

Report of On-Site Evaluation

Professional Master's/Undergraduate programs

2017–2018

Accrediting Council on Education
in Journalism and Mass Communications

Name of Institution: Elon University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Leo M. Lambert, President

Name of Unit: School of Communications

Name and Title of Administrator: Paul Parsons, Dean

Date of 2017-2018 Accrediting Visit: October 22-25, 2017

If the unit is currently accredited, please provide the following information:

Date of the previous accrediting visit: October 9-12, 2011

Recommendation of the previous site visit team:

Professional master's program: Accreditation

Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council:

Professional master's program: Accreditation

Undergraduate program: Reaccreditation

Undergraduate program recommendation by 2017-2018 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Professional master's program recommendation by 2017-2018 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

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PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The policies and practices of the unit ensure that it has an effectively and fairly administered working and learning environment.

Elon University is the third largest private institution in North Carolina, after Duke and Wake Forest. Elon defines the nation as its service area; students in 2016-17 came from 49 states and 50 nations. It has moved from a teaching-only institution to a teacher-scholar-mentor model, a transition that has contributed to its rise in *U.S. News & World Report* and other rankings of quality. Because its endowment of \$232 million is modest by private university standards, Elon has one of the lowest tuition-discount rates in the nation (17%). Nevertheless, the student body has increased 15 percent in the past six years.

Established in 2000 and first accredited in 2005-06, the School of Communications enrolled 20 per cent of the University's student body in 2016-17. Undergraduates choose from six majors: Journalism, Strategic Communications, Cinema and Television Arts, Communication Design, Media Analytics, and Sport Management (which is not seeking accreditation). Communication Design and Media Analytics are new since 2011-12 and reflect the School's commitment to preparing students for the digital, multimedia world. The School established a Master in Interactive Media degree in 2009, first accredited in 2011-12.

In 2016-17, the School moved into four new and renovated buildings that more than doubled its space.

Here is a snapshot of change:

	Fall 2011	Fall 2017	% Change
University enrollment	5,916	6,810	+15.11
School undergrad. enr.	1,048	1,239	+18.23
Majors:			
Journalism	187	156	-16.58
Strategic Comm.	386	523	+35.49
Cinema & Telev. Arts	293	190	-35.45
Sport Management	132	164	+24.24
Comm. Science	18		
Comm. Undeclared	32		
Comm. Design		133	
Media Analytics		73	
Graduates	246	284	+15.45
M.A.	41	26	-36.59*
Full-Time Faculty	41	52	+26.83
Expenditures	\$4.82m	\$6.50m	+34.85

*While the changes from fall 2011 to fall 2017 tend to reflect trends over six years, enrollment in the 10-month graduate program fluctuates annually, from the 20s to a program high of 41.

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

The School adopted a mission statement in 2001, the year after its founding, and revised it in 2010-11 to respond to the global workings of digital, multimedia technology. (See Part 1, General Information.)

The School's five-year plans have an impressive record of aspiration and achievement. Goals and actions have included:

2000-05 Search for a founding dean. The dean was appointed in 2001.

2005-10 Seek accreditation, establish a graduate degree and a program in Los Angeles. The School was accredited in 2005-06, and the M.A. in Interactive Media and the LA program began in 2009.

2010-16 Revise the curriculum, and launch a multi-million-dollar campaign to upgrade facilities. Two new majors were introduced in 2014, and the School moved into four new and renovated buildings in 2016-17.

2017-22 Seek re-accreditation, explore COSMA accreditation for Sport Management, and achieve Top 10 ranking in the Hearst contest. The record from 2000 to 2016 indicates the School is likely to achieve these goals.

- b) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.

Consistent with a university of five schools and one college and an enrollment of fewer than 7,000, Elon strives in its management to balance efficiency and representation, to avoid duplication of administration and governance at the central and unit levels. The School does not have its own faculty handbook; it adheres to Elon's policies and procedures for shared governance defined in the *Faculty Handbook*, which states:

The faculty...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.

The School has a faculty representative on each of the University's standing committees. The School's seven standing committees (Awards & Competitions, Curriculum, Diversity, Communications Fellows, Library, Teacher-Scholar and Technology) are made up of about six members each.

The dean informs faculty and staff about upcoming events, statistical reports, student awards, alumni updates, and other news through *COMMUNICATOR*, an electronic newsletter. The dean produced 32 issues during 2016-17.

The faculty said the School has a collegial, participatory culture that unites rather than separates members by major and enables expression of concerns and involvement in decision-making.

- c) 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.

The dean is the chief academic and administrative officer and is responsible for strategic planning, school quality, personnel, budgets, technology, facilities, faculty development, public service and accreditation. The dean reports to the provost, the University's chief academic officer, who reports to the president.

The dean is admired within the School and across campus for his vision and strategic ambition, openness to ideas, encouragement of experiment and creativity, patience and persistence, fairness and grace.

Associate deans provide oversight of the School's programs, centers and student experiences. Faculty respect their selfless dedication to the interests of students, faculty and staff.

The department chair is a faculty member and coordinates course schedules, teaching assignments, hiring of adjuncts, student advising, and annual faculty reviews. She is assisted by two associate chairs responsible for classroom observation, annual review of adjunct faculty, admissions events, and student awards selection. There is concern within the School and across campus that the increase in students and faculty may be overtaxing this office.

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

The provost appoints deans after a national search and faculty and administrative input. Deans serve at the pleasure of the provost and faculty and do not have a designated term. The current dean of the School of Communications has served since 2001.

The dean appoints associate deans in consultation with the faculty and provost. The dean appoints the department chair based largely on faculty input. The chair has a similar process for selecting associate chairs.

Each spring the provost's office invites faculty and staff to evaluate 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. The dean writes annual reviews for the associate deans and department chairs.

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

The *Faculty Handbook* and the *Staff Manual* define procedures for filing and adjudicating complaints. Students address complaints to faculty members and appropriate School administrators. The University defines a grade appeal procedure for all students.

Summary

The School has benefitted from almost two decades of continuous leadership that is ambitious, goal-driven and action-oriented. The dean has developed a participatory culture open to ideas and experiment that enables the School to adapt nimbly to the demands of a digital, multimedia world of communication.

COMPLIANCE

Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:

f) The unit has a separate written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for the professional master's program's future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals and is supported by university administration outside the unit.

The School adopted this mission statement in 2010-11:

The M.A. in Interactive Media program prepares students to think strategically across media platforms, plan and create interactive media content, and manage information in a digital age.

The master's program has a five-year plan with goals that are consistent with those of the School's five-year plans.

g) The unit has designated administrative oversight of the professional master's program as well as policies and procedures that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum in the professional master's program.

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. The School does not have a separate graduate faculty. Led by the director, faculty discuss curriculum and policy matters, submit proposals to the School's Curriculum Committee and then to the University's Curriculum Committee.

Summary

Although separate from the undergraduate program in its own building with its own plan and curriculum and managed by a director, the master's program is integrated into the administrative structure of the School.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

a) The unit requires that students take a minimum of 72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of journalism and mass communications and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.

The Bachelor of Arts degrees in Journalism, Strategic Communications, Cinema & Television Arts, Communication Design, and Media Analytics require 132 credit hours. Courses within the School account for 52 credit hours, and students must earn at least 72 hours outside communications. The BFA in Cinema & Television Arts requires 60 credit hours. To promote academic depth, the School requires its students to complete a minor or double major in a unit outside of Communications, or in lieu of a minor/double major, to spend a semester studying abroad. Most students choose to complete a minor, although the School estimates that roughly 10 percent of students complete a double major—most within the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Advising Center produces an online degree audit for each student that includes progress toward 72 outside hours and remaining coursework for graduation. In the final year, every graduating senior meets with an associate registrar to review remaining curriculum requirements, including ensuring completion of the 72-credit-hour rule. Based on graduation audits, 100 percent of School majors under review comply with the rule, and students indicated familiarity with it during discussions with the site team.

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 competencies listed by the Council.

The School's curriculum includes six core courses (20 credit hours) required of all majors; these are listed below:

- Communications in a Global Age
- Media Writing
- Web and Mobile Communications
- Creating Multimedia Content
- Media Law and Ethics
- Great Ideas: Issues and Research

The School requires all students to take a public speaking (2 credit hour) course, which counts toward the 72 external hours. Students were well versed in legal and ethical concepts, which they indicated were discussed throughout the curriculum. Students also seemed fairly articulate about diversity and inclusion

issues; one student pointed particularly to the value of the required Entertainment Media course within the Cinema & Television Arts major as helping her (a Caucasian) to better understand and discuss topics of diversity and inclusion more intelligently and comfortably.

Each School major, except for the BFA in Cinema and Television Arts, requires 20 hours of additional major course work (five four-credit-hour courses) plus an internship of one to four credits and electives. Students pursuing the BFA must also take two electives from specified options, complete a thesis requirement and also complete the Elon in LA program, discussed in more detail below. The strategic communications major also requires at least one business course; the communication design major also requires two four-credit-hour art classes (design; intermedia and photography).

