

Part 2

Circumstances and Scope of the Unit



Students conduct interviews at College Coffee, a weekly social gathering on campus

Highlights

- ❖ Elon has experienced a remarkable rise in quality and national stature since gaining university status in 2001 and now is ranked the No. 1 master's-level institution in the South.
- ❖ The School of Communications itself was established in 2000 and has grown to 1,250 students, representing 20 percent of Elon's student body.
- ❖ The full-time Communications faculty has grown from 11 in 2000 to 58 this fall.
- ❖ Elon's teacher-scholar-mentor model places teaching first, with professional activity (scholarship) and contributions to the life of the university (service) as co-equals.
- ❖ In 2016-17, the school moved into new and renovated facilities that more than doubled its space in the historic heart of campus.

Part 2: Circumstances and Scope of the Unit

1. Complete and attach here in the main body of the self-study report the following tables:

Table 1, “Students”

Table 2, “Full-time Faculty”

Table 3, “Part-time Faculty”

Table 1, on the following page, shows the School of Communications was home to 1,310 undergraduate and graduate students during the 2016-17 academic year. Those receiving degrees in May 2017 totaled 334 undergraduates (284 Communications majors, 50 Sport Management majors) and 25 graduate students.

Table 2 shows that the school has built a faculty with considerable professional and teaching experience. The 58 full-time faculty members in fall 2017 average almost 12 years of professional experience and 14 years of full-time college teaching experience.

Elon defines faculty roles using different terminology than teaching, research and service. Elon calls these roles *Teaching*, *Professional Activity* (scholarship + professional service), and *Contributions to the Life of the University* (service on campus only). As a benchmark based on each course representing 10 percent, a faculty member teaching six courses a year would have an allocation of 60 percent teaching, 20 percent professional activity, and 20 percent contributions to the university. With course reassignments for scholarly pursuits or course releases for service such as advising student media, the overall allocation of faculty effort in the School of Communications in 2017-18 averages 45 percent teaching, 28 percent professional activity, and 27 percent contributions to the life of the university.

The chart below shows that faculty, on average, are teaching one less course a year compared to 12 years ago. Half of that time reallocation is devoted to scholarship through an increasing number of sabbaticals and course releases, and the other half is allocated to university service as School of Communications faculty increasingly are tapped for important campus roles.

	Teaching	Professional Activity	Contributions to University
2005-06	54%	23%	23%
2011-12	49%	23%	28%
2017-18	45%	28%	27%

This is in line with Elon’s teacher-scholar model that calls *teaching* the first criterion and *professional activity* and *contributions to the life of the university* as co-equal second criteria.

Table 1. Students (May 2017)

List below each of the separate programs of study in the unit. These may be called emphases, concentrations, sequences, or majors; please identify each program with a separate set of requirements. Please also provide separate listings for all graduate programs in the unit. Give the number of students by

class (year in school) in each of these programs at the end of the 2016-17 academic year. Show the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees conferred during academic year 2016-17. Please include all semesters or quarters. If the unit has a formal pre-major status, list the number of such students.

Undergraduate/Graduate programs of study	<u>Number of Students</u>					Total students	<u>Degrees Conferred 2016-17</u>	
	<u>frsh</u>	<u>soph</u>	<u>jr</u>	<u>sr</u>	<u>prof. master's</u>		<u>bachelor's</u>	<u>master's</u>
Journalism	48	43	40	38		169	38	
Strategic Communications	102	133	155	162		552	162	
Cinema & Television Arts	40	46	49	58		193	58	
Communication Design	43	35	34	17		129	17	
Media Analytics	17	28	15	9		69	9	
Sport Management	33	41	47	50		171	50	
M.A. in Interactive Media					27	27		25
Total						1,310	334	25

