

## Standard 1

# Mission, Governance and Administration



Dean Parsons welcomes the Communications Advisory Board, faculty and students in Williams Studio

## Highlights

- ❖ Elon takes academic planning seriously. The School of Communications develops five-year strategic plans and operates with a series of annual priorities.
- ❖ The school has seven standing committees: Awards & Competitions, Curriculum, Diversity, Communications Fellows, Library, Teacher-Scholar and Technology.
- ❖ The founding dean is in his 17th year, assisted by two associate deans, a department chair, a graduate program director and an outstanding staff.
- ❖ A Communications professor is 2017-18 chair of Academic Council, which is the elected faculty governance body at the university, and three of the university's seven Faculty Fellows are Communications faculty.

# Standard 1. Mission, Governance and Administration

## **1. Describe the administrative structure of the unit, including to whom the unit administrator reports within the university. Include names and titles. The information should extend from the lowest level of administrative responsibility within the unit to the institution's chief executive officer.**

The dean is the chief academic and administrative officer of the school. The dean works with the school's faculty and staff to build an outstanding program and is responsible for strategic planning, school quality, personnel, budgets, technology, facilities, faculty development, public service and accreditation. Paul Parsons came to Elon as founding dean in 2001 following 16 years at Kansas State University, including a year each as a Fulbright Professor in China and as a visiting professor in Singapore. He holds academic rank as a tenured full professor, which he earned at Kansas State.

The dean reports to Provost Steven House, who became the university's chief academic officer in 2009 following eight years as dean of Elon College, the College of Arts & Sciences. The provost reports to President Leo M. Lambert, who is in his 19th year as Elon's president. President Lambert has announced he will step down upon the selection of a successor, and a national search is underway for Elon's ninth president in its 128-year history.

Associate deans in the School of Communications handle internal administrative matters such as assessment of student learning and provide oversight of the school's programs, centers and student experiences. Don Grady and Kenn Gaither both became associate deans in 2010. Grady served the preceding six years as department chair, and Gaither directed the Communications Fellows program. Both hold academic rank and are tenured.

The department chair is a faculty member who accepts leadership responsibilities for a designated period of time. The chair coordinates course schedules, teaching assignments, hiring of adjuncts, student advising, and annual faculty reviews. Jessica Gisclair became department chair for a four-year term in 2010 after serving for a year as associate chair, and she accepted a second four-year term in 2014. She is assisted by two associate chairs: Julie Lellis and Vic Costello. Associate chairs are responsible for classroom observation, annual review of adjunct faculty, admissions events, student awards selection, periodic meetings of students and faculty by major, and other duties as assigned by the chair.

The director of the M.A. in Interactive Media program is a faculty member who coordinates teaching assignments and programmatic initiatives on the graduate level. David Copeland became director of the graduate program in 2008. He is the A.J. Fletcher Distinguished Professor in the School of Communications.

**2. Describe the unit's process for strategic or long-range planning. Provide a copy of the unit's written strategic or long-range plan. This plan should give the date of adoption and revision and any timeline for achieving stated goals. Discuss how the plan provides vision and direction for the unit's future and how it has encouraged and contributed to quality and innovation in the unit.**

Academic planning at Elon is systematic. All units develop five-year strategic plans, and the School of Communications adopted its fourth strategic plan during the self-study year. Faculty discussion began in August 2016 during Planning Week and continued for months, eventually leading to the final version implemented in February 2017.

The school's first strategic plan (2000-05) called for hiring a founding dean, exploring accreditation, and initiating a Communications Fellows program. The second strategic plan (2005-10) focused on achieving accreditation, starting a graduate program, creating an Elon in Los Angeles program, and fully transitioning to digital technology. The third strategic plan (2011-16), which will be in the workroom, called for reconceiving the curriculum in a way that led to new and revised majors, establishing school alumni awards, and embarking on a multi-million-dollar campaign to significantly expand the school's facilities. The new strategic plan (2017-22) is attached.