The School actively endorses ACEJMC's professional values and competencies, labeling them as the "Elon Eleven." These core values and competencies are displayed in all School of Communications classrooms, and the dean personally introduces them and discusses their importance in the School's introductory course. Course learning objectives are tied to the eleven concepts in required courses, and course syllabi highlight these learning objectives, which demonstrate a balance between theory and conceptual courses and skills courses.

The department chair or associate chairs meet with faculty in each major to ensure uniformity and currency in course content, and the School's *Course Handbook* lists the catalog description, course goal and primary course objectives to ensure that the values and competencies are uniformly stated in syllabi and provide sufficient consistency across multiple sections. Faculty can add additional objectives for their classes as they wish. In fall 2017, 16 courses had multiple sections.

The School's Great Ideas: Issues and Research seminar capstone course offers students a chance to explore five key media issues in greater depth: ethics and law, communication technology, audiences and consumption of media, diversity and inclusion, and power and knowledge. Students' work is the primary contributor of articles for the only known undergraduate communications research journal, *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication*, established in 2010 and published online twice a year.

In addition to the core courses listed above, the 20 hours of required coursework and other Communications requirements for each major follow below:

Journalism

Journalism in a Free Society

Reporting for the Public Good OR Broadcast News Writing

Multimedia News Production

Editing and Design OR Television News Reporting

Multimedia Journalism

plus Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 52 COM hours

Strategic Communications

Public Relations and Civic Responsibility

Strategic Writing

Corporate Publishing

Strategic Research Methods

Strategic Campaigns

plus Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 52 COM hours; majors must also complete at least one of the following business courses: Principles of Economics, Introduction to Managing, Principles of Financial Accounting, Introduction to Finance, or Principles of Marketing.

Cinema & Television Arts

Entertainment Media

Writing for Television and Cinema

Television Production OR Cinema Production

The Documentary OR Film and Television Aesthetics

Producing for the Screen

plus Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 52 COM hours

BFA in Cinema & Television Arts

Entertainment Media

Writing for Television and Cinema

Television Production OR Cinema Production

The Documentary OR Film and Television Aesthetics

Producing for the Screen

BFA Thesis Project (2 credit hours each term as a senior)

plus one of the following courses: Broadcasting in the Public Interest, Development and Influence of Cinema, International Cinema, Film Theory

and one of the following courses: Sports Broadcasting, Audio for Sound and Visual Media, Editing the Moving Image, The Screenplay, Directing the Documentary

plus participation in the Elon in Los Angeles program, Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 60 COM hours

Communication Design

Visual Communication

Writing for Visual Media

Web and Mobile Publishing

Design of Visual Images

Design Strategies and Solutions

plus Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 52 COM hours

plus two Art courses are required: Fundamentals of Design and Introduction to Intermedia and Photography

Media Analytics

Understanding Audiences

Communicating Media Insights

Applied Media Analytics

Strategies for Emerging Media

Measuring Media Impact

plus Communications Internship (1-4 hours) and electives to total at least 52 COM hours

c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and **current**, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies. Achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.

The School maintains currency through regular assessment and periodic curriculum revisions and regular course updates, new equipment purchases and faculty development. Since the last reaccreditation, Journalism was revised to become a cross-platform major including print, broadcast, multimedia, web and mobile news, and two new majors have been added in direct response to the evolving professions: Communication Design and Media Analytics.

The Media Analytics major is one of the smallest of the School's major options, but students and faculty are enthusiastic about what already exists and what's possible in the future. One of the original faculty dedicated to the creation of the major was recruited to teach at Columbia University in 2017, so the School had to move quickly to hire a new faculty member, who arrived in August. Students were aware of the change but expressed no concerns, saying all of their teachers were "very available" outside of class, and they seemed satisfied overall with the instruction and required course work.

Although also quite new, the Communication Design major has grown rapidly, and the School was searching for another faculty member to teach these courses. Two of the required major courses are taught by faculty in the art department, and students believe those courses help develop their aesthetic judgment.

Since the last reaccreditation, Cinema and Television Arts have been combined into a single major, and the BFA in this field has been added. The benefit of these students learning together remains the goal, with a shared vision and discipline identity remaining the challenge. However, overall there is broad faculty and student support for the two areas' combination, which mirrors industry convergence.

Students expressed satisfaction with their coursework, believing it to be current and engaging. However, some students in Journalism and Cinema and Television Arts expressed frustration with the perceived repetition in their required courses—particularly those who were actively engaged in FreshTV. Others, including Strategic Communications, Cinema and Television Arts, and Communication Design majors, expressed a desire for more elective options to help them specialize even more within their professional areas of interest.

Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum and is widely available to students and faculty. Faculty and lab computers are upgraded every three years. The School's Technology Committee helps make recommendations for technology upgrades and new purchases. Faculty and staff have access to professional development funding each summer to help keep up to date with technological advancements in the field. Recent examples include Poynter workshops, Adobe training, and online writing and WordPress workshops. Books and software have been purchased since the last accreditation visit to help faculty develop the new Media Analytics major.

The School and University actively support teaching development. The School's Teacher-Scholar Committee holds lunch-and-learn sessions that feature faculty speakers presenting to their peers on pedagogical and faculty service topics. The School also offers workshops for faculty and staff on a range of topics, including classroom technology, drones, and academic advising. Faculty development also has included sessions on the latest technology in entertainment media, and the University offers workshops

and development sessions related to teaching through its Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, in which School faculty are actively involved. Communications faculty and staff have participated in national and international workshops and seminars, including the Council on International Education, Scripps Howard Leadership Academy, Plank Center Educators Fellowship, Poynter's Teachapalooza, Experimental and Evidence-Based Learning e-portfolio Conference, and Media Technology Summit.

Elon University's Office of Leadership and Professional Development hosts workshops and seminars for staff on such topics as using Excel, race and reflection discussions, mentoring, writing effective performance reviews, and understanding issues in higher education.

Although the University requires student evaluations for fall courses only, the School evaluates all courses throughout the year. School evaluations are higher than the University's overall means on measures of *high academic standards* (mean of 5.51 on a 6-point scale) and *instructor facilitated learning* (mean of 5.32). Overall, students expressed respect for their professors' knowledge, expertise, caring, mentorship and accessibility. In 2017, one faculty member was named an Elon Distinguished University Professor. Other School of Communications faculty have been recognized nationally; for example, an assistant professor won third-place in AEJMC's Mass Communication and Society Division's Promising Professors competition; another was a top three finalist for the Scripps Howard Journalism Teacher of the Year award. More than a dozen faculty have published or presented at national venues on teaching-related topics.

d) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1. (Campaigns classes are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

Ninety percent of classes in the School are taught by full-time faculty, and the student-faculty ratio in lab courses does not exceed 20:1. Consistent with Elon University's goals to promote student-faculty interaction and engaged learning, all classes in the School have enrollment caps of 15 or 18 in skills classes and 25 or 33 in all others. Overall student-faculty ratio at Elon University has declined from 15:1 a decade ago to 12:1 today, and the University has no large-lecture classes.

School enrollments in fall 2017 skills classes ranged from 6 to 19 students; in spring 2017, from 9 to 19. Summer course enrollments overall ranged between 15 and 17.

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

Students may take up to two semester courses (or their equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals. Students may take up to three semester courses (or their equivalent) at a professional media outlet 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.

In addition to its experiential courses, the School requires all students to complete a professional internship before graduation, and many students complete more than one. Students may not apply more than four credit hours (the equivalent of one full course) toward their required coursework. For their initial internship, students may earn up to two semester hours of credit, based on a minimum of 80 work-hours per credit hour. Students who complete more than one internship for credit may earn an additional two semester hours, for a maximum of four credit hours.

In 2016-17, 314 internships were completed for academic credit, 77 percent occurring during summer. Student internship performance is assessed by the School's full-time internship director (who holds faculty rank) through submitted course work (50 percent of the course grade) and through the internship supervisor's evaluation (50 percent of the grade). Elon interns overall were highly reviewed and received a 99 percent favorable rating on two items: *ethical ways of reasoning* and *employing the tools of technology*.

Internship employers praised Elon students, calling them "strong writers" and "professional" in appearance and office etiquette. One employer commented that he was so impressed by his first Elon intern that he plans to continue to seek more Elon students; another said he requested his intern return for another summer because he contributed a refreshing academic perspective that undergirded his professional work and because his writing was better than some of his full-time colleagues'.

Students majoring in strategic communications, the largest major in the School, have the opportunity to apply to be part of Live Oak Communications, the student-run advertising and public relations agency. Students must undergo a competitive application and interview process to be eligible to register for the one-credit-hour class. Students may elect to remain in the agency as an extracurricular option. Live Oak Communications has a dedicated faculty member and serves paying, for-profit clients. The agency also takes on at least one *pro bono*, nonprofit client each semester and one University client. Students spoke enthusiastically about their experience with Live Oak Communications and its direct contribution to their success in securing internships and offers of employment post-graduation.

