

# Report of On-Site Evaluation

## ACEJMC

2010 – 2011

Name of Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Sidney A. McPhee, President

Name of Unit: College of Mass Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Roy Moore, Dean

Date of 2010 - 2011 Accrediting Visit: October 31-November 3, 2010

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

Date of the previous accrediting visit October 8-13, 2004

Recommendation of the previous accrediting team Re-accreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council Re-accreditation

Recommendation by 2010 - 2011 Visiting Team: Re-accreditation

*Prepared and submitted by:*

### Team Chair

Name and Title: Carla V. Lloyd, Professor

Organization/School S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

### Team Members

Name and Title: Jannette Dates, Dean

Organization/School: John H. Johnson School of Communications, Howard University

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: Steve Geimann, Deputy Leader, U.S. Regulation Team

Organization/School: Bloomberg News

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: Nancy Mitchell, Director for General Education

Organization/School: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: Patty Reksten, Photographer

Organization/School: Freelance

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: Dulcie Straughan, Senior Associate Dean

Organization/School: University of North Carolina

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

PART I: General Information

Name of Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

Name of Unit: College of Mass Communication (Dean's Office, Department of Electronic Media Communication and School of Journalism)

Year of Visit: 2010

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

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- X Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**2. Indicate the institution's type of control; check more than one if necessary.**

- Private
- X Public
- Other (specify)

**3. Provide assurance that the institution has legal authorization to provide education beyond the secondary level in your state. It is not necessary to include entire authorizing documents. Public institutions may cite legislative acts; private institutions may cite charters or other authorizing documents.**

The University is empowered to provide an education beyond a secondary school by the Tennessee Legislature under law, specifically the *Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-7-101 and 49-8-101*.

History of the University

In 1909, the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee moved "to provide for the improvement of the system of Public Education of the State of Tennessee, that is to say, to establish a General Education Fund." The major thrust of this "improvement" embodied in the legislative act that was to become known as the General Education Bill of 1909 was the establishment of three normal schools or teacher-training institutions. Following the intent of the Act that one was to be located in each of the grand divisions of the state, the State Board of Education assigned the Middle Tennessee Institution to Murfreesboro. Opening in 1911 with a two-year program for training teachers, Middle Tennessee State Normal School evolved into a four-year Teachers College in 1925 with the power of granting the Bachelor of Science degree. In 1943, the General Assembly designated the institution a State College. This new status marked a sharp departure from the founding purpose and opened the way for expanding curricular offerings and programs. In 1965, the institution was advanced to University status. SOURCE: MTSU 2009-2011 Undergraduate Catalog

**4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?**

Yes      If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: 2004

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

The unit was first accredited by ACEJMC in 1988. At that time, the unit was the Department of Mass Communication, consisting of sequences in Journalism and Radio-Television/Photography (the third

sequence, Recording Industry Management—now the Department of Recording Industry—is not included in the ACEJMC accreditation review). Today we define the unit as the Dean's Office, the School of Journalism and the Department of Electronic Media Communication. The Master's Program in Mass Communication is in transition and is not standing for reaccreditation in this cycle.

**6. Attach a copy of the unit's mission statement. The statement should give the date of adoption and/or the most recent revision.**

"The College of Mass Communication provides the entire University community with educational opportunities that foster an appreciation of the role of media in a democracy and nurture better-informed citizens. The College specifically provides professional education for individuals aspiring to careers in the fields of electronic media communication, journalism, and the recording industry, as well as academic preparation for advanced study. Offerings include theoretical foundations, professional skill sets, research, creative activity, experiential learning, and public service. Graduates of the College acquire broad knowledge from across the University; a global perspective, a professional ethos, and scholarly orientation to life from the College; and an affinity for freedom of expression, critical thinking and diversity of thought." The mission statement was revised in September 2008.

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

Fall and spring semesters of 16 weeks

Five Summer 2010 sessions:

- Summer May Term: May 17-June 5, 2010
- Summer June Term: June 7-July 9, 2010
- Summer July Term: July 12-Aug. 13, 2010
- Summer RODP Term: June 7-Aug. 13, 2010
- Summer Full Term: May 17-Aug. 13, 2010

**8. Check the programs offered in journalism/mass communications:**

- Four-year program leading to Bachelor's degree
- Graduate work leading to Master's degree
- Graduate work leading to Ph.D. degree

**9. Give the number of credit hours required for graduation. Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.**

MTSU requires a total of 120 semester hours for graduation.