At Elon, a strategic plan does not sit on a shelf. Instead, it guides resource requests and priorities. As a result, the School of Communications creates annual priorities to guide the school's progress toward its strategic plan.

Each year the dean drafts annual priorities in consultation with the faculty and staff. The school's 2016-17 priorities appear after the five-year strategic plan. Sixteen of last year's 20 priorities were achieved (a checkmark indicates the priority was achieved; an X indicates it was not).

The school's newly adopted 2017-18 priorities also are provided. Not surprisingly, the first priority is "Host a successful ACEJMC site visit with compliance on all standards and a recommendation of reaccreditation of the undergraduate and graduate programs."

# Strategic Plan for Elon's School of Communications, 2017-22

*Advancing one of the nation's great communications schools  
for the benefit of students, alumni, faculty, staff and society*

The School of Communications was established in 2000, following 12 years as a department. In less than two decades, the school has grown to 20 percent of Elon's student body with more than 70 full-time faculty and staff members.

The maxim "*It's not until you look back that you see how far you've come*" is fitting. In its young life, the School of Communications has gained a national reputation for excellent students, alumni and programs through faculty and student successes. Examples include two collegiate Emmys for student newscast and TV magazine show, Top 10s in writing and multimedia in the 2016 Hearst Awards, national president of the Public Relations Student Society of America, Top 5 finalists in Coca-Cola's filmmakers competitions in 2016 and 2017, and national chapter of the year for the communications honor society. The school received AEJMC's national diversity award, publishes the only undergraduate research journal in communications, and has teacher-scholar-mentors who have received high teaching honors as well as Pulitzer and Emmy awards.

## The Planning Process

Strategic plans are roadmaps that point to future directions. Elon requires all schools to develop long-term strategic plans, as does the school's accrediting body. The internal benefit of this external requirement is that it systematically propels forward-thinking discussions in the school.

To know where the school should go, it's important to know where the school came from. The school's first strategic plan (2000-05) called for hiring a founding dean, exploring accreditation, and initiating a Communications Fellows program. The second strategic plan (2005-10) focused on achieving accreditation, starting a graduate program, creating an Elon in LA program, and transitioning to digital technology. The third strategic plan (2011-16) called for reconceiving the curriculum in a way that led to new and revised majors, establishing school alumni awards, and embarking on a campaign to raise funds to significantly expand the school's facilities.

This is the school's fourth strategic plan, crafted through a series of faculty conversations and drafts during the self-study year of 2016-17. In every five-year period, new ideas have emerged that never were part of a strategic plan. Examples include the addition of the Sport Management department, a partnership with the business school to establish a Corporate Communications graduate track, and a bid to become home to the North Carolina Open Government Coalition. While the same openness to new ideas will remain, here is the school's projected roadmap for the next five years, adapting the same eight categories as in *The Elon Commitment* strategic plan.

## *Highest Levels of Academic Achievement*

Academic achievement by students is the top priority of the School of Communications. This occurs through engaged learning in the classroom and experiences such as internships, student media, and school initiatives such as the Imagining the Internet Center, elondocs and Live Oak Communications. The school was initially accredited in 2005-06, the M.A. in Interactive Media program became accredited in 2011-12, and programs undergo review every six years.

- ❖ Secure ACEJMC reaccreditation of the undergraduate Communications program and the M.A. in Interactive Media degree as a national standard of program quality.
- ❖ Consider accreditation of the Sport Management program by COSMA (Commission on Sport Management Accreditation).
- ❖ Advance the school's intellectual and experiential climate by highlighting participation in high-impact practices and promoting student learning through new signature experiences.
- ❖ Emphasize media literacy so that students are proficient in creating content, recognizing the methods of content distribution, and evaluating the accuracy and value of content.
- ❖ Achieve an overall Top 10 ranking in the national Hearst student awards competition and support students in other endeavors that benchmark student quality.
- ❖ Enhance the recruitment of outstanding students by moving toward scholarships for all Communications Fellows, and explore how Sport Management can be a participant.