Table 2. Full-Time Faculty (Fall 2017)

	years full-time professional experience	years full-time college teaching	years on this faculty	years at present rank	highest earned degree	tenured (y/n)	credit hours taught 2017-18	teaching	prof. activity	contribs to univ
Unit Administrator										
Paul Parsons	10	33	17	27	PhD	Y		dean		
Professors										
Janna Anderson	21	18	18	4	MA	N	16	40	30	30
Brooke Barnett	3	17	17	5	PhD	Y		associate provost		
David Copeland	8	24	17	14	PhD	Y	12	30	30	40
Kenn Gaither	8	14	14	2	PhD	Y	8	20	20	60
Harlen Makemson	12	16	16	4	PhD	Y	12	60	20	20
Associate Professors										
Bill Anderson	20	10	3	7	PhD	N	16	40	40	20
Vanessa Bravo	11	7	7	1	PhD	Y	20	50	30	20
Lee Bush	19	14	14	8	MS	N	12	30	50	20
Naeemah Clark	9	17	9	5	PhD	Y	12	30	30	40
Vic Costello	8	23	17	17	PhD	Y	12	30	30	40
Jessica Gisclair	3	24	18	14	JD	Y	8	20	20	60
Don Grady	11	38	33	25	PhD	Y	8	20	20	60
Ben Hannam	10	16	4	4	MFA	N	24	60	20	20
Anthony Hatcher	4	31	16	3	PhD	Y	12	30	50	20

	years full-time professional experience	years full-time college teaching	years on this faculty	years at present rank	highest earned degree	tenured (y/n)	credit hours taught 2017-18	teaching	prof. activity	contribs to univ
Dan Haygood	20	14	9	4	PhD	Y	20	50	30	20
Derek Lackaff	1	8	8	2	PhD	Y	12	30	20	50
Richard Landesberg	22	14	14	8	PhD	Y	20	50	20	30
Byung Lee	8	23	22	17	PhD	Y	8	20	50	30
Julie Lellis	6	11	8	4	PhD	Y	12	30	20	50
Barbara Miller	6	12	12	6	PhD	Y	8	20	30	50
Phillip Motley	17	13	9	4	MID	Y	16	40	20	40
Tom Nelson	10	28	22	12	MA	N	24	60	20	20
George Padgett	8	38	28	30	PhD	Y	20	50	30	20
Glenn Scott	24	15	14	8	PhD	Y	24	60	20	20
Michael Skube	22	16	16	10	BA	N	24	60	20	20
Amanda Sturgill	13	21	8	8	PhD	Y	20	50	30	20
Frances Ward-Johnson	10	20	15	15	PhD	Y	12 (fall leave)	30	30	40
Qian Xu	1	8	8	2	PhD	Y	8 (maternity)	20	30	30

Visiting Associate Professor

John Doorley	33	9	3	3	MA	N	20	50	20	30
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Assistant Professors

David Bockino	7	4	4	3	PhD	N	12	30	40	30
Ahmed Fadaam	9	13	6	6	PhD	N	24	60	20	20
Gerald Gibson	11	30	30	30	MA	N	24	60	20	20
Sana Haq	3	2	2	2	MFA	N	20	50	30	20

	years full-time professional experience	years full-time college teaching	years on this faculty	years at present rank	highest earned degree	tenured (y/n)	credit hours taught 2017-18	teaching	prof. activity	contribs to univ
Denise Hill	32	4	4	2	PhD	N	20	50	30	20
Jooyun Hwang	4	3	3	2	PhD	N	24	60	20	20
Ray Johnson	4	34	34	34	MFA	N	24	60	20	20
Doug Kass	24	8	10	2	MA	N	20	50	30	20
Alex Luchsinger	7	1	1	1	PhD	N	20	50	30	20
William Moner	8	12	5	3	PhD	N	16	40	40	20
Max Negin	13	11	9	8	MFA	N	8	20	50	30
Youssef Osman	10	7	6	6	MFA	N	24	60	20	20
Kathleen Stansberry	8	6	1	6	PhD	N	20	50	30	20
Jessalynn Strauss	4	6	4	6	PhD	N	on leave			
Nagatha Tonkins	8	30	10	16	MA	N	internship director	50	0	50
Nicole Triche	9	10	10	8	MFA	N	20	50	20	30
Brian Walsh	10	8	5	8	MFA	N	24	60	20	20