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

Total University credit for internship, practicum and individual problems (independent study) courses cannot exceed 6 semester hours of credit.

In the School of Journalism, students may take no more than 3 credit hours of internship/practicum. In EMC, the total hours of credit for internships may not exceed six, but no more than three total hours can be taken at one site. There are few instances of six-credit-hour internships. However, EMC adheres to allowing six hours for a combination of internship, practicum and independent study.

**11. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered and give the name of the person in charge.**

<u>SEQUENCE OR SPECIALTY NAME</u>	<u>PERSON IN CHARGE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Department of Electronic Media Communication</b></li> <li>• Concentration: Electronic Media Communication</li> <li>• Electronic Media Journalism Sequence</li> <li>• Electronic Media Management Sequence</li> <li>• Electronic Media Production Sequence</li> <li>• Concentration: Digital Media Communication</li> <li>• Digital Animation Sequence</li> <li>• Digital Media Communication Sequence</li> <li>• Concentration: Photography</li> <li>• Photography Sequence</li> </ul>	Dr. Dennis Oneal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School of Journalism</b></li> <li>• Concentration: Advertising</li> <li>• Concentration: Public Relations</li> <li>• Concentration: Journalism (Newspaper/Magazine)</li> <li>• Concentration: Media Design/Graphics (Visual Communication effective 2011)</li> </ul>	Dr. Dwight Brooks

**12. Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:**

26,430 in Fall Semester 2010                      SOURCE; MTSU RECORDS OFFICE

**13. Number of undergraduate majors in the unit, by sequence and total (if the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total):**

<u>SEQUENCE OR SPECIALTY NAME</u>	<u>UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS</u>
	<b>F09 S10 F10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Department of Electronic Media Communication</b></li> <li>Digital Animation</li> <li>Digital Media Communication</li> <li>Electronic Media Journalism</li> <li>Electronic Media Management</li> <li>Electronic Media Production</li> <li>Photography</li> <li>TV (artifact)</li> </ul>	<b>717 730 730</b> 74 75 68 69 58 59 192 214 209 57 50 46 225 243 245 98 90 103 2
	<b>F09 S10 F10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School of Journalism 629 517 574</b></li> <li>Journalism (Newspaper/Magazine)</li> <li>Media Design</li> <li>Advertising</li> <li>Public Relations</li> </ul>	<b>250 154 212</b> 53 44 54 115 126 113 211 193 195

**EMC and Journalism                      TOTAL    1,346 1,247 1,304**

**14. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and the preceding term. Attach separate pages if necessary.**

Department of Electronic Media Communication skills courses Fall 2010

<b>COURSE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
EMC 3020-001 Writing for the Electronic Media	16
EMC 3040-001 Electronic Graphics for Television	8
EMC 3060-001 Writing for Digital Media	16
EMC 3060-002 Writing for Digital Media	16
EMC 3060-003 Writing for Digital Media	11
EMC 3130-001 Television Production	18
EMC 3130-002 Television Production	17
EMC 3140-001 Multi-Camera Directing and Producing	17
EMC 3150-001 Single-Camera Directing and Production	12
EMC 3150-002 Single-Camera Directing and Producing	12
EMC 3210-001 New Media Applications	12
EMC 3300-001 Introduction to Digital Imaging	16
EMC 3310-001 Intermediate Digital Animation	9
EMC 3320-001 Introduction to Digital Compositing	7
EMC 3410-001 Electronic Media News Writing	17
EMC 3410-002 Electronic Media News Writing	16
EMC 3460-001 Media and Messages	19
EMC 3500-001 Electronic Media News Reporting and Producing	17
EMC 3740-001 Advanced Electronic Media News Reporting and Producing	16
EMC 3740-002 Advanced Electronic Media News Reporting and Producing	13
EMC 4300-001 Advanced Digital Animation	14
EMC 4910-001 Advanced Seminar-Digital Imaging	8
EMC 4940-001 Advanced Seminar-Electronic Media Production: Movie Making	21
EMC 4940-002 Advanced Seminar-Electronic Media Production: Documentary	11
EMC 4940-003 Advanced Seminar-Electronic Media Production: Remote Truck Production	12
PHOT 2050-001 Basic Black and White Photography	24*
PHOT 2050-002 Basic Black and White Photography	24*
PHOT 2050-003 Basic Black and White Photography	27*
PHOT 2050-004 Basic Black and White Photograph	23*
PHOT 3110-001 Intermediate Photography I	10
PHOT 3110-002 Intermediate Photography I	14
PHOT 3200-001 Still Digital Imaging	15
PHOT 4280-001 Editorial Photography	21*

\*Photo faculty exceed the cap due to student demand and university pressures

based on student enrollment. They do not add more students in skills courses than the allotted equipment can support.

