of professional teams and organizations and sports-related companies. The College also hosts media tours for students that often dovetail with alumni receptions in locations including New York, Chicago and Minneapolis. Through a collaboration with the Omaha World-Herald, the state's largest news organization, students can enroll in a one-credit-hour course taught by World-Herald staffers that can lead to one of four semester-long, paid World-Herald Fellowships who work out of one of the organization's bureaus. Students who successfully complete fellowships are eligible for a \$2,500 stipend at the end of the semester.

The College has a full-time career development specialist who tracks and assesses student internships, maintains the Career Bulletin, coordinates career fairs, manages a sophomore-level internship course and organizes media tours.

## **SUMMARY:**

The College has enhanced its curriculum and demonstrates a range of courses that are responsive to industry needs and trends. It has reduced silos across the unit and made curricular adjustments that are driven by faculty and insights from industry professionals. The Experience Lab nimbly fills the gap for students who do not intern by providing them with hands-on experience with coaching by faculty and professionals in residence. Students expressed great enthusiasm for the quality of their courses and opportunities in the College.

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



## PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a written assessment plan that has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media world.**

**The unit posts its assessment plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.**

The College's assessment plan is designed to jointly address UNL's Achievement-Centered-Education (ACE) outcomes assessment focus and ACEJMC's Professional Values and Competencies. Student learning outcomes are assessed through six measures. Two direct measures are the Berens Test, named after a former associate dean, and a capstone product review. The four indirect measures are a senior exit survey, internship employer survey, alumni survey and an industry professional survey and review that launched in spring 2023.

The College does not post its student learning outcomes assessment plan in a prominent location on its website. The unit accreditation webpage touts the College as the only accredited program of its kind in Nebraska and lists College retention rates through 2017, but no additional data related to assessment or student outcomes.

**(b) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the professional Values and Competencies" of the Council. (See Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.)**

The CoJMC assessment plan clearly lists ACEJMC student learning outcomes in tandem with the university's ACE program requirements. The College's assessment plan was developed and approved in 2013 and launched in 2014. The assessment plan provided to the site team was revised to fit ACEJMC's new standards, but there is insufficient evidence that the plan has been revisited in any structure way to ensure it meets the goals of the unit.

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

The written assessment plan focuses on ACEJMC values and competencies and the university ACE requirements. The plan identifies two direct measures (Berens test and capstone product review) and four indirect measures (senior exit survey, internship employer survey, alumni survey and an industry professional survey, added in the spring of 2023). As the newest direct measure, the capstone product review is the least developed of the measures. The assessment plan adequately explicates findings from the review, but how those findings emerged is less conclusive.

A review of assessment data in the three-year period prior to the site team visit illustrates two trends. One, the reporting of assessment data and student learning outcomes is not consistent. The measurements vary by year, with the Berens test one of the few consistent measures. Second is that the College's assessment measures are improving, with a wider range of direct and indirect measures, but those measures might be better formalized in an assessment plan that is clearly revised and modified and consistently applied to assess student learning outcomes.

**(d) At least one direct and/or indirect measure should include journalism and mass communication professionals engaged in assessment data collection.**

Two indirect measures include professional engagement in assessment data collection: Internship evaluation and an industry professional curriculum review. For the former, CoJMC student internship supervisors complete an evaluation survey predicated on ACEJMC's values and competencies. While that measure yielded valuable data and meets ACEJMC requirements, it includes 12 values and competencies rather than 10 under ACEJMC's new standards. In 2022-2023, 22 internship supervisors completed evaluations. The survey is generally in alignment with ACEJMC values and competencies with two caveats. The survey questions related to diversity are not in alignment with accreditation language. One survey question asks, "Demonstrates respect for colleagues from different countries." Second is the low response rate of internship supervisors in the summer and fall. While more than 86 percent of supervisors would hire their students again, the paucity of responses make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions, an issue exacerbated with the lack of historical data. Internship evaluation data is provided for several years in the period of review, but the unit does not clearly distinguish between student assessment of their internship and professionals evaluating students, indicating a need for more descriptive and accurate language around assessment.