The School has maintained an Elon in Los Angeles summer program since 2010 with a full-time director and an Elon in New York summer and fall program, overseen by the School's internship director. The program offers students courses toward their majors as well as internship opportunities and is a requirement for the BFA. In keeping with the University's focus on global experiences, Elon students regularly study abroad. In fall 2017, nearly a quarter of the strategic communications majors were studying abroad, primarily in Europe.

Summary

The School has responded creatively to changes in the media landscape and offers a balanced curriculum of skills, theoretical and conceptual courses. The School supports faculty development and includes hands-on, experiential courses, study abroad opportunities and internship resources and staff.

COMPLIANCE

Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:

f) At least half of the required credit hours are in either professional skills or courses that integrate theory and skills appropriate to professional communication careers.

Within the 37 total hours for the Master in Interactive Media (iMedia), 28 hours of coursework are required, 22 of which are professional skills courses. They include an international “fly-in” project during the January term as part of the “Interactive Project for the Public Good” course, in which students travel to other countries to produce work for nonprofit organizations. The 2017-18 class had been divided into four teams: one team will travel to work with a client in Nicaragua; another team will go to Haiti; a third team will go to Costa Rica; and a final team will work in Ireland. Another six credits are dedicated to the students’ professionally oriented capstone project in their last semester.

Required skills-based courses include the following, and syllabus reviews confirm their largely skills-oriented focus:

- Digital Media Workshop (3 credits)
- Digital Video Production (1 credit)
- Interactive Writing and Design (3 credits)
- Producing Interactive Media (3 credits)
- Visual Aesthetics (3 credits)
- Interactive Project for the Public Good (3 credits)
- Interactive Media Capstone (6 credits)

Interactive media graduate students are required to participate in a non-graded, zero-credit professionally oriented seminar, which includes exposure to new technologies and alumni guest speakers working in the field. Students without undergraduate degrees in communications are required to take a writing course and a media law and ethics course in July summer courses prior to starting the program.

g) Instruction and curricular requirements for professional master's students are more advanced and rigorous than for undergraduate students, including courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Graduate courses are completely separate from the undergraduate program; no courses are cross-listed. (The School offers an undergraduate course titled Interactive Media for juniors and seniors who wish to explore this curricular area and perhaps consider applying for the graduate program. Although eligible undergraduates may apply to take graduate courses, thus far none has chosen to do so.) The School reports that in end-of-year interviews, iMedia students describe the curriculum as challenging, and indeed current students indicated the same.

It was clear in student interviews that theoretical, diversity, legal and ethical concepts are incorporated regularly into the curriculum. In addition, students exhibited knowledge of the historical context from which these technologies evolved. As part of the capstone experience, students must conduct secondary research and develop a comprehensive literature review that provides a foundation for their applied capstone work; as part of that assignment, they must distill the academic literature review into a white paper relevant for working professionals.

Summary

The M.A. in Interactive Media is an innovative, immersive, professionally oriented program that includes an applied international experience and has impressive student diversity, graduation, and placement rates.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

a) The unit has a written diversity plan for achieving an inclusive curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population, and a supportive climate for working and learning and for assessing progress toward achievement of the plan. The diversity plan should focus on domestic minority groups and, where applicable, international groups. The written plan must include the unit's definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.

The School's written diversity plan uses the University's definition of diversity in its opening paragraph: "Elon embraces a broad definition of diversity that includes gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic standing and intellectual viewpoint." Though it does not explicitly identify specific under-represented groups, the plan references the need to partner with historically black institutions and to maintain a relationship with Elon Academy, a college-access program that helps high school students typically underrepresented on college campuses.

The School names a faculty diversity committee every year and the self-study highlights key achievements shared with faculty and staff at the School's August 2017 retreat:

- In fall 2017, the racial and ethnic minority composition of the School's 58 full-time faculty was 28 percent including international faculty and 22 percent without. The full-time faculty consisted of 24 women and 16 minority colleagues, compared to 18 women and 11 minority colleagues six years ago. The full-time faculty has grown from 41 six years ago to 58 in fall 2017.
- Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) suggest the School actively encourages and supports student conversations on campus climate and diversity topics in and outside the classroom. In 2016, 64 percent of Communications students (n=56) said their learning "often" or "very often" included diverse perspectives.
- The School has received two \$100,000 Hearst Foundation endowment gifts to support student scholarships for under-represented students.
- The 2016-17 diversity committee hosted an end-of-semester unity celebration for Communications students, faculty and staff to show "love, appreciation and support" in trying times. The event drew more than 200 attendees.

The School's diversity plan is supported by a University-wide focus on promoting diversity and inclusion across campus. In fact, Theme 1 of the University's strategic plan is titled "An unprecedented commitment to diversity and global engagement."

The commitment to diversity is evident in nearly every discussion with faculty and administrators. From initiatives involving the creation of an organization for women in film on the L.A. campus to a faculty member literally building an "information booth" as part of an effort to raise awareness about Islam, the School is dedicated to continuous improvement in embracing the importance of diversity.

b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The unit's curriculum includes instruction in issues and perspectives relating to mass communications across diverse cultures in a global society.

Two key pieces of data are worth noting:

- According to the NSSE survey, 71 percent of Elon Communications students said diverse perspectives were included in course discussions and assignments often or very often, compared to 66 percent nationally.
- Seventy-two percent of students on campus study abroad at least once, ranking Elon first in global student participation among all master's-level universities in the nation.

Courses that place special emphasis on diversity are identified in the Elon Eleven curriculum matrices, including the School's introductory course, Communications in a Global Age, which has a goal of preparing students to better understand and appreciate the diversity of people both domestically and globally. Instructors for the course report using "fault lines" concepts in teaching about sourcing and developing stories; they highlight LGBTQIA portrayals in the media or discuss mass media in Africa, for example.

Several other classes include assignments requiring students to seek out people who can provide diverse perspectives or to consider how the diverse characteristics of the creator may affect content. In interviews, faculty also described course work related to the use of analytics to segment audiences and how new media was facilitating the development of sub communities, e.g., Native American dialects being revived and living on the web.

School faculty have collaborated to receive University Diversity Inclusion Grants. For example, one project involved updating course materials to reflect diverse voices in the contemporary entertainment media environment and another sought to engage students with a diverse community to generate multimedia projects and structured reflection by students. The School also regularly brings in a diverse group of guest speakers who discuss topics such as public relations or media systems in a global context.

Students could identify specific courses that contributed to their understanding of domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in all the majors except for Communication Design. One student in Communication Design suggested there could be more instruction related to communication with diverse audiences.

During the last accreditation cycle, the site team noted the need for the graduate program to "creatively, effectively incorporate awareness and understanding of diversity more broadly across the curriculum." The self-study indicated that the Interactive Media curriculum now highlights the need for inclusiveness and accessibility in web design and pointed to the fact that students were involved in projects in Costa Rica, Iceland and the Dominican Republic in 2017. In the student meeting, students mentioned course assignments that required them to consider different cultures and demographic differences, and one faculty member described discussions about Black Lives Matter, challenges for women in technology fields and instruction related to the ways in which various groups are represented online.

Special programming and extra-curricular experiences promoted to the graduate students are geared toward helping them understand diversity in a global society, and though there seems to be slightly less emphasis on creating special programming related to domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, those topics are covered in the classroom.

c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and domestic minority faculty and professional staff and, where feasible, recruits international faculty and professional staff.

As Table 8 shows, eight of the 14 full-time faculty members hired in the past three years are women, and five are minority colleagues (three domestic, two international). Minority faculty make up 18 percent of the University's faculty compared to 22 percent for the School.

The dean's office regularly invites prospects to campus for a tour and to meet with faculty, and the self-study reports women and minorities have been added to the faculty through this proactive effort. In addition, the School reports being one of the most aggressive benefactors of a University program that facilitates the hiring of minority faculty by providing positions and funding for opportunity hires.

In terms of staff, the self-study indicated that the School has five female staff members on 12-month contracts. The School has 10 staff members overall. In the University, 24 percent of staff members represent minorities; in the School, there are 0 minority staff members.

The dean reported making a good faith effort to hire minority staff but recently lost one promising candidate on a credential check and for another position, with a diverse candidate pool, he deferred to a search committee's recommendations, which resulted in the hiring of a white staff member.

d) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to help recruit and retain a student population reflecting the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education in the region or population it serves, with special attention to recruiting under-represented groups.

The School has improved its student-of-color enrollment (defined in the self-study as African-American, Hispanic, Asian and multiracial) from 12 percent at the last accreditation visit to 16.5 percent in 2016-17, plus another 5 percent international students. The School defines its geographic service area as the nation at large in which 41 percent of high school graduates were students of color in 2011-12, the latest numbers available.

In student meetings, it was not uncommon to hear undergraduates articulate their desire to see the student population become even more diverse, which speaks to their understanding of the importance of diversity in fostering a quality education. The students of color we met with said they do not feel excluded; however, they do notice a lack of representation.