## *Strategic and Innovative Pathways*

The school added undergraduate majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics and a BFA in Cinema & Television Arts in 2014. On the graduate level, a Corporate Communications track in the M.S. in Management began in 2015. The school's professional advisory board plays an important role in guiding the school to see emerging trends for curricular consideration.

- ❖ Promote deliberate conversations in the school about emerging trends in disciplines so that the school remains on the leading edge of curriculum and instruction.
- ❖ Champion the collaborative environment created for student media and be open to connections between courses and student media experiences.
- ❖ Implement a real-time, location-based social media analytics platform for student and faculty use.
- ❖ Establish a year-round Elon in Los Angeles program and work with the university to open an LA facility.

- ❖ Develop an academic pathway for students interested in sports media.
- ❖ Explore a Sport Management track in the M.S. in Management degree.
- ❖ Consider an MFA degree focusing on immersive media and game design as an extension to the M.A. in Interactive Media program.
- ❖ Launch a Ph.D. in Communications degree to produce exemplary teacher-scholar-mentors who can fulfill the growing need for communications faculty.

### *Premier Academic Facilities*

The School of Communications is in the process of expanding into a 105,000-square-foot complex with the 2016 renovation of McEwen, the additions of Schar Hall and Steers Pavilion, and the 2017 renovation of Long.

- ❖ Complete the renovation of Long Building and dedicate the new and renovated facilities in the four-building School of Communications complex.
- ❖ Promote four-day-a-week movie programming in Turner Theatre to support the university's social climate goals.
- ❖ Transition all of Sloan residence hall into a communications living/learning community.

### *World-Class Faculty and Staff*

The school's faculty and staff are dedicated to engaged learning and student achievement. In turn, the school must provide resources for professional development and ensure that the school keeps attracting outstanding teacher-scholar-mentors.

- ❖ Double the financial support through annual gifts for professional development of faculty and staff to enhance conceptual and technological currency in the discipline.
- ❖ Extend the concept of a distinguished visiting professor or professional in each major.
- ❖ Revisit the organizational structure of Communications in light of its continual growth.

### *Commitment to Diversity and Global Engagement*

In 2010, the school became the second program in the nation to receive AEJMC's Equity & Diversity Award for its record of advancing gender equity and racial and ethnic diversity.

- ❖ Augment the diversity of the school’s faculty as part of being a national exemplar for diversity and global engagement initiatives in the discipline.
- ❖ Participate in the university campaign to significantly expand need-based scholarships to achieve greater socio-economic diversity in the student body.

### *Academic Partnership with Athletics*

The school produces a student-led Elon sports show that airs weekly on ESPN2 in much of the state. The university’s 2016-17 priorities call for a partnership between Communications and Athletics to expand live-event coverage in keeping with Colonial Athletic Association goals.

- ❖ Establish a student sports organization that partners with Athletics on live game production at an ESPN-quality level.

### *Innovative Alumni Programs*

The school’s alumni base is extraordinarily young. Graduates of the School of Communications are in their 20s and 30s, and graduates from its departmental years are in their 40s. The school sends quarterly e-newsletters to alumni and, in 2012, began presenting outstanding alumni awards.

- ❖ Deepen the relationship with alumni through stellar communications and special events at Homecoming and through special alumni gatherings in major cities.
- ❖ Create a professional advisory board in Sport Management with substantive alumni involvement.

### *Stewardship To Remain a Best-Value University*

The university holds the primary role of keeping Elon as one of the best-value private institutions in the nation. The School of Communications is committed to financially helping current students by supporting student initiatives and securing foundation scholarships for those in need.

- ❖ Attract endowment and annual gifts to build a fund to support student projects, internships in high cost-of-living cities, and scholarships for current students facing financial need.