School of Journalism skills courses Fall 2010

<b>COURSE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
ADV 3480 Advertising Media Planning	17
ADV 4160-001 Advertising Copywriting	14
ADV 4169-002 Advertising Copywriting	5
ADV 4170-001 Advertising Campaigns	10
ADV 4230-001 Advertising Management	15
GRAF 2950-001 Media Design Applications	15
GRAF 2950-002 Media Design Applications	15
GRAF 2950-003 Media Design Applications	16
GRAF 3910-001 Basic Media Design	11
GRAF 4010-001 Publication Design	12
JOUR 2710-002 Media Writing	16
JOUR 2710-004 Media Writing	15
JOUR 2710-005 Media Writing	16
JOUR 2710-006 Media Writing	17
JOUR 2710-007 Media Writing	17
JOUR 2710-009 Media Writing	17
JOUR 2710-010 Media Writing	18
JOUR 2710-011 Media Writing: Honors	17
JOUR 2710-012 Media Writing J	16
JOUR 2710-013 Media Writing	14
JOUR 3090-001 Reporting	13
JOUR 3090-002 Reporting	7
JOUR 3090-003 Reporting	16
JOUR 3421-001 PR Writing (RODP)*	13
JOUR 3450-001 Editing J	16
JOUR 3450-002 Editing	16
JOUR 3520-001 Specialized Jour: Opinion Writing in a Digital Age	16
JOUR 3520-002 Specialized Jour: Computer-Assisted Reporting	16
JOUR 3530-002 Feature Writing	16
JOUR 3530-004 Feature Writing	16
JOUR 4800-001 Seminar in Media Issues: Immersion Reporting	7
PR 3360-001 PR Communication	13
PR 3360-002 PR Communication	16
PR 3360-003 PR Communication	16
PR 3380-001 PR Publications	10
PR 3380-002 PR Publications	13
PR 3380-003 PR Publications	16
PR 3400-001 Case Studies in PR	16
PR 4740-001 PR Campaigns	12
PR 4740-002 PR Campaigns	11
*Regents Online Degree	

**15. Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2009-2010 academic year:**

\$4,744,518

**Percentage increase or decrease in three years:**

Total 2007-2008:	\$4,608,823
Total 2008-2009:	\$4,561,716 (-2% from 2007-2008)
Total 2009-2010:	\$4,744,518 (+1.4% from 2008-2009)*

\*A budget cut had been forecast for 2009-2010, but federal stimulus funds restored the budget to near 2007-2008 levels. The difference in the two years is due to salary differences from resignations and retirements. A budget cut is forecast for 2010-2011.

**Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:** \$2,801,647

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

Professors

Edd Applegate (retiring end of AY 2009-2010)	David Badger
Marc Barr	John Bodle
Dwight Brooks	Larry Burriss
David Eason (retiring end of AY 2009-2010)	Chris Harris
Tom Jimison	Edward Kimbrell
Roy L. Moore	Mary Nichols
John Omachonu	Dennis Oneal
Zeny Sarabia-Panol	Robert Spires
Jan Quarles	Wendell Rawls
Ray Wong (on leave Fall 2010 for Non-Instructional Assignment)	
Robert Wyatt (phased retirement ending AY 2009-2010)	

Associate Professors

Sanjay Asthana	Tom Berg
Ken Blake	Clare Bratten
Jackie Heigle	Roger Heinrich
Michael Johnson	Robert Kalwinsky
Jane Marcellus	Jim Norton
Robert Pondillo	Guanping Zheng

Assistant Professors

Leon Alligood	Tricia Farwell
Katherine Foss	Deborah Gump
Marcie Hinton (resigned at end of Summer 2010)	Joon Soo Lim
Randy Livingston	Phil Loubere
Jason Reineke	Jennifer Woodard

Full-Time Temporary

Robert Gordon  
Bob Dowd (shared position EMC/School of Journalism)

17. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2010. Also list part-time faculty teaching in Spring 2010. (Those schools whose accreditation visits occur in Spring 2011 should provide an updated list of faculty names at time of visit.)