Fourteen CoJMC alumni volunteered to evaluate the curriculum in 2022-2023. The relationship between the assessment tool and ACEJMC values and competencies is tenuous but does not rise to the level of a concern. Overall, alumni had a favorable response to the curriculum. The unit did not indicate whether this review is periodic or sustained, which might fit into a more structured assessment plan.

**(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction. There is substantial, concrete evidence of "closing the loop," generally and specifically. Multiple examples of "closing the loop" are evident.**

Despite some unevenness in assessment, the unit does make a strong case that it is using its assessment data to inform curricular improvements. In response to multiple measures showing weaknesses in research, data and analysis, the College developed new courses or reconfigured courses (and requirements) across majors at the 300-level to address this concern. The Experience Lab was borne out of the university emphasis on experiential learning and alumni feedback stressing real-world experience. The newly required JOMC Social Justice, Human Rights and the Media course acknowledged the need for more focused coursework in diversity which is supported by assessment data, and other elective courses with DEI issues are offered. Students said diversity is discussed in courses but note a disparity between those faculty who effectively incorporate it into their teaching and those who are more rote in their treatment of DEI.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The College is both instituting assessment measures and using data to close the loop. It makes a strong case that its curriculum and curricular innovation have been shaped through assessment measures. Those measures are inconsistently applied, however, and there is a need for a more sustained and organized approach to assessment. How the unit captures its efforts using current language reflecting ACEJMC values and competencies is another area that requires attention.

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

## PART II — Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

**(a) The unit has a written diversity plan that has been implemented and discussed annually, for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse, culturally proficient faculty, staff 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, identify underrepresented groups and articulate key performance indicators upon which the unit intends to focus and improve.**

The unit has a written five-year diversity plan that was approved by CoJMC faculty on May 12, 2023, and is posted on the College website. The plan, newly implemented, is the centerpiece of diversity committee meetings. The diversity plan ties directly to the professional values and competencies related to diversity. It has four components: developing a diverse and inclusive culture and climate; 2. creating an academic environment for student success; 3. incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion in the College curriculum; and 4. enhancing recruiting and retention efforts to increase diverse faculty and staff. Each component has five steps to fulfill the commitment includes assessment measures. The diversity plan does not include the unit's definition of diversity; however, a definition is included in the DEI Toolkit — a resource developed by the student-run advertising agency Jacht in partnership with the college's DEI committee. The toolkit provides tips and resources to support underrepresented students, faculty and staff.

**(b) The unit's curriculum creates culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit's curriculum includes instruction on issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.**

The College incorporates diversity, equity and inclusion across the curriculum. As an example, in 2022, JOMC 222 Social Justice, Human Rights and the Media was added as a requirement for all majors. This discussion-based class incorporates a book-club model where students read books and respond in smaller cohorts. The College's introductory courses outline basic concepts of cultural communication surrounding domestic and global diversity and required writing courses build on this awareness. The required JOUR 200a Fundamentals of Editing 1 course, for example, explores inclusive language and communication for diverse audiences.

**(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to enhance all faculty members' understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and ability to develop culturally proficient communicators capable of learning with, working on and advancing the value of diverse teams. The unit also demonstrates intentional efforts to recruit and retain faculty and professional staff who are from demographics that are historically, domestically marginalized.**

Efforts to enhance faculty members' understanding of DEI include inviting an instructional designer to promote professional development opportunities. Promotion is done via email with the Monday Morning Memo. The instructional designer also provides teaching tips, including how to make courses more inclusive and accessible, at the monthly all-college meetings. In addition, about 20 faculty members have participated in one of three additional classroom-focused diversity trainings, for example, the Catalyst Journalism Project, which brought together investigative reporting and Solutions Journalism, and The Poynter Institute's Diversity Across the Curriculum.

In matters of intentional efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty, the College has expanded its position advertisements to include diversity-focused organizations, publications and listservs. The College also analyzed its hiring funnel and collaborated with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to offer training and add diversity ambassadors to its search committees. Six searches for faculty conducted in fall 2022 resulted in four minority hires (two Black and two Asian-Pacific Islanders).