*February 2017*

# 2016-17 Priorities

## School of Communications, Elon University

(those marked with a ✓ were achieved during the year; those marked with an X were not)

- ✓ Engage in a year-long evaluation and write a comprehensive self study for reaccreditation of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Communications for the next six years.
- ✓ Move into Schar Hall and Steers Pavilion, complete Phase 2 of McEwen's renovation, determine how best to renovate the front entrance of McEwen, and complete planning for Long Building's renovation in 2017.
- ✓ Host Internet pioneer Vint Cerf as a special university guest and present the inaugural Arete' Medallion from the Imagining the Internet Center.
- ✓ Implement a Writing Excellence Initiative plan in Communications and Sport Management.
- ✓ Launch the expanded *Great Ideas: Issues and Research* course as a 4-hour capstone seminar with significant topical discussions and individual research papers.
- ✓ Lead a university partnership to provide all faculty, staff and students with free digital access to *The New York Times*.
- ✓ Work with HBCUs and others to organize the 2017 Global Communication Association conference in Greensboro.
- ✓ Establish a student sports entity that partners with Athletics on live game production at an ESPN-quality level (*university priority*).
- ✓ Provide multi-day movie programming for Turner Theatre to complement the university's social climate goal.
- X Select and inaugurate a real-time, location-based social media analytics platform for student and faculty research.
- ✓ Host the state College Media Association and regional Society of Professional Journalists conferences.
- ✓ Take another step toward Fellows scholarship equity through a second year of having 10 available Communications Fellows scholarships for the class of 2021.



- X Work with the Study USA office to expand the Elon in Los Angeles program to a full year and to explore greater involvement with the Elon in New York program.
- √ Review the thesis process and branding of the BFA in Cinema & Television Arts.
- X Organize an innovative event to celebrate the positive linkages with Arts & Sciences.
- X Decide what to do with game development on either the undergraduate or graduate level.
- √ Strategize on creating pathways or early entry for undergraduates wanting to advance directly into the Interactive Media and Corporate Communication graduate programs.
- √ Pilot a faculty shadowing/internship program to promote professional development with community partners.
- √ Support the Residential Campus Initiative and propose living/learning community themes for Sloan to be an all-Communications residence hall.
- √ Achieve \$150,000 or more in annual gifts to the school.

*September 2016*

# 2017-18 Priorities

## School of Communications, Elon University

- ❖ Host a successful ACEJMC site visit with compliance on all standards and a recommendation of reaccreditation of the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- ❖ Complete remaining elements of the facilities building project and renovation (Turner Theatre venting, front entrance of McEwen, Foley sound-effects studio, news ticker).
- ❖ Analyze how the school distinguishes itself as a top communications program and strengthen a brand strategy to enhance recruitment of outstanding students.
- ❖ Expand the Communications Fellows program to include Sport Management and enter into the three-year plan for all Fellows to receive scholarships.
- ❖ Inaugurate Maroon Sports in partnership with Athletics and attract a Fall 2018 admissions cohort.
- ❖ Consider accreditation of the Sport Management program by COSMA (Commission on Sport Management Accreditation).
- ❖ Revisit the organizational structure of Communications in light of its continued growth.
- ❖ Identify and implement a real-time, location-based social media analytics platform for student and faculty research.
- ❖ Support a number of students with financial need who accept unpaid internships or internships in high cost-of-living cities.
- ❖ Pilot an alumni/student mentor program for interested juniors to help them better understand expectations of selected careers and build relationships with professionals.
- ❖ Explore the idea of an MFA degree, perhaps as an extension to the M.A. in Interactive Media and focused on immersive forms of storytelling (virtual and augmented reality, gaming).
- ❖ Pursue a living-learning community in Sloan focused on sports media and management, and support Residential Campus Initiatives such as the planned First Amendment focus.