Senior Lecturer

Randy Piland	27	13	13	7	MA	N	28	70	10	20
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Lecturers

Kelly Furnas	14	8	2	8	MBA	N	20	50	20	30
Staci Saltz	3	15	15	13	MA	N	24	60	10	30
Hal Vincent	10	9	5	5	MA	N	20	50	20	30
Ryan Witt	10	2	2	2	MA	N	24	60	20	20

- Professor and Lecturer ranks (previous pages) are permanently funded faculty positions
- Full-time Instructors (below), while full time, are fixed-term teaching appointments

	years full-time professional experience	years full-time college teaching	years on this faculty	years at present rank	highest earned degree	tenured (y/n)	credit hours taught 2017-18	teaching	prof. activity	contribs to univ
Full-Time Instructors										
Lorraine Ahearn	25	3	3	3	PhD	N	24	60		
Brandon Booker	1	2	1	1	MA	N	24	60		
Carolyn Desalu (pre-doc)	6	1	1	1	BFA	N	12	30	50	20
Michele Lashley	27	12	12	12	MA+JD	N	20	50		
Frances Rodenbough	6	1	1	1	MA	N	24	60		
Elma Sabo	26	6	7	7	MA	N	24	60		

Table 3. Part-Time Faculty (Fall 2017)

	years full-time professional experience	years college teaching	highest earned degree	now working full-time as professional (y/n)	now working toward degree here (y/n)	credit hours teaching this semester	teaching responsibilities: in charge of course lectures	assists teacher in charge
Administrative Staff Who Teach								
Colin Donohue (Student Media director)	2	10	MA	N	N	4	✓	
Jonathan Jones (Open Gov't director)	9	5	MA+JD	N	N	4	✓	
J McMerty (Elon in LA director)	7	12	MFA	N	N			
Part-Time Instructors								
Gary Davis	35	2	MA	Y	N	4	✓	
Sharon Eisner	8	18	MA	N	N	8	✓	
Mark Fox	30	28	MA	Y	N	8	✓	
Amy Hogan (psychology professor)		12	PhD	N	N	3	✓	
J.P. Lavoie	15	2	MS	Y	N	3	✓	
Mark Tosczaak	23	3	MBA	Y	N	4	✓	

2. Describe the history of the unit in no more than 500 words.

The School of Communications was established in 2000 to prepare students for the rapidly evolving media and communications landscape. Today, the school is home to 20 percent of Elon's student body, joining the School of Business, School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences as the university's academic units for undergraduates. Elon also has two graduate-only schools: a School of Law and School of Health Sciences.

The teaching of journalism at Elon began 100 years ago. A course titled "Argumentation, Debating and Newspaper Writing" was first offered in 1917-18, and the course "Journalism" was taught in 1923-24, complementing a weekly student newspaper that began in 1919. Journalism was a component of the Department of Literature and Languages until 1980, when the department was renamed Literature, Languages and Communications with a major in English-Journalism. A Department of Journalism and Communications was established in 1988 and, by the end of the decade, had become the second-largest program on campus, trailing only business administration.

The size and quality of the program led Elon to elevate it to school status in 2000. The School of Communications, then with 11 permanent faculty members, moved into Elon's former library, McEwen Building. Paul Parsons, a professor and journalism head at Kansas State University, became founding dean in 2001 and was tasked with securing ACEJMC accreditation and guiding the school to excellence and national prominence.

The decision to pursue accreditation transformed the school in many ways. The school adopted a new curriculum, reduced class sizes in skills courses to 18, required an internship of all students, added a full-time internship director, cut in half the advising loads for faculty, and raised the school's scholarly and service profile while maintaining excellence in teaching. In 2007, the school created the Elon in Los Angeles program. In 2009, the school began an M.A. in Interactive Media degree. In 2015, the school partnered with the business school to offer a Corporate Communications concentration in a new M.S. in Management degree.