**(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit, retain and graduate a student population reflecting the diversity of the population the institution aims to serve.**

The College established several programs to support underrepresented students resulting in improved retention, increased enrollment, better four-year and six-year graduation rates, and reduced equity gaps between underrepresented groups and the broader student population. Comparing the fall 2017 cohort with the fall 2021 cohort, the College saw a 14.1% increase in the retention rate for underrepresented students, a growth of 10.2 percentage points from 72.2% to 82.4%.

The university and College have also placed increased emphasis on reducing equity gaps on campus. This effort has resulted in reducing the retention rate gap between underrepresented students and general College student population. For example, the gap was 7.4% in fall 2017; it fell to 5.3% for the fall 2021 cohort.

The College credits key initiatives such as expanding degree planning, early feedback campaigns and instituting required courses, such as JOMC 100 The First Year Experience and JOMC 222 Social Justice, Human Rights and the Media, in an effort to provide students with a foundational understanding of DEI. The College has also maintained a dedicated recruitment staff person, hired after the last site-team review, to support recruiting diverse students. The College has targeted high schools with diverse student populations for hands-on workshops with faculty and student ambassadors and established partnerships with community organizations.

The College also collaborates with the UNL Office of Academic Services and Enrollment Management and the UNL Office of Diversity and Inclusion on institution-wide diversity recruiting initiatives to recruit from Nebraska and target out-of-state and international students. Recruiting initiatives include representation of diversity and inclusion in materials, partnerships with community organizations and workshops in high schools with large, underrepresented student populations.

**(e) The unit demonstrates that it has an inclusive climate, 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 College has revised its policies and procedures to ensure a climate free of harassment. It has also created transparent mechanisms for DEI-related issues. It provides opportunities for professional development and growth. Faculty uniformly reported that the College is an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment and that there are mechanisms to address any rare occurrences.

**SUMMARY:**

The College, found out of compliance in the previous review cycle, has increased its faculty and student diversity, improved student success metrics, and integrated diversity across its curricula. When asked about diversity and inclusion, students cited examples of lessons they had learned and classes that deepened their understanding. The College's newly adopted diversity plan is an extension of the commitment it made in its strategic plan, adopted in 2021.

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

### Full-Time Faculty Population

Academic Year 2022-2023	CoJMC		% of total in unit	UNL		% of total in institution
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Black/African-American	3	0	7.9%	21	22	2.1%
White	13	18	81.6%	790	677	71.7%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0.0%	2	2	0.2%
Asian	2	0	5.3%	159	76	11.5%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	0	2.6%	54	39	4.5%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Two or more races	0	1	2.6%	6	4	0.5%
Other race	0	0	0.0%	4	2	0.3%
International (any race)	2	0	5.3%	127	62	9.2%
Subtotal	19	19	100.0%	1163	884	100%
Grand Total	38			2047		

\*Non-resident aliens are excluded from total.

### Part-time Faculty Population

	Male	Female	% of total in unit			% of total in institution
				Male	Female	
Black/African-American	0	2	4.7%	3	1	1.4%
White	19	20	90.7%	137	118	91.1%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0	0	0.0%	0	2	0.7%
Asian	0	1	2.3%	2	4	2.1%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	0	0	0.0%	3	7	3.6%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Two or more races	1	0	2.3%	1	1	0.7%
Other race	0	0	0.0%	0	1	0.4%
International (any race)	1	0	2.3%	3	2	1.8%
Subtotal	20	23	100.0%	146	134	100.0%
Grand Total	43			280		

## PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

#### **(a) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity and service.**

According to the self-study, full-time faculty have oversight of curricula, course design, and research, creative and service activities in the College. The site team confirmed this through faculty interviews on site and a review of records related to meetings of the faculty and the 9 standing committees that operate to oversee activities related to curricula and other areas of the College, including implementation of its strategic plan.

Furthermore, full-time faculty members teach the majority of courses. According to the self-study, the proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty members are:

2022-23 school year: 59.6%

2021-22 school year: 68.2%

2020-21 school year: 64.9%

#### **(b) The unit's faculty (full- and part-time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.**

The self-study makes the case that faculty are highly qualified through their professional experience and degree credentials. The self-study reports that during the 2022-23 academic year, 90 full- and part-time faculty, along with graduate students designated as instructors, taught courses across the College. Of the full-time faculty, the average years of industry experience is 14. The average for part-time faculty is 17 years. About half the full-time faculty hold terminal degrees; most of the remaining faculty hold a master's degree.

