Standard 7

Resources, Facilities and Equipment

The school's Virtual Studio includes seamless walls for creation of virtual reality environments

Highlights

❖ The School of Communications budget has increased 33 percent in the past six years primarily through new faculty and staff positions and annual philanthropic giving.

❖ The school moved into new and renovated facilities in 2016-17 featuring additional classrooms, touch-screen capacity in two labs, a movie theater and grand atrium, state-of-art studios and control rooms, and a larger fleet of gear for student checkout.

❖ All computers in the school are on a three-year replacement cycle.

❖ In 2017, the graduate program moved into new facilities in historic Long Building. The floor features classrooms, an innovation lab, six edit suites, a commons area and faculty offices.

Standard 7. Resources, Facilities and Equipment

1. Complete and attach Table 11, "Budget." If necessary, provide a supplementary explanation.

Table 11, on the following page, shows the School of Communications operating budget and salaries (omitting benefits) for each of the past three years.

Below is the budgetary growth since the school's origin, initially reported in the ASJMC budget surveys conducted annually by the Cox Center at the University of Georgia and most recently through university budget summaries:

2000-01	$ 844,200		2009-10	$ 3,937,500
2001-02	1,115,800		2010-11	4,577,500
2002-03	1,592,700		2011-12	4,820,000
2003-04	1,734,500		2012-13	5,075,500
2004-05	1,956,800		2013-14	5,320,800
2005-06	2,237,800		2014-15	5,585,600
2006-07	2,478,000		2015-16	5,850,700
2007-08	2,756,700		2016-17	6,160,600
2008-09	3,074,800		2017-18	6,500,000 (est.)

Table 11. Budget and Expenditures

Show below the annual unit budget for each of the three years preceding the accreditation visit. "Annual budget" refers to funds directly under control of the unit for the entire year (12 months). Budget figures should not include expenditures for building maintenance, retirement allowances, scholarships, prizes or student aid. List student media budget only if it is under control of the unit and is used in instruction. [This table omits faculty/staff benefits such as health insurance.]

Budget Item	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Faculty salaries	$3,751,200	$3,921,500	$4,115,300
Staff salaries	793,300	941,700	1,039,500
Teaching salaries (fixed term/part time)	251,200	279,300	245,200
Student worker salaries	34,300	32,300	30,300
Office supplies, copying, phones, postage	43,900	41,900	58,000
Travel and professional development	145,200	126,700	130,100
Special guests, speakers, hospitality	13,800	20,200	16,100
Equipment/technology	97,300	97,000	100,600
Subscriptions, readership program	11,900	11,200	12,600
Student support (scholarships, travel, projects)	17,400	14,800	57,800
Communications Fellows	40,400	49,200	55,000
Programs (Internet Center, Live Oak, elondocs)	20,100	35,500	30,300
ESPN2 show/cable contract	27,500	26,500	25,000
Special projects, facilities, sponsorships, ads	120,200	64,500	89,400
Graduate program operations	209,900	176,100	142,600
Sport Management operations	8,000	12,300	12,800
TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET	$ 5,585,600	$ 5,850,700	$ 6,160,600
additional end-of-year school funds through philanthropy and savings	*$ 367,100*	*$ 573,700*	*$ 580,300*

2. Describe the process through which the unit develops its budget, including preparation of the budget request and spending plan, review and approval, and the role of faculty in the process.

In the School of Communications, the dean shares budget information at the faculty retreat each August, showing how the school's money was spent in the preceding year and discussing budget issues for the coming year.

All schools at Elon follow the same budget process. Deans work with department chairs to prepare requests in four categories: new faculty positions, operations, new programs and capital expenditures. Because faculty recruiting requires early advertising, deans propose new positions to the provost in late summer, and the provost authorizes new positions in September after receiving official enrollment numbers and consulting with the president.