The school offers many opportunities for students to put their learning into practice, and student success has followed. Students have won two collegiate Emmys (the latest in 2016 for best TV magazine show) and collectively finished in the national Top 10 in writing and multimedia in the 2016 Hearst Journalism Awards and in the Top 10 in broadcast in 2017. Student agency Live Oak Communications won gold and silver ADDYs from the American Advertising Federation. In 2015, the White House News Photographers Association named an Elon journalism major as national Student Photographer of the Year, and Elon was one of five finalists in the 2017 Coca-Cola/Regal Films student filmmaker competition.

In other highlights, the school houses the North Carolina Open Government Coalition, publishes the nation's only undergraduate research journal in communications, received AEJMC's Equity & Diversity Award for its faculty diversity and gender equity, and sends students across the globe every year to cover Internet Governance Forums. In 2017, the student-produced *College Magazine* ranked Elon as having the second-best communications school in the nation, behind only Syracuse.

3. Describe the environment in which the unit operates, its goals and plans, budgetary considerations, and the nature of the parent university.

Elon has experienced a remarkable rise in quality and national stature since moving from college to university status in 2001. Today, Elon is the third-largest private institution in North Carolina, after Duke and Wake Forest, and has an intense focus on engaged learning.

U.S. News & World Report ranks Elon first among master's-level universities in the South and as the nation's leader in academic programs that lead to student success. In 2017, for the third year in a row, Elon is the only university cited as outstanding in all eight categories (undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, writing in the discipline, first-year experiences, service learning, senior capstone and learning communities). Yale, Stanford, Brown and Michigan are recognized in six, with Duke and Northeastern in five.

More Elon students study abroad than at any other master's university in the nation, and the university campus is designated as a botanical garden. Elon is even the subject of a book highlighting the ascent, *Transforming a College* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

Elon receives about 10,000 applications a year for 1,550 seats in the entering class. The average SAT score has risen to the top quartile of those taking the SAT nationally, and the first-year retention rate is 91 percent. The student body represents 49 states and 50 nations. A quarter of Elon's students come from North Carolina, followed by Massachusetts (9%), New Jersey (8%), New York (7%), and Connecticut, Maryland and Virginia (6% each).

Once enrolled, students freely select their major without further entrance requirements. Currently, 43 percent of undergraduates are pursuing a major in Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences; 33 percent in the School of Business; 20 percent in the School of Communications; and 4 percent in the School of Education. The university operates on a 4-1-4 academic calendar, with a winter term (January) between the fall and spring terms.

Elon was founded in 1889 by the Christian Church (now the United Church of Christ), and it is best described today as an historic affiliation. No religion courses or activities are required of students.

Under the leadership of President Leo M. Lambert, the institution changed its name from Elon College to Elon University in June 2001 and also changed the mascot to the Phoenix, in remembrance that Elon College burned to the ground in 1923 and, like the mythical bird, rose from the ashes.

While Elon's student population has grown about 25 percent in the past decade, the institution's core values have remained constant: close relationships between students and faculty, a culture that supports innovation, and a strong sense of community. Each Tuesday morning, students and faculty socially gather on a plaza for College Coffee.

Elon's recognized weakness is the size of its endowment, which is currently at \$232 million. While the endowment has almost tripled in a decade, it remains small by private university standards. One result is that Elon has one of the lowest tuition-discount rates in the nation (17%) because it provides fewer scholarships through the endowment and returns fewer tuition dollars in the form of scholarships.

Yet, unlike many universities, Elon is not experiencing budget woes. It benefits from the basics: more students, higher tuition, improved retention, and budgetary strategies for investing savings toward making the university better. The student-faculty ratio has declined from 15:1 a decade ago to 12:1 today. The university has no large-lecture classes, and all Communications courses have a class cap of 15, 18, 25 or 33 students.

Elon is on a steady march of transitioning from the teaching-only institution that it was 30 years ago (when faculty typically taught eight courses a year) to a teacher-scholar-mentor model. While six courses a year remains the stated standard, a diminishing number of faculty members teach that many courses each year. The university has created multiple ways to secure course reassignments for scholarly, creative and institutional service purposes.