A review of faculty CVs indicates wide-ranging experience that works to the benefit of students. For instance, one faculty member has been a play-by-play announcer for four Olympic Games, another brings many years' experience as photo editor for the Associated Press, and another was co-founder and director of global integrated marketing communications agency. According to the self-study, two faculty members are Pulitzer Prize winners.

#### **(c) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear.**

The University of Nebraska is an R1 (very high research activity) university, thus the expectations for faculty members across the university are aligned with that designation. The College requires, supports and rewards scholarly and creative activity by its faculty, which is a balance between research-active (tenure-line) and professionally-oriented ("professors of practice") faculty. Evidence includes:

*Requires:* The university requires annual faculty evaluations across their areas of responsibility, including research/creative activity, teaching and service. The College has developed its own process for annual reviews and promotion and tenure reviews, where the expectations for scholarly productivity are outlined. These policies and procedures were adopted by the faculty in 2022.

*Supports:* The College supports scholarly activity by faculty through start-up packages for new hires, travel support, and the connection of faculty to resources provided at the university level. One example is travel funds that are provided through a grant program (the Seacrest Travel

Program), in which faculty can apply for support to present their research at conferences. Faculty can also apply for a Faculty Development Fellowship after full-time employment for six years; the fellowship provides leave for faculty to focus on scholarly projects.

*Rewards:* The College and the university rewards productive faculty through its merit process, a “Research Awards Program” for the College (outlined in its policies and procedures document) and through support to faculty in pursuing outside prestigious awards and honors.

In interviews, faculty members indicated that they received the support they needed, in the form of resources inside the College, connections to resources outside the College and to scholars in areas of interest in other academic units. They said they also understand the path toward promotion because they get regular, consistent and helpful feedback. They often attributed that to the leadership of the associate dean for research and faculty affairs, whom they said has been attentive to their needs and their advancement.

**(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.**

Faculty members attend major conferences in affiliated disciplines to present their research; they also share their research and other scholarly/creative activity through other venues such as publications, panels, public forums and university-sponsored events. An example of an event sponsored by the university is the “Research Slam,” in which faculty members are challenged to present their research in an “elevator-pitch” style. For the past three years, the College has won the competition.

The College has, in recent years, also expanded its profile beyond the university through its scholarly and creative activity. A comparison of the table provided in the 2017 site team report and the one at the end of this standard provide the evidence: 66 peer-reviewed journal articles produced during the most recent reporting period, compared to 40 in the previous (2016) self-study. At least part of the reason for this is the hiring, in recent years, of tenure-track, research active faculty at the assistant-professor rank.

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

Administrators in other units, from those leading university-wide undergraduate education and research initiatives to deans from the colleges of business, law, and arts and sciences, indicated that they see the College of Journalism and Mass Communications as an active collaborator and good citizen – a unit with high retention and graduation rates, a strong research trajectory, and a willingness to both support other units and lead initiatives. The College is “always on the lookout for opportunities,” said one administrator. In particular, the dean and both associate deans were called out for their eagerness to engage across the university and to connect College faculty to opportunities and networks.

#### **SUMMARY:**

During the review period, new faculty (both tenure-line and professors of practice) have brought new energy to the College related to teaching excellence and scholarly activity. They are supported by a focused administrative team and with policies and procedures that clearly align with ACEJMC standards related to faculty.

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

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals					Totals (39)
		Full Professors (8)	Associate Professors (10)	Assistant Professors (17)	Other Faculty** (4)		
Awards & Honors	62	13	26	22	1	62	
Grants Received Internal	23	5	18	9	2	35	
Grants Received External	28	12	16	4	0	32	
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	4	4	0	0	0	4	
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	7	5	6	2	1	14	
Books Edited	2	1	2	1	0	4	
Book Chapters	30	15	1	8	1	25	
Monographs	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Articles in Refereed Journals	64	10	23	33	0	66	
Refereed Conference Papers	102	51	19	52	0	122	
Invited Academic Papers	13	2	10	1	0	13	
Encyclopedia Entries	3	2	0	1	0	3	
Book Reviews	2	1	1	0	0	2	
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	28	10	3	16	0	29	
Juried Creative Works	11	5	6	1	0	11	
Non-juried Creative Works	18	5	6	7	0	18	
Other: invited presentations	42	17	13	12	0	42	



## PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

### Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

Students access information on degree planning in the Academic Catalog that UNL makes available online. The catalog contains degree requirements for each major along with academic policies. It is updated each fall and incorporates all curriculum changes. Students are introduced to this tool during New Student Enrollment, which occurs the summer before their first year. During New Student Enrollment, students also attend a degree-requirement presentation and complete a one-on-one academic advising session.