Spring 2010

Chris Clark Botsaris	Steven Chappell (also advises student paper <i>Sidelines</i> )
Margo Cope	John Egly Sharon Fitzgerald Chris Harkins
Glenn Himebaugh	Rob Jasso (GTA) Gina Jones Jim Leonhirth
Lisa Marchesoni	Samantha Meeks (GTA) Randy O'Brien Marc Parrish
James Stevens	Charles Whiting

Note: Fall 2010 will be available for site team upon arrival.

18. **Schools on the semester system: For each of the last two academic years, please give the number and percentage of graduates who earned 80 or more semester hours outside the major and 65 or more semester hours in liberal arts and sciences.**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Graduates</u>	<u>semester 80 or more semester hours outside the major</u>		<u>65 or more hours in liberal arts/sciences</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
2008-2009 academic year	294	294	100	294	100
2007-2008 academic year	301	301	100	301	100

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

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

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

- (a) **The unit has a mission statement and engages in strategic or long-range planning 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 College of Mass Communication's mission statement is detailed, identifying two distinct goals of the curriculum and the two groups of students it's intended to serve. The mission

statement's first sentence shows how the College strives to contribute to the general education of all University students by offering classes that teach them about the civic responsibility of a free press in a democratic society. The mission statement then identifies the specific goal of the College's curriculum, which is to provide professional education to all its majors. It spells out the balance between skills-based training and critical, theoretical and conceptual thinking. The mission statement also includes many ACEJMC professional values and competences.

The mission statement is supported by a strategic plan that provides action steps and benchmarks for evaluation. The strategic plan is broken into three categories of goals. They are:

- 1.) Academic quality (5 goals)
- 2.) Student-centered learning (5 goals)
- 3.) Partnerships (9 goals).

These 19 objectives are tied to both the College's mission statement and the University's Academic Master Plan. Full faculty participation brought about the latest versions of these documents. This work was completed at a faculty retreat in 2008. The faculty then voted to adopt the revised mission statement and strategic plan in May 2009. The Dean has continued faculty involvement in the ongoing strategic-planning process for the College by calling upon his Advisory Committee to develop strategies and benchmarks.

The University has a long-term strategic plan called the Academic Master Plan that is implemented over a 10-year period, with progress measured annually. The Plan was revised in 2007 and included input from across campus, including the College of Mass Communication.

The last site-team evaluation found the College's mission and faculty engagement in its development to be of seven weaknesses, stating: "The overall role and mission of the College needs to be formulated more clearly and agreed on by the faculty." Real headway has been made to correct this issue.

The College is one of three units at Middle Tennessee State University designated a "signature" program by the President. And with this title comes special consideration from central administration, as the Provost told the site team: "You will have a handful of programs that are truly distinctive and of high quality, and you never want them to decline because it can harm the overall University. Mass Communication is one of these programs, so I watch it closely."

The College has three main units: School of Journalism, Department of Electronic Media Communication, and Department of Recording Industry. All offer undergraduate sequences.

The Department of Recording Industry program is not up for re-accreditation review. The College also offers a pre-Ph.D.-type master's program, which is also not being evaluated for accreditation.

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

Faculty members participate in the governance of the College by serving on four elected/standing committees (Promotion and Tenure; Curriculum; Dean's Advisory; and Graduate Studies) and six Dean-appointed committees (Diversity Issues; Internalization; Tech; Development; College Centennial, and Tom T. Hall). Terms for standing committees are generally three years. When work arises that standing committees can't complete, the Dean forms special committees to meet the needs of the College. Further evidence of faculty governance can be found as you move from the College to the department/school level. The Electronic Media Communication Department has five committees (Peer-Evaluation; Curriculum; Events; Scholarship; and SMARTI Awards) and the School of Journalism has six (Assessment committee; Curriculum; Hall of Fame committee; Scholarships and Awards; Appointments, Promotion & Tenure committee; and Search Committee).

The scope and purpose of committees are clearly explained in the College's "Faculty and Procedures" manual. Concerted effort is made to have balanced representation of faculty from the College's three different units.