The University has many programs that support the School's efforts in recruiting a diverse student population. For example, G.A.M.E. Day (Gathering of Achievers: Multicultural Experience) offers high school students the chance to learn about the multicultural experience at Elon during a home football game weekend, and the Multicultural Experience Weekend brings students from diverse backgrounds to campus to participate in a diversity leadership conference. Phoenix Fusion is a day for accepted students and their families to learn about Elon's diversity initiatives, and University recruiters also attend multicultural fairs

such as the National Hispanic Fair.

The School has more than doubled its scholarship support for underrepresented students since the last accreditation report through the Hearst Foundation grants mentioned previously, as well as from other sources at the University level.

In the previous accreditation report, the site team identified the need for the graduate program to shore up its focus on diversity as a priority in recruiting. The School more than met the challenge. For 2016-17, the self-study reported 41 percent of students enrolled in the M.A. in Interactive Media program identified either as African American or Latino with the percentage increasing to 50 percent for the 2017-18 class. Part of the success is due to a strong relationship the School has cultivated with North Carolina A&T State and North Carolina Central University, which have impressive minority student enrollments.

At the undergraduate level, retention rates are strong in the School. For under-represented students from first year (2012-13) to senior year (2016-17) the rate was 86.4 percent, slightly higher than the 85.8 percent retention rate for white seniors.

The self-study emphasizes the importance of advising, mentoring and strong instruction as key factors in retention and students say faculty are available, caring and stay current in their instruction.

e) The unit has a climate that is 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 diversity committee surveyed international students for suggestions to improve their experience in the School and found that they felt welcomed and included in the community, and they feel comfortable in the classroom and enjoy sharing their stories.

The Advising Center's coordinator of disabilities services arranges accommodations for students with disabilities, ranging from note-taking in classes to providing testing rooms and proctoring. In 2016, the School hosted a session on accommodating students with special needs in the classroom. All four Communications buildings – McEwen, Schar Hall, Steers Pavilion and Long – are ADA compliant.

The University has created a Gender and LGBTQIA Center, adopted a University-wide strategic plan for LGBTQIA inclusion, and achieved a Top 10 campus ranking by Campus Pride. In addition, the University has launched Inclusive Community Conversations for first-year students and a series of intercultural competency-based seminars for students, faculty and staff. Several Communications faculty have participated in LGBTQIA ally training at Elon, and the Gender and LGBTQIA Center director is a frequent speaker in communications classes.

Upon arriving at Elon, students sign an agreement to abide by the University's Honor Code that requires honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect.

In the 17-year history of the School of Communications, two cases of inappropriate faculty behavior have occurred that would fall into the categories of harassment and discrimination. Those faculty members are

no longer at Elon.

Summary

A commitment to diversity permeates the School and administrators, faculty and staff are easily engaged on the subject. The diversity plan is a living document and the diversity committee has a wide latitude in identifying and tackling diversity challenges. Many courses include overt discussions of diversity and the School can point to several key successes, not the least of which is the increase in minority faculty. Areas of growth for the School would involve more efforts to diversify staff and continued dedication to adding more minority students in the program.

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/ non-compliance:

The master's program should be a significant point of pride for the School of Communications. To have a graduate program population with 50 percent identifying as students of color is a major achievement.

COMPLIANCE

Full-time Faculty, Fall 2017 (total of 58)

Group	Female	% of total	Male	% of total
Black/African American	5	8.6%	2	3.5%
Native American	1	1.7%	1	1.7%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1	1.7%		
Asian	2	3.5%	1	1.7%
International faculty (any race)	1	1.7%	2	3.5%
White	14	24.1%	28	48.2%

PART II — Standard 4: Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

The unit hires, supports and evaluates a capable faculty with a balance of academic and professional credentials appropriate for the unit's mission.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.

Elon's University-wide *Faculty Handbook* details the criteria for the selection and evaluation of faculty in clear and concise terms. A separate School document clarifies how the unit defines scholarship for both research and creative faculty.

The selection of new full-time faculty begins each August as the dean makes requests to the provost. After allocations, a robust and strategic search process begins. Faculty openings are posted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the AEJMC jobs site, and other comprehensive sources. These include diversity outlets such as NABJ and NAHJ.

Search committees, jointly appointed by the dean and department chair, are given careful instructions so that candidate pools ensure full consideration of women and minority applicants who meet qualifications. Eight of the 14 full-time faculty members hired the past three years are women, and five are minorities (three domestic, two international). A candidate's day-long campus visit includes class teaching and a research/creative activity presentation. Then faculty and student feedback is solicited. After input from the search committee the dean makes a decision and extends a contract offer.

Part-time faculty teach 10 percent of the courses. The School builds long-term relationships with adjuncts to ensure consistency in the curriculum. The department chair keeps a list of potential new adjuncts and stated, "if there are several positions, we advertise."

Faculty evaluations come from students and administrators. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to receive feedback from their peers on teaching effectiveness. The department chair provides a written yearly faculty evaluation based on the University's three criteria: teaching, professional activity (scholarship) and contributions to the life of the University (service). At the School that means 58 reviews for the regular fulltime faculty. The School and the University are looking for ways to relieve this workload. Despite the large department, there is resistance from the faculty to break it up into new departments for fear of losing the cross-collaborative spirit so evidently valued.

Faculty are evaluated based on one of three tracks to which they belong. A **Professional track** is no longer offered, although two faculty earned and retain this rank.

The three faculty tracks are:

Tenure track. Candidates submit a portfolio for consideration by a University Promotions and Tenure Committee and the dean, typically after six years on tenure track.

Continuing track. Candidates submit a portfolio for consideration to a Senior Faculty Review Committee appointed in the School rather than to the University P&T committee. This performance review occurs in the fourth year. After six years they can go up for promotion.

Lecturer track. These faculty teach seven not six classes annually. There is no scholarship expectation. Candidates submit a portfolio for consideration to a Senior Faculty Review Committee appointed in the School rather than to the University P&T committee.

Any level of promotion goes to the University-wide committee. The dean makes the final recommendation for continuing and lecturer track faculty. The provost holds that responsibility for tenure track.

The School maintains an effective mentor program in which more-experienced faculty observe and mentor newer faculty, especially in the tenure process.

For the tenure track, the *Faculty Handbook* calls for a committee of nine post-probationary faculty – with at least one from the School of Communications – to review candidate files in October and make a recommendation to the provost by December. Independently, the dean reviews the candidate files and makes a recommendation to the provost. If the recommendation is positive in each case, discussions may be brief. In the event of a split recommendation or two negative ones, the provost will lead a lengthy discussion of the candidate's merits and shortcomings. In advancing ranks from associate to full, the provost told the site team that he “rarely overturns the decision of the University-wide committee.”

b) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service.

Teaching is paramount at Elon. The *Faculty Handbook* articulates a Teacher-Scholar-Mentor model wherein excellent teaching is the first criterion and professional activity (research, creative activity and external service) and contributions to the life of the University (internal service) are co-equal second criteria. “Mentor” is frequently now added to the traditional description of Teacher-Scholar. Examples of mentoring for faculty include a course release to advise the student-run Elon News Network or Live Oak, the strategic communications agency that has paying clients.

Over the past three academic years full-time faculty taught an overwhelming number of the core and required courses: 90 percent in 2017-18, 92 percent in 2016-17, and 86 percent in 2015-16.

c) Credentials of the unit's faculty represent a balance of professional and scholarly experience and expertise kept **current** through faculty development opportunities, relationships with professional and scholarly associations, and appropriate supplementation of part-time and visiting faculty.

The full-time faculty members average almost 12 years of professional experience and 14 years of university teaching experience. Of the 52 permanent and six fixed term faculty, 31 have a Ph.D., eight have an M.F.A. or equivalent, two have a J.D. degree, 15 have a master's degree, one has a B.F.A., and one has a bachelor's degree (and a Pulitzer Prize). At Elon, the M.F.A. and J.D. are terminal degrees, meaning that 75 percent of the School's permanent faculty members have a terminal degree.

There is ample evidence the faculty stay current in the field verified through the timely, topical publications produced and discussions with students. One student shared with pride that “one of my

professors sits on the Pulitzer committee.” Faculty have participated in a wide variety of national and international workshops and seminars, among them the Scripps Howard Leadership Academy, Teachapalooza at Poynter, the Aspen Institute and the BEA/Time Warner College Professor Thought Leadership Seminar. Knowledge from these workshops is brought back to Elon and offered as School workshops for faculty and staff.

One faculty member said, “We are very much in tune with what is going on in the real world and preparing our students so they don’t see a disconnect to the classroom and what they learn on the job.”

Elon’s commitment to teaching excellence by both professionals and scholars at the School can be seen in its “Teaching Enhancement and Evaluation” plan, which provides financial support for faculty development such as a professional internship.

d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, whether onsite or online, using multiple measures that include student input.

Even though the University requires evaluation only of fall classes, the School evaluates through the year. Students evaluate classes on a 6-point scale and most rank about the University average. Below is a cross section of results from spring 2017:

High academic standards	Communications	5.51
	University	5.46
Instructor facilitated learning	Communications	5.32
	University	5.25
Class is well-organized	Communications	5.25
	University	5.31
Course effort required	Communications	5.50
	University	5.42

e) The faculty has respect on campus for its University citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.