**(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.**

First-year and transfer students are required to take JOMC 100 The First Year Experience, an introductory course taught by their academic adviser, who helps them transition into college, understand the curriculum requirements and extracurricular opportunities available in their degree program. Students are also introduced to the Degree Audit, a university-sponsored tool available to all students to track progress toward their degree, in the class. Students reported varying degrees of satisfaction with this course and with academic advising, generally, in the College. Some said they were satisfied, but others said they were frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of helpfulness or timely, accurate information from their advisers.

In addition to Career Services, students report that faculty members are instrumental in connecting them with job openings in the industry. Faculty assist students in developing cover letters and resumes as well as advising them in job searches.

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

Communication about degree requirements continues after students' first year through individual meetings with their academic advisers, with whom they formed a relationship in JOMC 100. In addition, advisers inform students through the College's weekly student newsletter, Today@CoJMC, which is emailed to students each Monday. Students receive reminders and deadlines via email. During the semester they plan to graduate, students are required to enroll in a zero-credit hour course, JOMC 98 Senior Assessment. The course, administered by an academic adviser, is used to communicate graduation information and collect assessment data from graduating seniors.

**(d) The unit and institution provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities relevant to the curriculum and that help develop the students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.**

The College offers students extra-curricular opportunities with student media outlets such as radio station 90.3 KRNU; Buoy, a student-led advertising agency; Jacht Ad Agency; and the Nebraska News Service. Other college clubs and organizations include Ad Club; Creative Commons, an inclusive space for women interested in advertising and the creative arts; The Daily Nebraskan, an independent student-run publication; the Society of Professional Journalists; PRSSA, Sports Media Club and the Student Advisory Board.

**(e) The unit uses retention and graduation data to improve student services, such as advising, and to reduce barriers to student success.**

Enrollment, retention and graduation rates are collected and maintained at the university level using data available from PeopleSoft, the database used to collect student information. Responsibility for reporting rests on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics. In 2021, the university asked each college to develop plans to support student success to improve retention and begin to address equity gaps across campus. The plan outlines approaches to meet the experiential learning requirement for all UNL students, part of the university's strategic plan. The College regularly analyzes recruitment, retention and graduation rates and shares the findings in a regular column, By the Numbers, published in its weekly faculty and staff newsletter, the Monday Morning Memo.

**SUMMARY:**

The College leverages a wide range of tools to help students understand degree requirements, enroll in the courses they need, and graduate in a timely fashion. However, students' assessment of the trust they put in their College advisers varied widely. Even so, the College's track record – high retention and graduation rates – indicates that it is effective in fostering student success.

**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 unit provided a detailed annual budget totaling more than \$5.7 million for FY 2022-2023. The largest portion of the College's budget comes from state funds, and 93 percent of the state budget supports faculty salaries and benefits. Besides the state funding, the College has a diverse range of funding sources including revolving/auxiliary funds (such as a technology fee), sponsored program funds, self-generated revenue (Jacht Agency - \$51,000) and foundation/philanthropic funds.

The College underwent budget cuts in 2020 and again in 2023. The 2020 budget cuts were implemented across three years, while the 2023 budget cuts were implemented during the 2023 fiscal year. The College has been unable to consistently hire additional full-time faculty and staff in this accreditation cycle and relies heavily on the use of temporary instructors to meet growing student course demands. However, the budget cuts implemented this year drastically reduced the budget to hire part-time faculty. At the same time, enrollment and retention numbers in the College have increased.