*September 2017*

**3. Describe the unit's policies and procedures for faculty governance. Provide the web link or make available in the site team workroom a copy of faculty policy manuals, handbooks or other documents specifying policies, procedures and the roles of faculty and students in governance and in development of educational policy and curriculum.**

Rather than schools setting their own governance policies and procedures, Elon has a university [Faculty Handbook](#) (that's Associate Dean Don Grady on the cover). It specifies faculty rank and responsibilities, evaluation of teaching faculty and administrators, procedures for hearings/complaints, and policies and procedures of the instructional program.

The shared governance statement in the front of the *Faculty Handbook* reads:

The administration of Elon University makes every effort to practice democracy in administrative matters. Authority for the administration of the university is vested in the Board of Trustees and in its selected administrative officer, the president. The faculty, however, is given the responsibility of making the decisions that involve the teaching program of the university. Faculty committees are asked to make studies and to report to the faculty, which renders decisions within the scope of its authority. On matters beyond the authority of the faculty, the faculty may make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The administration recognizes that the most important function of the university is that of teaching. It is the aim of the administration to maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to good teaching and where faculty members can pursue the search for the truth in an atmosphere of academic freedom. In a democracy, such a freedom is obtained only as the faculty exercises that freedom and assumes its responsibility to guard that freedom against abuses.

Academic Council is the voice of the university's faculty. Its responsibilities include formulating policy for faculty approval, nominating members of standing committees, serving as a hearing committee on sensitive faculty cases, and advising the president on priorities.

A Communications faculty member, Phillip Motley, is chair of Academic Council this year, and colleague Dan Haygood is a newly elected member of Academic Council.

University standing committees include Faculty Research & Development (FR&D), which awards faculty sabbaticals, course releases for research, and summer research funds. Major course and curriculum proposals go through an elected school Curriculum Committee and then through the university Curriculum Committee. The Promotion & Tenure Committee consists of faculty members from across the university. Graduate Council approves curriculum changes and recommends new graduate programs. In each case, one or more School of Communications faculty members sit on these major university committees.

The Communications faculty as a whole develops curriculum and educational policy. For example, the faculty adopted Professional Standards Policies to provide consistency on issues such as student attendance and grading, compiled a *Course Handbook* with course goals and objectives to provide commonality among multiple sections (described in Standard 2 Curriculum), and crafted a definition of peer review as part of a university initiative to better articulate scholarly expectations (described in Standard 5 Scholarship).

#### **4. How often did the faculty meet during the most recent academic year?**

Communications faculty and staff met 12 times last year. The academic year often begins with a day-long retreat and then two meetings during the university's Planning Week. After that, faculty have monthly departmental meetings. The regular meeting date is the first Tuesday of each month.

Between faculty meetings, the dean writes an electronic newsletter named COMMUNICATOR to inform faculty and staff about upcoming events, statistical reports, student awards, alumni updates, and other news in the School of Communications. The dean produced 32 issues of COMMUNICATOR during the 2016-17 academic year. These will be available in the site team's workroom.

#### **5. List faculty committees and chairs. List any ad hoc committees in operation at the time of the self-study.**

The School of Communications has seven standing committees led by faculty. They are:

Awards & Competitions (Sana Haq, chair)

Curriculum (Glenn Scott, chair)

Diversity (Ahmed Fadaam, chair)

Fellows (Dave Bockino, chair)

Library (Ben Hannam, chair)

Teacher-Scholar (Harlen Makemson and Vanessa Bravo, chairs)

Technology (Vic Costello, chair)

In addition, the school has an *ad hoc* Leadership and Service Committee that will draft a statement – similar to the school's scholarship statement – about the leadership and service endeavors that the school encourages, supports and values. Also, a Senior Faculty Review Committee has been formed to consider a faculty member going through the continuation process, and a faculty search committee(s) will be appointed to guide future searches.

Faculty are given an opportunity to express committee preferences during Planning Week, and the leadership team does its best to accommodate as many first choices as possible. Committee chairs call their own meetings, and a dean and/or chair serves as a liaison to each committee.