As the number of School faculty has grown so has their campus-wide reputation. One is head of the Faculty Senate. Another is a “Distinguished University Professor.” Campus administrators and leaders spoke highly of the School’s contribution to the fabric of University life. They could point to specific examples of impactful service and powerful teaching by individual faculty members. One faculty member indicated the School enjoys campus-wide respect but sometimes other units do not appreciate or understand their contributions to scholarship. Examples included those who have an MFA or faculty who produce visual scholarship.

Summary

The full-time faculty is well balanced in academic and professional credentials, in age and rank. Its record in tenure and promotion and in teaching innovation and awards and its student evaluations demonstrate that it is effective in instruction and mentoring.

COMPLIANCE

Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:

f) Faculty members teaching in the professional master's program meet the criteria for graduate instruction at that University.

Creation of the iMedia program in 2009 involved adding six new faculty and staff positions. The director of the program, who has a Ph.D., has been honored as an outstanding teacher and researcher with the title, Distinguished University Professor. Faculty members who teach in the program have appropriate academic credentials and/or interactive media expertise. Students spoke with great respect and admiration about the faculty's expertise, currency of skills, attentiveness, and access.

When someone without a terminal degree teaches a course, the dean writes a note to the provost explaining what the credentials are in lieu of a terminal degree.

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

The School does not have faculty dedicated solely to the graduate program. Since the program began, 32 faculty members have taught iMedia courses. However, a half dozen faculty teach the bulk of the courses, including the required core courses, the capstone class, and often the winter "fly-in" course, as well as several spring term electives.

Summary

The School has recruited, nurtured, and promoted a robust faculty with a wide array of excellent credentials.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity

With unit support, faculty members contribute to the advancement of scholarly and professional knowledge and engage in scholarship (research, creative and professional activity) that contributes to their development.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

- a) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity.

Even though Elon University mandates teaching as the first priority and has no aspiration to become a Research I institution, the School produces an impressive volume of academic research and professional activity - more than 1,000 scholarly and creative activities in the past six years.

Two documents guide the process: The institutional statement, “The Elon-Teacher Scholar” and the School’s statement, revised in 2014, titled, “School of Communications: Peer-Reviewed Scholarship, Other Forms of Professional Activity, and Indicators of High Quality.” This document defines peer-reviewed scholarship as any “academic, creative or professional work that is evaluated, in its entirety by academic peers, editors or other professionals and is judged worthy of entering the public discourse or the domain of the discipline.”

Faculty receive what they described as generous financial support for research. The University provides an operating budget of \$1,000 in travel per faculty member, which the School supplements to \$1,700 or more when justified. If a faculty member does multiple trips, the School dips into private funds. One academic or professional membership per faculty member is paid each year.

An \$8,000 University Faculty Research and Development Committee summer grant is available. In 2017, five of 11 faculty proposals from the School were awarded. The dean has a \$17,000 summer allocation fund he can dip into to support professional development. A faculty workshop to improve a course and sending teachers to a Poynter Workshop are two examples of how this fund has been used. First year faculty members can also apply for the University-wide Hultquist Award. Two School members received it in 2017.

In the last six years, eight tenured or continued faculty members have taken sabbaticals. One faculty was awarded a Fulbright Professorship in Japan.

- b) The unit specifies expectations for research, creative activity and/or professional activity in criteria for hiring, promotion and tenure.

Since the 2011 accreditation visit, 18 faculty members have gone through tenure, promotion or continuation reviews. Sixteen of the 18 were successful, including eight women and five minority faculty.

The School supports new tenure-track faculty in three main ways: 1) strategically timed course releases, 2) mentoring by senior faculty, and 3) helping them win a University-wide Hultquist Award available by competitive selection the summer of their first year.

The University's "Teacher-Scholar" document states that peer-reviewed scholarship is the "most fundamental form of professional activity." The School articulates "Peer-Reviewed" scholarship in its document described above. The dean says this document is "sweeping the campus" and being adopted by other units. It includes specific expectations of high quality "peer-reviewed scholarly activity" and defines six measures of impact:

- Substance
- Reach
- Selectivity
- Permanence
- Significance
- Recognition

The document clearly distinguishes "peer-reviewed scholarship" from other scholarly and professional activity. Presenting papers based on an abstract, panel participation or self-published works are examples of scholarly activity that do not meet the criteria. Professional activity such as leadership roles in professional organizations, consulting or judging do not meet the criteria.

c) Evaluation criteria for promotion, tenure and merit recognition account for and acknowledge activities appropriate to faculty members' professional as well as scholarly specializations.

The "Peer-Reviewed Scholarship" document used to evaluate promotion and tenure broadly defines and acknowledges the wide variety of faculty scholarship at the School. Scholarship is recognized across the disciplines and according to the self-study is "at the intersection of the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and professional practice." The result is a forest of output: books, monographs, journal articles, presentations, trade publications, documentaries, screenplays, exhibitions, articles and programming in media, works in new media, external grants and granted intellectual property rights.

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.

Press attention to studies by the Imagining the Internet Center in partnership with the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C. is one way that School research is disseminated nationally. Uniquely, the School produces a faculty-edited undergraduate online research journal comprised of articles submitted by students in the capstone course.

Four of the six criteria the School uses to measure impact of "peer-reviewed scholarship" focus on how faculty communicate the results of their research.

- **Reach:** Refers to the size and/or composition of the audience, such as a nationally presented work compared with a locally presented one.
- **Permanence:** Refers to the work's durability, such as publication being more permanent than presentation.
- **Significance:** Refers to the importance of the work as measured by the use of the work by others, such as citation or adoption.

- **Recognition:** Refers to accolades that the work receives from qualified evaluators and critics, such as positive reviews, awards and honors.

The “teacher-scholar” faculty at the School are intellectually alive at all crossroads of what the self-study calls “the scholarship of discovery.” There have been 42 juried creative works, six scholarly books, six textbooks and 37 book chapters. This is an impressive result from a non-Research 1 University.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Totals by Unit	By Individuals				Totals by Faculty (52)
		Full Professors (6)	Associate Professors (24)	Assistant Professors (17)	Lecturers (5)	
Awards and Honors	56	6	15	35	3	59
Grants Received, Internal	99	5	51	45	0	101
Grants Received, External	17	8	3	6	0	17
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-Authored	6	3	2	1	0	6
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-Authored	6	1	5	0	0	6
Books Edited	5	5	0	0	0	5
Book Chapters	34	8	19	10	0	37
Monographs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles in Refereed Journals	121	13	74	50	0	137
Refereed Conference Papers	277	36	137	139	1	313
Invited Academic Presentations	148	17	42	87	15	161
Encyclopedia Entries	9	2	6	1	0	9
Book Reviews	8	1	4	3	0	8
Articles in Non-Refereed Publications	110	30	52	27	7	116
Juried Creative Works	42	0	1	15	27	43
Non-Juried Creative Works	26	0	4	23	0	27
Total		135	415	442	53	1,045

Note

- Totals by unit differ from totals by faculty because co-authored works are counted a single time in the totals by unit.

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

The School has found a near perfect pathway to focus a faculty member’s intellectual output to lead right back into the classroom. One faculty noted, “We have people -- deeply intellectual -- working at

the Research 1 level for the pure love of it, while others are pursuing an agenda of creative scholarship.” This diverse approach to scholarship clearly enriches the student, the School and the University.

The School’s climate is very responsive as current events impact intellectual life and the education of the students. For example, a faculty member noted how during and after the 2016 American election discussions arose on how to deal with the “new political climate in America and translate it into substantive things we could bring into the classroom about the importance of being engaged citizens.” The result was a faculty consensus to let all students’ voices be heard but guide them and ground them back into the curriculum.

Summary

The School sparkles and shines with broadly but carefully defined scholarly activity benefiting its students, enriching the academy and serving communities locally, nationally and globally.

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

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

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

Elon freshmen, during their first semester, are required to take an orientation seminar where graduation requirements are explained and advisers assigned.

Students declaring a communications major are assigned a faculty adviser and are required to meet with that adviser at the start of each semester. A student cannot register for classes without having an adviser sign off on the student's schedule. In addition to the required sessions, students have ample opportunity to meet at other times with their advisers to discuss scheduling issues and career plans.

As students begin to think about post-graduate plans, two full-time staff from the University's Student Professional Development Center are located in the communications school to offer counsel. A full-time internship coordinator also posts weekly notes to students about internships, which are required for graduation.

b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Communications majors agree faculty members keep office hours and are easily accessible to discuss schedules, graduation requirements and career options. Detailed information about progress toward graduation, called a "degree audit," is also available online for review by students and faculty. Students who take the initiative appear to have the best advising experience. They tend to take advantage of office hours and go beyond the required twice yearly meetings with advisers.

Students in the Strategic Communication major, likely because of their large numbers, say they do not have enough advisers knowledgeable about their major. More information about electives and a more focused discussion about post-graduation plans and options would strengthen the advising experience, students say.