The College has a significant endowment (\$25+ million) that enhances the resources available to help support the College's operations, curricular mission and strategic priorities. Technology fees are collected from students according to a formula that allow for equipment purchase that support student instruction. In FY 2022-2023, the College received \$59,000 in technology fees.

The College has identified its most urgent needs as faculty lines and funds to support strategic priorities. As part of a 2022 university-wide campaign launch, the College developed a list of resource needs totaling \$14.7 million and established a committee to work with potential donors and the University of Nebraska Foundation. The priorities are directly related to the College's strategic plan.

#### **(b) Resources provided by the institution are adequate to achieve the unit's mission and are fair in relation to those provided to other units.**

The self-study notes that the College's institution-provided resources are smaller than those for similar units on campus. Despite this challenge, the College has demonstrated remarkable operational efficiency, as confirmed by the executive vice chancellor, outpacing other colleges on campus in several key indicators. The College has seen 16.3 percent growth in first-time freshmen, a retention rate of 87.7 percent, and boasts a four-year graduation rate of 61.6 percent - all numbers that exceed the university overall. Despite having the second smallest state-aided budget, second-fewest faculty and fewest staff per student credit hour produced, the College appears to be making the most of its resources by delivering strong results on key university indicators. The College gets "great results on a shoestring budget," according to the executive vice chancellor.

Dean Veil has been successful in fundraising (and partnerships) to support the College's strategic goals and curricular innovation. Her efforts include securing a floor in the nearby Lincoln Children's Museum for Experience Lab agency spaces and the renovation and outfitting of the newly named Don & Lorena Meier Studio, where Nebraska Nightly takes place, also as part of the Experience Lab.

**(c) The unit’s facilities and information resources enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.**

The College operates in about 39,238 square feet of dedicated space across two buildings, Andersen Hall and the Lincoln Children’s Museum. Andersen Hall has been the College’s home since 2001 and houses all faculty and staff offices.

Parts of Anderson Hall have been renovated and reimagined since the last accreditation. Across three floors, students have an array of academic, creative and collaborative spaces. Some of the innovative spaces include a social media analysis space with Sprinklr sentiment analysis, a podcasting space with PTZ cameras, the Pepsi Unlimited Sports Lab, an experimental studio space with green screen and AI generation, a classroom that can be used for drone teaching, an entire row of audio booths and the newly renovated television studio. The College has a laptop requirement, but there is an open lab that contains 25 computers as an additional workspace. The checkout room with video and audio equipment in the Anderson Hall basement is currently sufficient in terms of size. An additional equipment room with audio and video equipment is housed in the Experience Lab in the Lincoln Children’s Museum.

In 2021, the College leased 9,464 square feet of vacant space on the third floor of the Children’s Museum. The entire floor has been transformed into workspaces to support advertising and public relations-related Experience Lab programs and competition teams (with spaces sponsored by agencies and businesses).

In all, across the two buildings, the Experience Lab appears to support the “do from day one” mantra of experiential education by containing areas for seven media outlets including 90.3 KRNU, Jacht Ad Agency and the Nebraska Nightly newscast.

Students and faculty said they were pleased with the facilities, classrooms and access to equipment. One new faculty member even said that when she was interviewing for her position it was the facilities that “sealed the deal” for her to join the College.

**(d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment, or access to equipment, and technical assistance needed to support student learning, curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty**

The College has two equipment checkout rooms (one in Anderson Hall and one in the Experience Lab) that include a variety of equipment to support instruction including JVC, DSLR, 360 and Go Pro cameras, which include the latest technology. Technology fees help support the purchase of cameras, lights and other equipment available to students for classes. Again, the students and faculty were pleased with the technology and equipment used to satisfy course requirements and hands-on training.

The College also provides technology support through three dedicated staff members who manage computer systems, studio facilities and equipment inventory to ensure smooth operations. The manager of the equipment lab was repeatedly mentioned as an amazing partner and resource.

While most were concerned about the state budget, the faculty enthusiastically said they felt very well supported in terms of resources. They also said they not only felt supported, but challenged to do things in fresh, new ways – whether in teaching or scholarly or creative research.