Committee rosters and responsibilities are provided on the following two pages.

# School of Communications Faculty Committees, 2017-18

## **Awards and Competitions Committee**

**Members:** Sana Haq (chair), Lee Bush (on sabbatical fall semester), Kelly Furnas, Gerald Gibson, Derek Lackaff, William Moner, Youssef Osman. Liaison: Vic Costello

**Charge:** Identify appropriate student competitions for the School of Communications. Evaluate applications for student creative grants. Make recommendations for awards that recognize outstanding personal and professional achievement of School of Communications students and alumni.

## **Curriculum Committee** (elected each February)

**Members:** Glenn Scott (chair, 2016-18), Janna Anderson (2016-18), Cara McFadden (2017-19), Randy Piland (2017-19), Staci Saltz (2017-19), Amanda Sturgill (2016-18), Hal Vincent (2017-19). Liaisons: Jessica Gisclair, Don Grady, Paul Parsons

**Charge:** Consider changes to School of Communications majors and courses in conjunction with the university's curriculum committee and processes.

## **Diversity Committee**

**Members:** Ahmed Fadaam (chair), Shaina Dabbs, Jooyun Hwang, Jonathan Jones, Byung Lee (on sabbatical spring semester), Alex Luchsinger, George Padgett, Frances Ward-Johnson (on leave fall semester). Liaison: Kenn Gaither

**Charge:** Continue the implementation of the School of Communications diversity plan; investigate ways to enhance the international and domestic initiatives of the plan.

## **Fellows Committee**

**Members:** Dave Bockino (chair and Fellows Director), Colin Donohue, Tom Nelson, Michael Skube, Nagatha Tonkins, Tony Weaver. Liaison: Julie Lellis

**Charge:** Review and implement the Fellows selection process; select class and organize program elements for Communications Fellows.

## **Library Committee**

**Members:** Ben Hannam (chair), Mark Cryan, Doug Kass, Max Negin (on sabbatical spring semester), Kathleen Stansberry, Qian Xu (on leave fall semester). Liaison: Vic Costello

**Charge:** Assess current Communications related library materials and make recommendations for new materials for the School of Communications.

### **Teacher-Scholar Committee**

**Members:** Harlen Makemson (chair, fall semester/on sabbatical spring semester), Vanessa Bravo (chair, spring semester), David Copeland, Young Do Kim, Barbara Miller, Phillip Motley. Liaison: Julie Lellis

**Charge:** Plan teaching development programs and Student Undergraduate Research Forum faculty scholarship presentations. Make recommendations on how to enhance the School of Communications intellectual climate. Consider ways to further the Teacher-Scholar model, including methods to promote greater involvement in undergraduate research.

### **Technology Committee**

**Members:** Vic Costello (chair), Bryan Baker, Dan Haygood, Ray Johnson, Nicole Triche, Brian Walsh, Ryan Witt. Liaison: Don Grady

**Charge:** Monitor developments in technology and consider the School of Communications needs; draft an annual recommendation of technology needs.

### ***ad hoc* Leadership and Service Committee**

**Members:** Bill Anderson (chair), Naeemah Clark, John Doorley, Anthony Hatcher (on sabbatical fall semester), Denise Hill, Rich Landesberg, Hal Walker. Liaison: Julie Lellis

**Charge:** Examine and report on faculty activities within the school that contribute to the life of the school. Draft a statement similar to the school's scholarship statement detailing the types of faculty leadership and service endeavors we encourage, support and value as a school.

**6. Describe the faculty's contributions to the administration and governance of the university.**

Faculty in the School of Communications are involved in every aspect of university life.

Brooke Barnett is associate provost for academic and inclusive excellence, and David Copeland is a member of the presidential search committee.