The School's self-study cites a 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement in which 66 percent of Elon Communications students often or very often talked about their career plans with a faculty member compared to 49 percent nationwide. On academic advising, 79 percent of Elon Communications students reported high quality interactions with advisers compared to 69 percent nationally, and 50 percent of Elon Communications students "often worked with faculty on activities other than coursework" compared to 36 percent at all schools.

c) The unit keeps students informed about the activities, requirements and policies of the unit.

The School uses many channels to communicate with students. In addition to a website that includes School-wide announcements, social media such as Facebook, and College Coffee, a weekly student/faculty gathering that includes information booths, an electronic billboard at the entrance to McEwen Hall promotes a host of activities. Walls throughout the school are filled with posters

announcing events and information about the School's mission and values.

- c) The unit and the institution provide students with extra-curricular activities and opportunities that are relevant to the curriculum and develop their professional as well as intellectual abilities and interests.

Elon offers a host of extracurricular activities relevant to the curriculum and designed to complement the classroom experience. These activities include robust independent student media that provide hands-on learning while encouraging critical thinking, collaboration and teamwork. While student media are not under the direction of Communications, the School provides space, equipment and faculty members as mentors.

Student media include Elon News Network, a multiplatform student news organization; Elon Student Television, which provides entertainment programming; the WSOE-FM student radio station; Phi Psi Cli, the University's yearbook; the literary and art journal *Colonnades*; and Limelight Records, a student-run record label.

The School funds several other initiatives that provide a place for students to get practical experience: FreshTV, an innovative program for first-semester students eager to get involved in their major, focuses on broadcast, cinema and journalism; Live Oak Communications, a student-run public relations and advertising agency; Cinelon Productions, which focuses on narrative filmmaking; *elondocs*, a documentary production program; and Maroon Sports, a partnership with Athletics for broadcasting and live streaming of events.

Communications is home to eight student chapters of national organizations: Society of Professional Journalists; Radio-Television Digital News Association chapter; Public Relations Student Society of America chapter; American Advertising Federation chapter; National Press Photographers Association; National Sports Media Association; Media Analytics Club; and Lambda Pi Eta communications honor society.

- e) The accredited unit must gather, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success. The unit annually publishes retention and graduation information on its website.

Enrollment, retention and graduation rates for the School are available on the School's website. The most recent data show enrollment has increased and retention and graduation rates are high.

Summary

The School has an effective advising system, stretched only in the high-enrolling Strategic Communications major, and an impressive array of student media and professional organizations, all of which contributes to high retention and graduation rates.

COMPLIANCE

f) The unit has appropriate admissions and retention policies for the professional master's program. The retention and graduation data are published on the unit's website.

Applications for the M.A. in Interactive Media are submitted to the University's Office of Graduate Admission, which admits students based on the University's program admissions standards. In addition to an application letter, resume and two letters of recommendation, and satisfactory TOEFL scores if not a native-English speaker, requirements include the following:

- evidence of an earned bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;
 - recommended GPA of 3.0 or higher for undergraduate work;
 - official transcripts of all undergraduate and any graduate studies completed or taken;
 - and a recommended combined verbal and quantitative score of 297 or higher on the Graduate Record Exam, a score of 3.5 or higher on the 6-point analytical writing scale taken within the last five years OR a recommended Miller Analogies Test (MAT) score of 400 or higher taken within the last five years.
- A student's portfolio of work may be considered in addition to or instead of scores on standardized tests. All final admissions decisions are made by the iMedia program director.

Enrollment, retention and graduation data are included in a link called "Student Success" on the program's website. In total, 265 of the 274 students who began the program have earned their graduate degrees, for a 96.7 percent retention rate. Poor academics was the cause of program attrition in only two of its eight years; in two other years, financial reasons or the program not being the "right fit" were cited as reasons for student departure.

Students in the School overwhelmingly report a positive experience. Many say they chose the School because of its excellent reputation, the opportunity to practice their skills in a number of settings, and for its graduates' success in finding jobs. While they may have a few quibbles here and there, students said they know what is expected for them to graduate; they know that service learning and hands-on experiences are valued; they feel supported by faculty, staff and administrators; and they expect to get good jobs when they graduate. In one meeting with students, all said they would recommend the School to a family member.

Summary

Enrollment has fluctuated between the 20s and a program high of 41 even as the program has grown stronger in curriculum, facilities and equipment, and experiential learning and opportunities.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

The unit plans for, seeks and receives adequate resources to fulfill and sustain its mission.

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.

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.

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 the School's dean to this role the past eight years.)

The Budget Committee prioritizes requests and establishes a budget model, based on projected tuition revenue, room and board revenue, and student enrollment and retention projections. Elon is heavily tuition-driven, so the available budget is tuition multiplied by the number of estimated students, minus a savings cushion. (The University factors in possible enrollment and other revenue shortfalls and has been successful in creating \$14 million in contingency funds at the end of 2016-17.) The School of Communications has benefited substantially over the years from end-of-year contingency fund allocations. For instance, the School received a \$1.8 million special allocation to ensure the new and renovated facilities would have state-of-the-art technology.

The School closely adheres to its annual goals and five-year strategic plan to identify funding priorities. For example, the School in the past year secured a staff position to begin Maroon Sports, which was a University priority, secured funds for the operation of Turner Theatre, and secured an agreement to eventually provide scholarships to all Communications Fellows – a program which identifies and recruits top-notch high school students. 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.

b) The resources that the institution provides are adequate to achieve the unit's mission. The resources are fair in relation to those provided other units.

In the self-study, the School wrote:

“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.”

The site team heard no concerns that the School was not being treated fairly in the budgeting process. To the contrary, the provost suggested other units on campus may occasionally feel Communications received more than its fair share.

c) The facilities of the unit enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.

The School's new four-building complex, including one floor dedicated entirely to the graduate program, is a source of pride for all involved, including administrators, faculty and students. In dozens of interviews with faculty and students, they applauded the design and functionality of the offices, classrooms, collaborative spaces, labs and common areas.

The facility includes nine classrooms, eight computer labs and two TV studios. The audio production suite consists of two sound recording studios and three control rooms. The School also houses a 220-seat movie theater and a 70-seat screening room.

As with any new building, kinks are to be worked out and some noted, for example, that the green screen and virtual studio are still not fully operational, but a new broadcast engineer position at the University and other initiatives should help bring all of the facilities fully online in the coming months.

d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment or access to equipment to support its curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty.

From the operating budget, faculty committees can propose expenditures and the faculty technology committee guides the School's decision-making each year on how best to allocate the available technology budget. In faculty and student interviews, a nearly universal appreciation for the scope and access to equipment for research, creative and professional activities was expressed.

In the new facility, the equipment available is extensive and includes:

- 115 video cameras and HD SLRs 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.
- Labs share a standard software package that 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 elevated video "reinforcement towers" situated near student computers to mirror content projected on the front screen, helpful for courses that include software skills training.
- Two labs have touch-screen capacity utilizing 98-inch touch screens with 4K resolution in lieu of a projector to support innovative teaching pedagogies.
- Each of the two TV studios is equipped with three high-end cameras and a dedicated control room, allowing them to operate concurrently during peak times as needed. One studio features a multi-function mobile set for anchor-based shows and the virtual studio has 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.
- Nineteen 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.

- One of two audio studios accommodates voice recording, interviews, podcasts and small ensemble music sessions. The larger recording space serves as a Foley sound-effects studio and can accommodate larger music ensembles. Each audio 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.
- 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.
- The graduate program also has six edit bays for student use, including two with super-sized monitors for collaboration.
- Several public computers and printers are available for student use and collaborative workstations with a flat-screen monitor and computer connections also available.

Faculty and students at both the undergraduate and graduate level said they felt confident they would be supported any time they asked for equipment to facilitate learning, scholarly or creative work. One graduate student noted the recent addition of drones and one iMedia faculty member said, “We were in a great space before moving into the new building, so I was worried, but I couldn’t have asked for anything better.”

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

Students, particularly at the graduate level, reported getting a wide variety of access to information resources from their faculty, including a subscription to Lynda.com. Students in the undergraduate Media Analytics major expressed an interest in expanding their access to information beyond social media data, but felt that would come as the program grew.

No student or faculty member expressed a need for better library resources.

Summary

The beautiful new facility and its state-of-the-art equipment are providing students and faculty with the tools and the spaces they need to learn, research and produce content that makes students award-winners and highly employable and helps faculty make contributions to knowledge and practice.

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master’s program), compliance/non-compliance:

The master’s program is also well resourced with a dedicated portion of a new facility and the latest in technology available for its exclusive use.

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

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

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School produces a quarterly electronic newsletter that keeps alumni informed about key activities, initiatives, awards and honors. The newsletter also includes feature stories on students and alumni and includes web and video links and social media and interactive components.

There is an active alumni website and alumni chapters provide another outlet for staying in touch with graduates. A new Facebook page was recently launched aimed at the growing number of young alumni in the Los Angeles area.

Alumni regularly return to speak to students in classes or via Skype.