Faculty are engaged in the affairs of the College through routine faculty meetings. The Electronic Media Communication Department meets twice a month, Journalism meets monthly, and the College, as a whole, holds at least two meetings a year. The Dean also seeks faculty participation through town-hall-type meetings, which he holds twice a semester.

Curriculum oversight is handled at the department/school level, with the EMC Department and School of Journalism having their own individual curriculum committees. The College Curriculum Committee reviews all department/school curricular matters.

**(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 current Dean of the College has been in place since August 2008. There has been some change in the Dean's office in recent years. In 2007, the College had an interim dean who replaced the then Dean, who left the University. The same can be said of the associate dean: in the past three years, this position has passed back and forth between two professors. Besides

the Dean and associate dean, the College administrative leadership also includes the chair of the Electronic Media Communication (EMC) Department, director of the School of Journalism and graduate director. People have also rotated through the two department/school administrative posts. In the past six years, Journalism has had two directors and an interim director, and EMC has had two chairs and is currently conducting a national search to replace the retiring chair. In speaking with faculty, the site team learned that there were two reasons for the departure of these administrators. “We hired seasoned administrators and some were ambitious and left us to take bigger positions – we were a stepping-stone.” The previous Dean of the College left to become a provost, for example. The other reason faculty members gave for continual departures is pay, noting that higher salaries could sometimes be had elsewhere.

In the relatively short time the Dean has been at the College, he has established himself as a consensus builder both inside and outside of the College, while at the same time demonstrating that he can be decisive. Some faculty members say that he has brought vision to the College and has aided strategic decision-making. According to some, the unit has made great strides to get into new technology since the Dean arrived. “The Dean has already brought some strong initiatives to the program,” said one professor. Others mention that he is “proactive,” “accessible” and “doing the best he can in some tough budgetary times.” A couple of professors feel that he tends to be a bit of a micromanager. “We’re learning from him, and he’s learning from us. He’s a hands-on manager, and faculty feel a little restrained . . . some of us would like more freedom to govern ourselves more.” Overall, he is seen as good-natured, and morale seems to be on the upswing since his arrival.

The site team reviewed recent faculty evaluations for the Dean and found that he is meeting or exceeding expectations. A recurring theme of open-ended comments showed that faculty members view the Dean as an advocate of the College who encourages collaboration.

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

The College’s policy to select and appoint administrators covers procedures for both internal and external appointments. When the College chooses to recruit outside candidates for an administrative position, then a full-blown national search is conducted, which begins by alerting the University Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action office. Internal searches for administrators are inclusive and fair, with all faculty members interested in the position becoming part of the applicant pool and the rest of the faculty acting as the search committee.

Faculty members get the opportunity to evaluate the Dean and associate dean every two years. The results of this faculty survey are considered when making recommendations about the

continuation of the Dean's appointment. The Dean also undergoes a formal review from the Vice President/Provost each year.

During their first three years as Journalism director and EMC chair, faculty evaluate these administrators every year. After that, professors assess these administrators' job performance every two years. The Dean evaluates these administrators annually.

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

The self-study makes it clear that the University prefers to resolve concerns and complaints from the "bottom up," stating: "MTSU makes every effort to resolve a grievance and/or complaint at the lowest possible step in the process." To that end, faculty and staff first bring concerns to chairs or directors, and then, if necessary, they continue to go on up the administrative ladder with their issue. The procedures to resolve faculty and staff issues are explicitly defined and explained in the University Grievance and Complaint Procedures and Board of Regents policies.

The process to resolve student complaints is also in place and fully explained in the "Resolution of Student Complaints and Grievances" section of the Student Handbook.

All of these policies are readily available through the University's website.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction**

*The unit provides a curriculum and instruction 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 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of the unit.**

The College is in 100 percent compliance with the 80/65 rule for the two academic years preceding the site visit.

- (b) **The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses and professional skills courses to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.**

The College offers Bachelor of Science degrees in mass communication and in Recording Industry. The unit undergoing ACEJMC re-accreditation review is made up of the School of Journalism and the Department of Electronic Media Communication. Students must earn at least 120 semester hours for the degree, with 80 hours taken outside the College; at least 65 of those hours must be in the liberal arts and sciences.

Students in the School of Journalism must complete two minors of 15-18 hours each; one of the minors has to be from the liberal arts and sciences. Students in the College complete concentrations in Advertising-Public Relations, Media Design and Graphics, or Journalism (newspaper/magazine).