The university's 10-year strategic plan, called *The Elon Commitment*, is organized around eight themes:

- ❖ *An unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement*
- ❖ *Supporting a world-class faculty and staff*
- ❖ *Attaining the highest levels of achievement across our academic programs*
- ❖ *Launching strategic and innovative pathways in undergraduate and graduate education*
- ❖ *Stewarding Elon's commitment to remain a best-value university*
- ❖ *Developing innovative alumni programs to advance and support the Elon graduate*
- ❖ *Establishing a national tournament tradition of athletics success along with the highest academic standards for Phoenix athletics*
- ❖ *Significantly enhancing Elon's campus with premier new academic and residential facilities and a commitment to protecting our environment*

Each theme is developed with a set of goals to achieve by the year 2020. For example, the diversity theme commits to doubling need-based financial aid, tripling international student enrollment, and providing 100 percent study abroad access. The final theme includes expanded facilities for the School of Communications, which was accomplished this year.

4. Describe any recent major changes in the mission, goals, or programs and activities of the unit.

In 2016-17, the School of Communications moved into new and renovated facilities that more than doubled the school's space and united student media in a collaborative environment. The school also has implemented four major initiatives in the past three years.

New facilities for the School of Communications

Because of continued growth, the School of Communications expanded into a modern four-building complex during the past year. Two existing buildings were renovated, and two new buildings were constructed to form a communications commons at the historic heart of Elon's campus. The facilities include 17 classrooms and labs, two television studios and control rooms, a 220-seat movie theatre and 70-seat screening room, a media sandbox to promote collaboration, 19 video edit suites, a Foley sound-effects studio, and individual spaces for student media and school initiatives.

New majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics

The school implemented new undergraduate majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics in fall 2014, joining multiplatform communications majors in Journalism, Strategic Communications and Cinema & Television Arts (AB and BFA). All students in the school take opening conceptual, writing and producing courses and a common set of advanced courses, along with 20 hours in each major plus electives.

New graduate degree with a Corporate Communications concentration

In 2015, the School of Communications partnered with the business school to begin an M.S. in Management degree with a concentration in Corporate Communications. Half of the curriculum consists of MBA courses taught by business faculty, and the other half consists of corporate communications courses taught by Strategic Communications faculty. The program is designed for full-time completion in one year, or part-time completion spanning two or more years.

Maroon Sports in partnership with Athletics

In 2017, the school created Maroon Sports as a live-event production unit for students. This fulfilled a university priority for the School of Communications to work with Elon Athletics to enhance the broadcasting and live streaming of games at an ESPN quality level. The school has hired a coordinating producer to guide the effort. Maroon Sports is expected to produce about 40 games a year.

An expanded Elon in Los Angeles program

The school began a summer Elon in LA program in 2007 and expanded it in 2016 to include a spring semester program for about 20 students. The plan is to offer a fall semester program in 2018 or 2019 to create a year-round Elon in LA program.

5. If the unit was previously accredited, summarize each deficiency noted in the most recent accreditation report that the site team said should be addressed, followed by a response to each, explaining actions taken to address the problems and the results.

The 2011-12 site team found the school in compliance on all standards for the undergraduate and graduate programs and cited no deficiencies to be addressed. In fact, the site team chose not to list anything as a *weakness* either, instead listing 17 *strengths* and five *challenges*.

Three challenges were cited for the undergraduate program:

“Needs to continue its efforts, with appropriate university support, to enhance its private fundraising, especially with the construction of a new building on the horizon.” The challenge was met with the \$15 million building campaign completed seven months early and new facilities opening in 2016-17.

“Needs to continue its efforts to increase university-generated financial support for its Communications Fellows program.” The Fellows program attracts outstanding students to Elon, but fewer than half receive a \$5,500 Fellows scholarship each year. The insufficient scholarship funding sometimes caused the school to lose outstanding applicants. In 2017, the university committed to a three-year plan for all Communications Fellows to receive Fellows scholarships.

“Needs to continue to wrestle with the effective and uniform integration of digital technology into the curriculum and with the teaching of software versus the teaching of its application.” We have a better integration of technology in the curriculum today than six years ago when we were wrestling with classroom time devoted to software instruction. The school has added a video producer position to provide more outside-of-class software training.