All other requests from across the university are compiled for the Budget Committee chaired by the provost and consisting of the vice president and assistant vice president for business and finance, two faculty members, a staff member, and an academic dean (the provost has appointed Dean Parsons to this role the past eight years).

During the fall term, the Budget Committee broadly prioritizes requests and establishes a budget model. The model is a projection for tuition revenue, room and board revenue, and student enrollment and retention projections. Elon is heavily tuition-driven, so the available budget basically is tuition multiplied by the number of estimated students, minus a savings cushion. The Budget Committee hosts two sessions for faculty and staff to discuss the budget model and special considerations for that year. Afterwards, the president reviews and submits a proposed budget to the university's Board of Trustees.

The university has operated for years with a conservative budgeting model to protect against a precipitous decline in students or another emergency. For example, the Trustees mandate that 10 percent of the annual budget be set aside as a reserve each year. In 2017, this totals about $25 million.

The Budget Committee creates a financial model based on revenue from 97 percent of estimated student enrollment (allowing for a 3 percent enrollment shortfall) and 95 percent of anticipated tuition dollars (allowing for the possibility of weaker retention in a bad economy).

Since enrollment and tuition have remained strong through the years, the university ends each year with a substantial pool of money that was not budgeted. This under-budgeting of enrollment and tuition resulted in $14 million in contingency funds at the end of 2016-17.

The university distributes these contingency funds in three primary ways:

-- End-of-year allocations for one-time expenditures. The School of Communications has benefited substantially over the years from end-of-year allocations. For instance, the school received a $1.8 million special allocation to ensure that the new and renovated facilities would have state-of-the-art technology.

-- Campus construction projects as recommended by Senior Staff or the Long-Range Planning Committee. While major gifts supported the School of Communications construction project, several million dollars in university contingency funds went toward completion of the project.

-- Investment of several million dollars each year for ongoing maintenance of facilities.

In terms of the school's operating budget, faculty committees can propose expenditures. For example, the faculty technology committee guides the school's decision-making each year on how best to allocate the available technology budget.

3. **Describe the adequacy of resources for the unit and the sources of revenue for those resources (university funds, fees, private funding, other). Describe how the unit will supplement its annual budget from other sources or reallocate resources to reach its strategic goals.**

The School of Communications is financially well supported by the university, and the school now attracts $150,000 or more a year in annual gifts to supplement its programs.

Money flows to priorities at Elon, and the School of Communications closely adheres to its annual goals and five-year strategic plan to identify priorities for funding. For example, the school in the past year secured a staff position to begin Maroon Sports as a university priority, secured funds for the operation of Turner Theatre, and secured an agreement to eventually provide scholarships to all Communications Fellows. Earlier, the school funded partnerships with News21 and the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and advocated the addition of a Career Services corporate and employer relations staff member to support Communications students.

At Elon, no academic unit has its own fundraising officer. Instead, Elon has a centralized development office with an assigned liaison to each school. This has worked well in the school's formative years. Besides the $15.2 million in gifts for the School of Communications building project, the school has attracted $2.5 million in private funding since its founding. Major gifts include $200,000 from the Hearst Foundation for minority scholarships; a $220,000 estate gift from alumnus Marjorie Hunter, formerly the White House correspondent for *The New York Times*; and $500,000 for the North Carolina Open Government Coalition, invested in the university's endowment for use by the organization housed in the School of Communications.

In the past three years, the School of Communications has attracted $463,400 in annual gifts and another $52,500 in endowment gifts for student scholarships (these are funds received; pledges are not included). This is five times more on an annual basis than in 2010 when the university began inviting alumni, parents and students to designate their giving to academic units if they wished. Communications alumni, parents and students have been very supportive.

The available private funds give the school valuable flexibility in addressing financial needs. For example, the school is able to offer annual (non-endowed) scholarships to current students experiencing financial need, provide funding support for student travel to conferences and to receive awards, support faculty development and travel beyond the school's operating budget amount, and invest in facilities enhancement beyond what the university will provide.