**SUMMARY:**

Looking at the metrics, the College is one of the most operationally efficient on campus yet has historically had a lower budget than other units. However, its \$25 million endowment helps fill budget gaps and allows for movement toward meeting strategic objectives. The needs continue to be faculty lines to accommodate enrollment growth. The College has increased its space significantly since the last review, and that space facilitates the College's mission and goals around experiential education. Students and faculty expressed great satisfaction with facilities, equipment and resources.

**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 actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

The College engages with alumni and professionals to keep curriculum and career preparation current, as well as to create pipelines for internships and jobs. The College has also in recent years hired a full-time alumni engagement and events coordinator.

The College has created boards and groups to receive alumni and professional input. For example, during the College's strategic planning process, the College enlisted groups of alumni and industry partners to work along faculty and staff. The Dean also enlisted another group of alumni to review syllabi in all of the curricular areas.

The Experience Lab is key to the College's experiential learning mantra and relies heavily on industry professionals. The College engaged local professionals to mentor students in the College's media outlets and agencies, as Professionals-in-Residence. The PIRs were not asked to volunteer personal time. Instead, Dean Veil engaged with editors, publishers, CEOs and owners to donate paid company time each week to the program. Each PIR visits campus for approximately 1.5 hours a week to mentor students. This approach was highlighted by alumni, industry professionals and students as critical to the development of "real-world" media-related skills. Networking with the PIRs was powerful and that the PIRs really "want to see you win," said one student.

One alumnus and hiring professional said that he is now drawn to mentor and help in classes and with events because of the increased effort he now sees from the administration to "take care of the kids" and get them prepared for industry.

**(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 long list of professional and public service activities makes it clear that faculty are engaged in their industries, research and teaching at award-winning levels. Faculty members regularly appear as panelists and leaders at national and international conferences for the media-related professions.

Many have held leadership positions with major organizations such as AEJMC, NCA, the American Advertising Federation and the Public Relations Society of America, as well as statewide and regional organizations. Many also contribute outside the classroom to student organizations within the College, for example, coordinating all of areas of the Experience Lab, including Jacht, Nebraska Nightly, KRNU, and directing the Nebraska News Service and scholastic press efforts. Faculty members serve as judges for national or regional journalism competitions, and many have been co-editors and reviewers for academic journals and conference papers.

**(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 College boasts an impressive list of engaging and diverse activities that show its commitment to its communities. It hosts regular lectures and training workshops, including the Seline Lecture Series that focuses on the future of Journalism; Hearst Visiting Professionals; and the Roper Visiting Professional in Sports Journalism.

In 2022-2023, the College launched media training workshops to help units on campus improve their employees' ability to interact with local media. Conducted by College faculty, five workshops were offered to graduate students in the College of Public Health. The success of the program has resulted in an expansion of workshops to local public health directors as well as the Nebraska National Guard and the U.S Strategic Command. A campus ROTC representative said this program was crucial for the preparation of his officers. Another campus administrator said these types of efforts, especially in the arena of public health, showed the College's commitment to the university's land grant mission.

The College's in-depth reporting program has won numerous awards as it highlights issues of social and community importance. In 2022, the College received a \$4.65 million pledge to create the Deepe Family Endowed Chair in Depth Reporting, which will allow for the hiring of two faculty members.

The College also hosts community programming that helps to increase knowledge of a participatory democracy including a congressional debate in 2023, a global policy forum and a forum partnership with a Nebraska nonprofit news organization to discuss issues facing the Nebraska Department of Corrections. Furthermore, a long-time faculty member hosts Campus Voices, which is designed to advance issues important to Nebraskans.

**(e) The unit supports scholastic journalism.**

The College regularly supports high school scholastic journalism. In 2015, the College launched a summer media academy where high school students from throughout the US came for a week-long, hands-on learning experience in journalism and media. Finally, the College has a history of supporting the Nebraska High School Press Association where one faculty member is assigned to serve as the association's executive director. The College hosts the association's fall convention, which brings hundreds of Nebraska high school students to the UNL campus to learn from College faculty and Nebraska journalists.

**SUMMARY:**

The College is actively engaged with both the academic and professional worlds through scholarship, leadership roles in organizations, and service. It provides numerous opportunities for students to interact with professionals, who frequently visit campus as part of the Experience Lab or speakers in classes and forums. The College also has a robust high school outreach program that also serves its communities.