Two challenges were cited for the graduate program:

“Needs to shore up its focus on diversity as a priority in recruiting and creatively, effectively incorporate awareness and understanding of diversity more broadly across the curriculum.” Half of the current class in the M.A. in Interactive Media program identify either as African American or Latino. In the past six years, roughly a third of iMedia students have contributed to a diverse graduate student population. The curriculum highlights the need for inclusiveness and accessibility in web design, and iMedia students gain a global perspective by traveling abroad to complete an interactive project for the public good.

“Needs to develop well-defined programmatic learning objectives – explicitly incorporating the ACEJMC professional values and competencies beyond those implied in the mission statement – to guide curriculum, assessment and strategic planning.” Six years ago, the graduate program had not explicitly incorporated ACEJMC’s values and competencies into a curriculum matrix. The program now has done so, with programmatic learning outcomes.

6. Describe the process used to conduct the self-study, including the roles of faculty members, students and others. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the program discovered during the process, and describe any changes undertaken or planned as a result.

The self-study process formally began with focused faculty meetings during Planning Week in August 2016. The faculty welcomed new colleagues and reviewed the school's mission, assessment outcomes, budget, technology and anticipated searches before plunging into developing a new five-year strategic plan for the school. That process led to a sharing of ideas to further improve the school.

During the year, faculty committees focused on areas related to the self-study such as diversity, teacher-scholar, technology, student awards and assessment, and the Student Advisory Board provided student feedback on facility and technology needs and curricular perspectives.

The writing of the self-study report was a group effort. The dean, associate deans and graduate director wrote working drafts of standards during summer 2017, incorporating university data and the contributions of faculty committees and individuals. Faculty and staff reviewed and deepened the self-study at the August 2017 retreat before it was put in final form and forwarded to ACEJMC headquarters and to the site team.

These strengths of the program were identified during the self-study year:

- ❖ *An outstanding faculty of teacher-scholar-mentors with broad professional experience*
- ❖ *An accomplished staff focused on excellence and student success*
- ❖ *A nimbleness in the school's leadership to implement good ideas*
- ❖ *A collaborative and collegial environment that looks at the discipline holistically*
- ❖ *Small classes to promote student-faculty interactions and student engagement*
- ❖ *Excellent facilities, technology and budget*
- ❖ *Student media and school programs that offer students quality experiences*
- ❖ *First-rate internship and career services programs in the school*
- ❖ *An innovative M.A. in Interactive Media program*
- ❖ *An increasingly diverse faculty and student body*
- ❖ *An assessment process that produces meaningful results and improvement*
- ❖ *Leadership in campus priorities such as the academic-residential initiative*
- ❖ *Highly supportive university administration*
- ❖ *A young, successful and supportive alumni base*

The self-study process also revealed some challenges, listed here with changes undertaken or planned:

- ❖ *Organizational structure.* The Communications faculty is five times larger today than when the school was established in 2000. By faculty choice, Communications remains a single unit with a department chair who does all course scheduling and faculty evaluations and is assisted by two associate chairs. Organizational structure will return as a faculty conversation later in the academic year.
- ❖ *Maintaining a sense of community.* Growth of the school, both numerically and physically, challenges the sense of community that pervades the faculty and staff. Faculty spread across multiple buildings may not see one another as much, so the school established a COMMONS room roughly in the middle in hopes it serves as a community meeting place.
- ❖ *More graduate student scholarships.* As the price tag rises amid a multitude of graduate degree options, the M.A. in Interactive Media program will need to increase its discount rate from the current 10 percent of tuition returned as scholarships.

7. Provide the web links to catalogs and other publications that describe the mission and scope of the unit, its curriculum, administrative and graduation requirements.

Key documents are the [2017-18 Academic Catalog](#), [Elon Core Curriculum](#) requirements for all undergraduate students, [School of Communications majors and degree requirements](#), and a master list of all [undergraduate Communications courses](#).

The [2017-18 Graduate Catalog](#) is available online.