Elon has an unusually young alumni base – 61 percent of Elon alumni are under the age of 40. For the School of Communications, this figure is almost 100 percent. As a result, the school does not have alumni who have reached the pinnacle of their careers or who have reached retirement age and wish to leave an endowment legacy to their alma mater.

The school's one endowed chair, the A.J. Fletcher Professorship, was given to Elon in the 1990s by the A.J. Fletcher Foundation in Raleigh, which has since shifted its focus from supporting higher education to addressing social and civic problems in the state. The Fletcher Professorship provides the recipient, David Copeland, with a salary supplement and an operations allocation.

4. Describe how the resources provided by the institution compare with the resources for similar units on your campus.

The School of Communications has aggressively secured resources through the years to build a program of quality. Elon operates with a strong sense of equity across academic units. The deans of communications, business, education, and arts and sciences collectively meet with the provost each Wednesday and often share input into resource decisions.

Since Communications faculty average a decade of professional experience, faculty salaries for new positions in the School of Communications generally are higher than those in the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education, but lower than salaries commanded in the School of Business. The annual pool for salary increases is equitable across schools. Elon has provided faculty and staff salary increases every year since the School of Communications was established.

The one area of dissimilarity is funding for the university's Fellows programs that attract outstanding students to each school. The university made a strategic decision a decade ago to enhance the Elon College Fellows prior to its successful bid to house a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. All 50 Elon College Fellows receive annual scholarships, whereas only five of the 25 Communications Fellows (and five of the 25 Business Fellows) initially did. This inequity was a rare occurrence of unequal resources for similar programs. In 2017, the university implemented a three-year plan to fully fund scholarships for all students invited to be Fellows, so this rare inequity will go away.

5. Describe the unit's classrooms, offices, computer labs or other building spaces, as well as technology support services. If the unit administers university media or student publications, include a description of equipment and facilities and devoted to those operations.

The School of Communications enjoys outstanding facilities and state-of-the-art technology.

The inventory of production equipment available for student checkout is valued at $2 million. The Gear Room, located in McEwen, houses 115 video cameras and HDSLRs for film/video production, 75 DSLR cameras and 35 digital still cameras for photography, 70 light kits, and specialty lenses, audio recorders, microphones, tripods and monopods, jibs, shoulder rigs, and track-mounted camera dollies. The Gear Room makes 700 to 900 student checkouts a month.

The School of Communications has nine classrooms and eight computer labs for undergraduate and graduate classes across its four-building complex. These rooms feature a teacher's station, iMac computer, HD video projector, speakers, external laptop connector, Blu-ray disc or DVD player, and a Crestron control unit to assist faculty with the operation of sources and displays.

Seven iMac labs serve the undergraduate program (three in McEwen, three in Schar, one in Steers Pavilion), and an iMac lab in Long Building serves the graduate program. The labs are largely interchangeable because they share a standard software package includes Microsoft Office Professional, Adobe Creative Cloud, SPSS, SAS (virtual access via Citrix), R/RStudio and Tableau. A handful of specialty software titles support specific courses. Some labs are equipped with multiple flat-screen monitors situated near student computers to mirror content projected on the front screen, helpful for courses that include software skills training.

The school's latest technology innovation is having touch-screen capacity in two labs (Schar 104 and Steers 101). The 98-inch touch screens with 4K resolution serve in lieu of a projector to support innovative teaching pedagogies.

Two television studios and control rooms were reconceived and built in 2016. Each studio is equipped with three high-end cameras and a dedicated control room, allowing them to operate concurrently during peak times as needed. The Jane and Brian Williams Studio – highlighted by 40 feet of window opening onto the school's new plaza a la NBC's *Today* show – features a multi-function mobile set for anchor-based shows. Next to it is the Virtual Studio with a green hard-wall cyc for video compositing and virtual set applications and a white infinity wall as a neutral or colored backdrop for photography, film or video-based applications.