Three faculty members have leadership roles in university programs:

Derek Lackaff, associate director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning  
Barbara Miller, associate director, university Honors program  
Qian Xu, associate director, Undergraduate Research program

Three of the university's seven Faculty Fellows are from the School of Communications:

Naeemah Clark, Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement  
Julie Lellis, Faculty Fellow for Substance Education  
Frances Ward-Johnson (on leave), Faculty Fellow for Leadership

When the university created the current academic structure (schools of communications, business and education, and a college of arts and sciences), the structure for committee membership was revised to provide representation from each unit. As a result, a School of Communications faculty member has a seat on every important committee at the university. Here are standing committees of the university, and the current School of Communications representatives:

Academic Council - Phillip Motley (chair), Dan Haygood  
Academic Standing Committee – Bill Anderson  
Academic Support and Advising Committee – Jessalynn Strauss  
Academic Technology and Computing Committee – Ben Hannam, chair  
Elon Core Curriculum Council – Ben Hannam  
Faculty Research & Development – Jooyun Hwang  
Fellows Program and Scholarship Committee – Dave Bockino  
Global Education Curriculum Committee – Max Negin  
Graduate Council – Derek Lackaff  
Institutional Review Board – Qian Xu  
Isabella Cannon Global Education Center Advisory Committee – Jessica Gisclair  
Library Committee – Youssef Osman  
Religious & Spiritual Life Committee – Bill Anderson, chair  
Promotion & Tenure Committee – Amanda Sturgill  
Student Communications Media Board- Kenn Gaither, Max Negin, William Moner  
University Curriculum Committee – Nicole Triche, Denise Hill

## **7. Describe the process for selecting, appointing and evaluating unit administrators.**

Deans at Elon are appointed by the provost with substantive faculty and administrative input. In 2001, Dean Parsons was selected through a national search coordinated by a consulting firm, with a campus search committee that included four School of Communications faculty members. The dean serves at the pleasure of the provost and faculty and does not have a designated term.

The dean appoints associate deans in consultation with the faculty and provost. In 2010 when the associate dean at the time was named an associate provost, the school initiated an internal search for *two* associate deans. Two faculty members expressed interest, gave presentations to the faculty, received strong faculty support, and were named associate deans.

The dean also appoints the department chair based largely on faculty input. When the former department chair became an associate dean, the school initiated an internal search for a new department chair. One candidate expressed interest, received strong faculty support, and was given an initial four-year term and later a second term as chair. The chair leads a similar process in selecting associate chairs.

In terms of evaluation, the provost's office each spring invites faculty and staff to evaluate the school's deans and chairs. The university's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment electronically sends evaluation forms to faculty and staff for anonymous submission. Evaluations of the dean are provided to the provost, who shares the feedback with the dean. Evaluations of the associate deans and department chairs are provided to the dean, who shares the feedback with each of them.

In addition, the dean writes annual reviews for the associate deans and department chairs, and the provost conducts an annual review of each dean, using a standard evaluative instrument.

## **8. Describe the unit's process for timely and equitable resolution of complaints and concerns expressed by faculty, staff or students.**

The school has a Student Advisory Board that meets with the dean each month to provide feedback on school issues and to suggest ways to strengthen student educational experiences. Sometimes a concern or complaint arises that can be discussed firsthand. In years past, the Student Advisory Board has offered valuable feedback for proposed curriculum revisions and for student spaces in the school's new and renovated facilities.

Informal concerns by faculty, staff and students are handled at the department chair and dean levels. Since the School of Communications operates with an open style (faculty and staff usually can walk into any office throughout the day), concerns often can be addressed immediately. Students typically schedule a meeting with the department chair or dean, depending on the type of complaint.



For formal complaints, a grievance procedure is outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, and a similar procedure exists in the *Staff Manual*. No grievances have ever been filed involving the school. Student complaints usually are related to grades. The university's grade appeal procedure requires students to contact professors about a grade concern in the first two weeks of the following semester; students must file a grade appeal within the first four weeks; and the department chair makes a ruling within the first six weeks. Students may appeal the chair's decision to a university grade appeal committee.