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

## PART III: Summary by site visit team

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

#### Strengths

***A strong, committed administrative team.*** The dean is widely regarded as a dynamic and successful fundraiser and innovator, and the associate deans are seen as collaborative and service-oriented –making for a strong team to shepherd the College’s ambitions.

***A collegial, collaborative, “can-do” faculty.*** Faculty appreciate and praise their colleagues – and pitch in together on projects – from painting the Experience Lab to collaborating on strategic plan goals.

***A “do it from day one” mantra is lived by all first-year students.*** The university requires that all academic units give students experiential learning opportunities, and the College is committed to giving students hands-on experience as soon as they arrive on campus. Much of that experience comes through its Experience Lab, an array of co-curricular programs.

***Research momentum.*** The College, energized by the addition of new hires in recent years, is moving from partner to leader in engagement around some of the university’s research priorities.

***Curricular innovation.*** Faculty are encouraged to offer special-topics and “pop-up” classes that keep curricular offerings fresh; minors and certificates, such as that in esports, give it a cutting-edge feel.

***Facilities that support the College’s priorities.*** The College leverages its space, equipment and technology in ways that invite faculty to innovate and experiment; students to collaborate and create; and industry partners to invest time and resources.

#### Weaknesses and challenges

***Uneven experience with advising.*** Students report highly varied experiences with advising; although some express satisfaction, others express frustration. Transfer students and others who enter outside traditional first-year channels may not get the curricular and co-curricular guidance they need.

***The need for a more systematic, focused assessment.*** The College’s assessment plan needs to be revisited, and its assessment activities – including the engagement of professionals – must be carried out more consistently.

***The need to support historically marginalized students in the College.*** Despite data indicating that the College has increased its enrollment of URM students, they were rarely seen in Andersen Hall, nor does the College have dedicated affinity groups. Meanwhile, the University is cutting its diversity-related resources. This further opens the support gap for these students.

***The need to ensure the Experience Lab is sustainable as a high-quality requirement for all students.*** The College has institutionalized experiential learning through its Experience Lab. While it can be powerful for many students, ensuring that the Lab provides meaningful and substantive learning for all students required to participate will take careful planning and resources.

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

None.

### 3) In the case of a recommendation for accreditation or reaccreditation, with standard(s) not in compliance, list the deficiencies that need to be addressed before the next site team evaluation.

N/A



**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 *significant* deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance on 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 found out of compliance on Standard 3 (now 4). The team wrote, *The difficulty of recruiting diverse faculty and students to a Midwestern campus demands creativity, coordination and institutional support, and requires a diversity plan with accountability at its core and clear lines of authority and responsibility. Instilling diversity throughout the curriculum likewise demands a college-level commitment to ensuring that students are taught issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Individual faculty efforts at student recruiting appear to be ad hoc and remain sporadic, as evidenced by the fact that minority student numbers in the college are not substantially greater than in the last accreditation cycle.*

The College has worked diligently to address the deficiencies noted in the previous report, and this review found they had sufficiently done so to merit a finding of compliance. See Standard 4.

Two other weaknesses were noted:

- *A budget that is not sustainable and does not provide a foundation for growth.* The College, like other units at the university, continues to undergo a series of budget cuts, forcing difficult decisions. The College is recognized for its efficiency and strong “ROI,” and this most recent round of cuts was adjusted downward for the College in relationship to other units on campus as a result. The potential of going to a performance-based model promises to be a boon to the College, should it be enacted. Meanwhile, the dean wisely leverages endowment, gift and sponsorship funds to help fill funding gaps.
- *Current structure of the broadcast and journalism majors inhibits curricular innovation.* Curricular changes were made to the broadcast and journalism majors, allowing them to capitalize on the strengths of the other. Although faculty say there are additional improvements that should be made, there is more room for curricular innovation with the current plans for each major.

**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 thorough and useful. It did contain some repetition throughout (from standard to standard) and could have used a stronger proofread. The format for the study – as a microsite – sometimes made it challenging for site-team members to navigate the study for their purposes. However: The self-study contained the substance the site team needed and was generally correct. The team found occasional inconsistencies between the self-study and data provided in supplementary materials.