Video and audio edit suites for student use are on the lower level of McEwen. The 19 video edit bays are equipped with 27-inch iMacs, secondary external monitors and speakers. The school teaches and supports editing in Adobe Premiere Pro in all production courses, but also provides access to Avid Media Composer with periodic training through staff-led workshops. Three of the edit bays are super-sized for special purposes such as client presentations and team collaboration. The audio production suite consists of two sound recording studios and three control rooms. One studio accommodates voice recording, interviews, podcasts and

small ensemble music sessions. The larger recording space serves as a Foley sound-effects studio and is capable of accommodating larger music ensembles. Each control room is equipped with Pro Tools for film and video sound recording and post-production. Pro Tools also is installed in a McEwen lab to support courses in sound production and editing.

The school houses a 220-seat movie theater and a 70-seat screening room. Turner Theatre is equipped with a Christie Digital Cinema projection system and Christie Vive 7.1 surround sound for a state-of-the-art immersive theatrical experience. The screening room in McEwen features HD projection with 7.1 surround sound and a Blu-ray DVD player.

Besides a dedicated classroom and computer lab for the graduate program, Long Building has six edit bays for graduate student use; two are super-sized with a large wall-mounted monitor.

All computers in the school – in computer labs, edit suites, and faculty and staff laptops – are replaced on a three-year rotation cycle. This is coordinated by the university's Technology Office and is not part of the School of Communications budget.

The communications school is a Mac environment, in sync with the majority of Elon students who bring a Mac laptop to campus for personal use. Several public computers and printers are available for student use in the Media Sandbox in Schar Hall and on the second floor of McEwen, and collaborative workstations with a flat-screen monitor and computer connections are available in the Media Sandbox and student engagement spaces.

STUDENT MEDIA

The School of Communications has a close and supportive relationship with student media, but not in a "publisher" role. Student media are guided and funded by the university's Media Board, and Communications faculty and staff serve as student media mentors.

In its recent building project, the school embraced the idea of bringing student media together in McEwen as a collaborative learning environment. McEwen's first floor is home to the student newsroom that publishes *The Pendulum* newspaper and produces a live ELN newscast and morning show each week while maintaining a daily website and social media accounts. Elon Student Television (ESTV) has its headquarters on the main floor as well. Radio station WSOE-FM and *Phi Psi Cli* yearbook are located downstairs. All student media benefited from facility and equipment upgrades in the move.

6. **Describe the unit's most urgent needs for resources, if any, and the plan to address these needs.**

It would be startling for the school to declare an urgent need for resources only months after moving into a $25 million facility with state-of-the-art technology. The university has supported the school exceedingly well, and faculty and students are complimentary of how the school's facilities and technology contribute to teaching, mentoring and student learning.

Professional master's program

7. Provide a summary paragraph that demonstrates needed resources (budget, faculty, staff, equipment and facilities) are provided for an effective professional master's program. Describe the program's most urgent needs, if any, and the plans to address these needs.

The university and School of Communications provide the M.A. in Interactive Media program with the faculty, facilities and budget to operate a highly effective program. When the iMedia program began in 2009, the university provided the school six new faculty and staff positions, renovated space so that the program moved into new facilities with the latest in technology, and established an operating budget that supported new media initiatives and funded every graduate student to go abroad during the winter term course titled Interactive Project for the Public Good.

In summer 2017, the iMedia program moved into a spectacularly renovated Long Building.

The one area of need is graduate student scholarships. Currently, 10 percent of iMedia tuition is allocated for scholarships. As the cost of tuition rises at 3+ percent a year, the discount rate needs to approximate the 17 to 20 percent undergraduate discount rate. Increasing scholarship support will make a difference. The iMedia program lost a number of prospective students for the 2017-18 academic year just prior to the start of classes. Cost was a prime factor.