## **Professional master's program**

### **9. Describe the role of the graduate director, other persons or committees assigned to the professional master's program.**

The M.A. in Interactive Media program is led by a graduate director and assisted by an administrative staff member and others at the university as needed.

The graduate director, David Copeland, is a member of the school's leadership team. He determines iMedia course offerings and teaching assignments, approves apprenticeships and independent studies, leads a weekly proseminar, discusses the program with potential students, is the final arbiter in terms of admitting applicants who do not meet all program requirements, works with a faculty committee to determine scholarship recipients, approves spending from the iMedia budget, creates partnerships with external constituencies, and oversees program components such as open houses, student showcase and commencement.

The coordinator of graduate outreach and special programs, Maggie Mullikin, provides administrative support to the director and iMedia faculty and is responsible for outreach efforts such as prospective student tours and program orientations. She increases awareness and generates interest in the iMedia program by promoting it to students in all disciplines, Elon alumni and broader audiences. She works with faculty and Graduate Admissions to develop an iMedia recruiting event schedule, strategically coordinating visits and representing the program at events and industry shows. She also builds relationships with key external audiences that can provide value to the iMedia program.

The Graduate Admissions Office is in charge of recruiting each class. The assistant director of graduate admissions, Tarah Holland, is an iMedia graduate herself.

### **10. Provide a copy of the written strategic plan for the professional master's program.**

The graduate program's five-year strategic plan is on the next page.

## Strategic Plan for Elon's M.A. in Interactive Media, 2017-22

The School of Communications launched the M.A. in Interactive Media degree in 2009 as an intensive 10-month, full-time program for up to 36 students a year.

Creation of the iMedia program involved adding six new faculty and staff positions, stand-alone facilities and technology, its own operating budget, and an innovative curriculum completely separate from the undergraduate program.

In 2011-12, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications found the graduate program in compliance on all standards and granted initial accreditation.

Here is the program's projected roadmap for the future, with openness to new ideas that may emerge beyond this strategic plan.

- ❖ Secure ACEJMC reaccreditation as a national standard of program quality.
- ❖ Complete the Long Building renovation project to provide iMedia with outstanding facilities including an innovation lab for eye-tracking studies and new technologies.
- ❖ Emphasize the recruitment of a graduate class each year that reflects broad racial, ethnic and gender diversity.
- ❖ Double the financial support for faculty professional development to enhance conceptual and technological currency in the discipline.
- ❖ Promote deliberate conversations among iMedia faculty about emerging trends so that the program remains on the leading edge of curriculum and instruction.
- ❖ Involve greater numbers of iMedia alumni as classroom guests, Commencement speakers and e-portfolio reviewers.
- ❖ Consider establishing an MFA degree possibly focusing on immersive media and game design as an extension to the M.A. in Interactive Media.

*June 2017*

**11. Describe the unit's policies and procedures for faculty governance of the professional master's program. Provide online or make available in the site team workroom a print copy of faculty policy manuals, handbooks or other documents specifying policies, procedures and the roles of faculty and students in governance and in development of educational policy and curriculum of the profession master's program. (If these documents are the same as those provided in response to Q. 3, there is no need for duplication. Note the passages and pages specific to the professional master's program.)**

Faculty members who teach core courses in the M.A. in Interactive Media program talk often about how to keep curriculum and instruction up-to-date in light of constant change. They meet both formally and informally among themselves and with the graduate director.

Just as schools operate within Elon's governance system outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, so do graduate programs. As a result, the answer here is the same as in item 3 earlier. Academic Council is the voice of Elon's faculty, and it is notable that iMedia professor Phillip Motley is the elected chair of the university's Academic Council for 2017-18.

[\*The 2017-18 Graduate Catalog\*](#) outlines the graduate admissions process and provides details about the interactive media program.