Advisory board members representing organizations such as The New York Times, ESPN, ABC, “60 Minutes” and Pew Research Center return to campus each term to advise the School and present classroom sessions on content issues.

Faculty members have a strong record of involvement with professional associations. They regularly attend professional seminars and present their research to relevant associations and institutions.

The School and/or faculty are members of the North Carolina Press Association, National Press Photographers Association, American Advertising Association, North Carolina Association of Broadcasters and a host of other professional organizations.

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 Imagining the Internet Center continues to send students and faculty abroad each year to report on policy issues raised at Internet Governance Forums. More than 200 Elon students have been involved in the Center’s initiatives, including the Internet Predictions Project that looks at the evolution of the Internet from its formative years.

The School houses the North Carolina Open Government Coalition that promotes the importance of governmental transparency. The coalition’s educational arm, the Sunshine Center, hosts workshops and

promotes Sunshine Day activities. The School maintains the coalition website and operates a phone/email hotline for the general public. The School raised and manages a \$600,000 endowment to support the coalition.

c) The unit contributes to the improvement of journalism and mass communication as academic disciplines by supporting the faculty's involvement in academic associations and related activities.

Faculty members are leaders and members of organizations ranging from AEJMC to BEA to PRSSA. They serve as jurors and judges for professional association contests and competitions and lecturers and contribute as panelists and presenters for academic and professional organizations.

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.

At the undergraduate level, students participating in the Live Oak Communications agency regularly provide campaigns and strategic communications services for nonprofit agencies.

The graduate program includes a winter term course titled Interactive Project for the Public Good. Since the last accreditation review, about 30 graduate students each year have completed interactive media projects for organizations in need of a digital footprint. Recent examples include Costa Rica (Camara de Turismo de Sierpe, tourism and travel agency) and Guatemala (Tierra Verde Project, organic agriculture). The iMedia student groups produced videos, designed promotional materials, shot still photography, researched marketing plans, and assisted with social media to help raise awareness of these organizations.

Faculty, staff and students also volunteer each year with the UNC Center for Public Television spring fundraising drive to solicit pledges for WUNC-TV, the statewide PBS member station.

The School organizes events to celebrate National News Engagement Day, an AEJMC initiative that encourages students to read, watch, tweet, like and share the news.

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

The School has a record of supporting high school journalists. Since 2014, it has been a sponsor of the Journalism Education Association and National Scholastic Press Association high school journalism conventions, and a number of faculty and staff have given presentations in the last three years.

Faculty members have offered sessions at the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association Summer Institute from 2013-16 and regularly serve as judges for the awards competition.

Among other high school activities, a faculty member has taught multimedia and skills-based courses at the Elon Academy, a program for academically promising high school students with financial need and/or no family history of college.

Summary

The School and its faculty have an admirable record of professional and public service. Just as the School encourages its students to engage in public service and professional activities, it expects faculty and staff to lead by example. Membership and involvement in professional organizations are deep and longstanding. Faculty members laud the School for its encouragement and financial support for faculty participation in activities that promote the exchange of ideas and good citizenship.

The School continues to strengthen links to alumni, with potential to broaden its reach through the addition of alumni chapters.

COMPLIANCE

Overall evaluation (professional master's program), compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

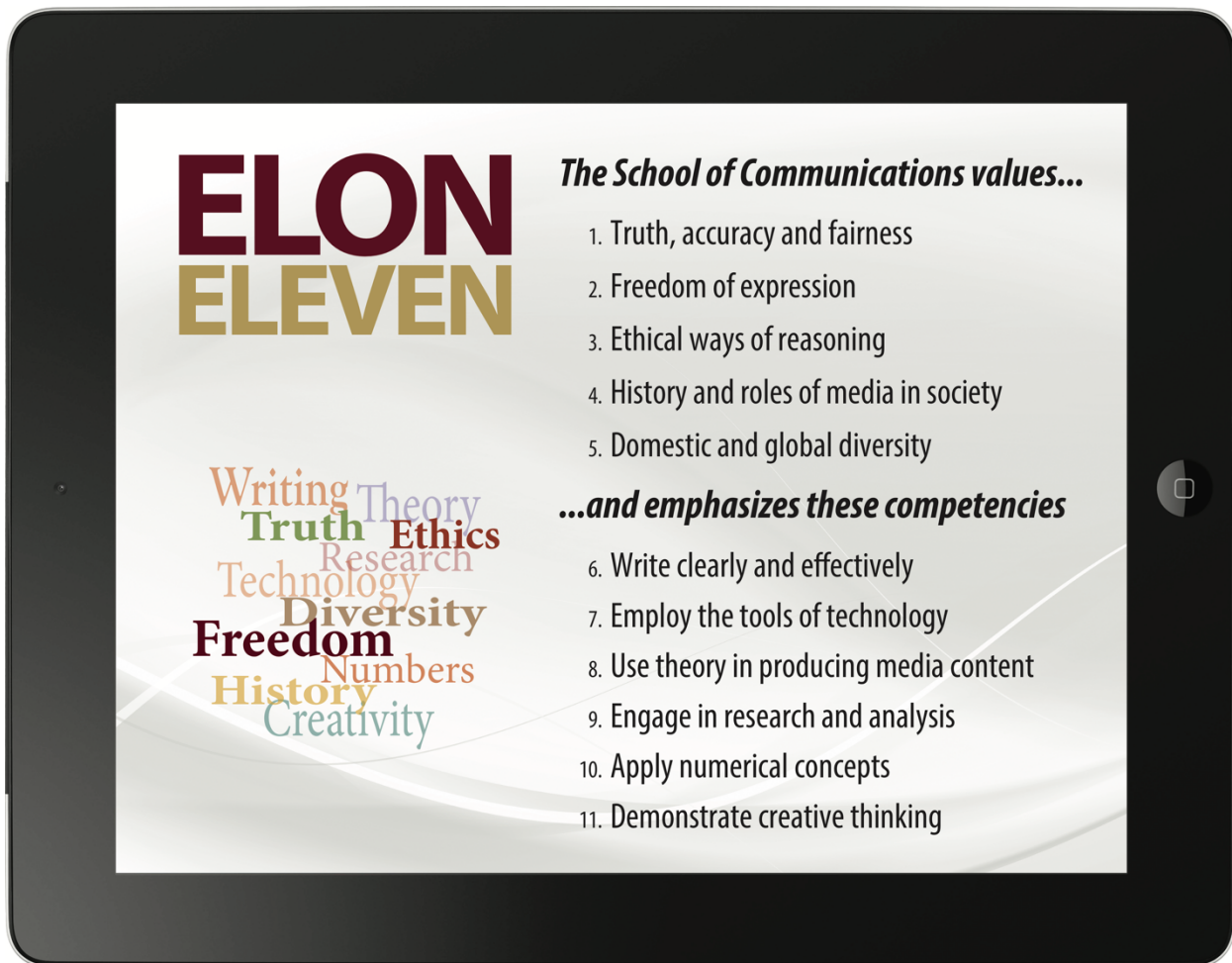
The unit regularly assesses student learning and applies results to improve curriculum and instruction.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another. Please respond to each of these questions in your report on indicators (a), (b) and (c):

- a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of the Council.

The School has recast ACEJMC’s professional values and competencies as the *Elon Eleven* and displays them in all classrooms.



The School defines learning outcomes for each of the *Elon Eleven*. Curriculum matrices for each major identify where the values and competencies are primary learning objectives in required courses, and course syllabi highlight these learning objectives.

- Who is in charge of the assessment program (e.g., administrator, sequence coordinator or faculty committee)?

An associate dean supervises the assessment program and ensures that the measures are administered, analyzed and reported in accordance with a timeline and its findings discussed and acted upon.

- How has the unit verified that core and required courses cover all 12 of ACEJMC's professional values and competencies?

Curriculum matrices for each major identify which courses emphasize which values and competencies at the levels of *awareness* (entry-level required core courses), *understanding* (entry-level required courses within a major), and *application* (upper-level required courses).

- How has the unit ensured that the syllabuses for these courses state learning outcomes that address the values and competencies appropriate for each course?

The School's *Course Handbook* lists the course description, goal and primary objectives to ensure that values and competencies are uniformly stated in syllabi and implemented consistently across multiple sections of courses.

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

The School adopted its first assessment plan in 2003 and revised it in 2016. It defines three direct measures and three indirect measures.

Direct Measures

Senior Examination

The School administers a 45-question examination to new students in the opening course (Communications in a Global Age) and to seniors in the capstone course (Great Ideas: Issues & Research) as a way of assessing student learning from the start of the program to the end. The exam seeks to measure students' grasp of knowledge and their degree of understanding of the discipline's values and competencies.

Internship Evaluations

Students complete one or more professional internships before graduation, and the Internship Office gathers systematic feedback from each professional supervisor. The School aggregates and analyzes the evaluations to determine strengths and weaknesses.

e-Portfolio Evaluations

Students create an electronic portfolio in the required internship course and add to it through course projects and participation in student media and School organizations. In their senior year, students refine the e-portfolio to support their job search. Using a rubric that evaluates the *Elon Eleven* student learning outcomes, external reviewers assess a sample of e-portfolios by academic major.

Indirect Measures

Student Survey

Elon seniors evaluate the quality of their educational experience by participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and other periodic national surveys. The School compares and analyzes Communications student responses to University and national averages to discover issues or reveal trends over time that need to be addressed to enhance student learning.

Student Competitions

The School compiles student success in the Hearst Journalism Awards, Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts and other national competitions, as well as Communications student research accepted for presentation in campus and national research forums for comparison and analysis over time.

Alumni Survey: every three years

The compilation, comparison and analysis of responses show patterns over time of alumni judgment about curriculum, instruction and student learning.

Timeline

Assessment measures implemented since the preceding accreditation site visit:

	Senior Exam	Internship Evaluations	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Student Survey	Student Competitions	Alumni Survey
2011-12	X	X		X	X	
2012-13	X	X	X	X	X	
2013-14	X	X	X	X	X	X
2014-15		X		X	X	
2015-16	X	X	X	X	X	
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X	X

Anticipated future implementation:

	Senior Exam	Internship Evaluations	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Student Survey	Student Competitions	Alumni Survey

Year 1		X	X	X	X	
Year 2	X	X		X	X	X
Year 3		X	X	X	X	
Year 4	X	X		X	X	
Year 5		X	X	X	X	X

At least four measures are reported each year. Two are direct measures (the Senior Exam or e-Portfolio Evaluations in rotation with Internship Evaluations), and two are indirect measures (Student Survey and Student Competitions, with an Alumni Survey every three years).

- Are these measures effective for assessing ACEJMC's professional values and competencies?

The direct measures have been effective in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of graduating seniors. The indirect measures have been complementary rather than definitive.

- c) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction.

- How does the unit collect and analyze the findings and identify unsatisfactory learning of specific values and competencies?

The School compiles end-of-year assessment reports (data collection, results, and use of data for improvement), plus summary charts of quantitative assessments. Below is an example of results:

Seniors taking the exam in spring 2017 averaged 74.3 percent, while first-year students taking the exam at the start of fall 2017 classes scored 42.7 percent, a 32 percent gap. Five examples:

- 87% of seniors identify the five freedoms in the First Amendment, compared to 54% of entering students
- 93% of seniors know the fair-use doctrine in copyright law, compared to 51% of entering students
- 90% of seniors know what a news lede is, compared to 46% of entering students
- 91% of seniors know what demographics are, compared to 62% of entering students
- 99% know what a literature review is, compared to 47% of entering students

Aggregate Internship Evaluations

Supervisors collectively marked the top two responses (agree or strongly agree) at the 95 percent level or above in terms of student performance on all 11 of the *Elon Eleven* values and competencies (a 5-point scale, omitting 'not applicable'). Supervisors collectively gave Elon interns a 99 percent favorable rating on two items: *ethical ways of reasoning* (85 percent marking the top response) and *employing the tools of technology* (81 percent marking the top response).

- How does the unit decide how to address these areas of concern and what actions did it take to do so?

Guided by assessment results and developments in the professions, the faculty embarked on a comprehensive curriculum review. In 2014, the School created majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics, revised Journalism into a multiplatform major, and revised the Cinema & Television Arts major to include a B.F.A. option.

The School added Web & Mobile Communications as a 1-credit-hour partner to the Creating Multimedia Content lab course to provide greater conceptual understanding of newer communication forms and demystify basic technology skills (such as coding) used to create web pages. Also, the School expanded the 2-hour Great Ideas: Issues & Research course to 4 credit hours, doubling the amount of classroom time for contemporary communications issues and providing greater focus on research to enhance applying numerical concepts.

Two assessment results were under faculty consideration in 2016-17:

- only about half of seniors know how to properly interpret a public opinion poll with a margin of error
 - each assessment measure ranks numeracy last in effectiveness
- d) The unit maintains contact with the alumni to assess these experiences in the professions and to provide suggestions for improving curriculum and instruction.

The School's Advisory Board consists of 25 or more professionals who come to campus each semester to interact with the School's leadership, faculty and students. The board played a central role in Elon's creation of the nation's first Media Analytics major by advocating its need in the communications professions.

- e) The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.

On the undergraduate level, supervisors evaluate internships by work-site and professionals evaluate e-portfolios.

Summary

For years, the School has administered a well-planned assessment program, tested and improved the measures, and acted on the findings to improve curriculum and instruction.

COMPLIANCE

Professional master's program / Unit performance with regard to indicators:

The assessment program for the master's program largely replicates that for undergraduates in systematically measuring the knowledge and competency of master's students.

- a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of the Council.

The graduate program added *contribute to knowledge* to the *Elon Eleven*. The learning outcome is “Contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the abilities to strategically plan and create interactive content for the public good.”

A curriculum matrix for the graduate program defined the courses in which the *Elon Eleven+1* were primary objectives in required courses.

The additional expectation in professional master’s programs – *contribute to knowledge* – was assessed through the fly-in course Interactive Project for the Public Good in winter term and the Interactive Media Capstone in spring term.

The M.A. in Interactive Media program uses two direct measures and three indirect measures:

Direct Measures

e-Portfolio Evaluations

Graduate students prepare an online portfolio as part of their course of study, and the School sends a representative sample of student portfolios from the capstone course to professionals

Entry and Exit Examination

The School administers a pre- and post-test to measure the learning of students and their grasp of knowledge and degree of understanding of interactive media. The exam is given to students poised to graduate and then, a few months later, to the class of entering students, ensuring that no student contaminates results by taking the exam twice.

Indirect Measures

Awards and Presentations, Exit Interviews, and Graduate Employment

Assessment measures implemented since the preceding accreditation site visit:

	e-Portfolio Evaluations	Entry and Exit Exam	Awards and Presentations	Exit Interviews	Graduate Employment
2011-12	X	X		X	X
2012-13	X	X		X	X
2013-14	X	X		X	X
2014-15		X		X	X
2015-16	X	X		X	X
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X

Two direct measures (e-Portfolio Evaluations and Entry/Exit Exam) have been reported each year along with at least two indirect measures (Exit Interviews and Graduate Employment, with periodic Awards and Presentations), except for only one direct measure in 2014-15.

An example of action to address a weakness:

Evaluation of student work and students' self-report identified an inadequacy in visual competence. The School developed a one-credit course to overcome this weakness in students' skill set.

Summary

The School's experience with assessment of the undergraduate program has informed assessment of the master's program. It has adapted and administered essentially the same measures, reported annual findings to the faculty and acted to address weaknesses.

COMPLIANCE

**PART III: Summary by site visit team
of the undergraduate program**

(A separate summary is required of the professional master's program)

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- Visionary, strategic, goal-directed leadership that inspires and supports the aspirations and work of students, faculty and staff
- Innovative, forward-thinking curriculum and instruction, ever alert to change
- Student-centered faculty who also encourage and celebrate the accomplishments of colleagues
- Committed, engaged students who excel in the classroom and volunteer time to sustain student media and organizations at a high, competitive level
- Outstanding scholarship, traditional and creative, in a university that prioritizes teaching
- A wealth of opportunities in experiential learning for students early in their program of study
- Four spacious, elegant buildings with inviting spaces for students to gather, collaborate and study
- High-tech facilities accessible 24/7 to students and faculty
- An expanded Elon in LA program that enhances students' learning and develops alumni relationships

No concerns rose to the level of a weakness. The School and the University are aware that increases in students and faculty are taxing the responsibilities of department chairs. Administrators and faculty are working to mature the instructional and curricular resources of the new majors in Communication Design and Media Analytics.

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

None

3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that should be addressed before the next evaluation (i.e., related to non-compliance with standards).

See above

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 that recommendation.

N/A

- 6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the unit was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.

No concerns rose to the level of a weakness.

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.

A \$15 million building campaign was completed seven months early and new facilities opened in 2016-17.

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.

Instructional experience with digital technology over six years has largely resolved this challenge. Now faculty and students confront a related challenge: mastering the capacity and potential of the latest technologies in the new buildings and facilities.

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

The self-study was a model of balancing professional practice in the older disciplines of the School, journalism and strategic communications: thorough, informative, and concise; appropriate in celebration of accomplishments; attractive and accessible in presentation.

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

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

Strengths

- Impressively diverse student body
- Collaborative space and ample equipment designed to promote learning
- Award-winning faculty who continually update knowledge and skills
- Fly-In experience that enhances global engagement and multicultural service learning

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

None

3) Summarize the problems or deficiencies that should be addressed before the next evaluation (i.e., related to non-compliance with standards).

None

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 that recommendation.

N/A

6) If the unit's professional master's program was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them. If the master's program was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s) and the problems noted. Explain actions taken to correct the problems.

No concerns rose to the level of a weakness.

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 2017-18 class identified as an African American or Latino. The curriculum emphasizes the need for inclusiveness and accessibility in web design. Students travel 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

The M.A. program incorporated ACEJMC values and competencies into a matrix to ensure that the curriculum and course syllabi addressed them.

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

See above.