Students in the Department of Electronic Media Communication may earn a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in mass communication and a concentration in Photography, Electronic Media Communication, or Digital Media Communication. The Electronic Media Communication concentration contains specialties, including: electronic media management, electronic media production and digital animation.

Students in the College all must take at least 9 hours of conceptual courses, with some areas requiring 12 hours. They also must take 5 to 6 skills classes in their concentrations. All students in the School of Journalism take two foundation courses: American Media and Social Institutions (Journalism 1020) and Free Expression, Mass Media and the American Public (Journalism 3650).

Within each of the sequences in the unit, the curriculum has been mapped to ACEJMC's 11 values and competencies.

The curriculum is professionally strong. For graduation (and for the initial acceptance to candidacy) in the College, all prospective majors must take a course that demonstrates writing proficiency. Usually, the course is Media Writing, but in Electronic Media Communication if students earn a B in the two semesters of English Composition, the writing competency is satisfied. Other writing-based courses, such as Writing for the Electronic Media and Writing for Digital Media, can be substituted on petition for the writing requirement.

During the summer of 2009, the unit undertook an audit aimed at determining the extent to which the collective content of the unit's core courses addressed each of the professional values and competencies that ACEJMC has established. Many of the values and competencies were addressed in classes, but the audit placed activities onto an ACEJMC grid for analysis. The audit found sufficient coverage in the core of all but one of the professional values and competencies: No. 10, which refers to skill in computing basic math and statistics. To remedy the deficiency, the unit added *Math Tools for Journalists* to the list of required texts for the unit's introductory media writing course, developed a set of reading comprehension quizzes based on the book's 11 chapters and added the quizzes to the required assignments. Additionally, faculty members in both departments were asked to incorporate into the syllabus for each course statements of all of the professional values and competencies the course would cover.

### **Advertising**

An Advertising major at MTSU earns between 37 and 39 credit hours. In addition to the six hours of foundations courses required of all majors, advertising majors are required to complete nine credit hours in writing and three in design, plus 12 credit hours in conceptual topics courses, one of which must be the Survey of Advertising course. Additionally, ad majors are required to complete courses in Advertising Media Planning and Advertising Management, although they can substitute another upper-division elective with their adviser's permission. Students complete their advertising education with a required Advertising Campaigns course and their choice of a practicum, internship or other journalism upper-division elective.

Interviews with students indicated that they are frustrated with their program, and to an extent, with the College. One student described his experience: "I feel like our concentration

is shunned.” They complained that too few classes – only five – focus specifically on advertising. For example, there is no specific graphic design class for advertising. Rather, students complete a course for public relations design. The students thought the sequence had too few faculty members. They sang high praises for the faculty member who incorporates social media in her class and the new temporary full-time member, who offers a rich background of professional experience. In the students’ eyes the sequence leader, who is a senior faculty member, is not committed to student learning. Students reported positive advising experiences depending on who their assigned adviser was.

Faculty members in the sequence mentioned that they were considering revising the curriculum. The site team encourages the faculty’s efforts to assess the program and explore innovative ways to create a curriculum that better prepares its students for their careers in a multifaceted, changing media environment. It invites the faculty to consider ways to offer students opportunities to join in interdisciplinary learning activities across the sequences (such as participating in the New Media Center) and even across colleges.

### **Electronic Media Communication Department**

Students in the Electronic Media Communication Department earn a degree in one of three concentrations: Photography, Electronic Media Communication (EMC) or Digital Media Communication. Within the EMC concentration, the department offers specialties in: electronic media journalism, electronic media management, electronic media production, and digital animation.

In EMC and Digital Media concentrations, students take 29 credit hours in their freshman year and 30 hours in their sophomore year. In Photography, students take 32 hours in freshman year. College core courses generally focus on history, writing and legal issues, while the department core is more focused on electronic media and video.

In **Electronic Media journalism**, students are required to take 29 credit hours in their freshman year, and 30 hours in the sophomore year with a total of 12 hours in the College. The College requires at least three courses out of six options, with the department requiring two courses, with four in the specialty selected from among six courses. Majors also are required to take liberal arts courses in computing or management information systems. EMC journalism students require 33 to 40 hours in the College, and 80 to 87 hours outside the College. **EMC management majors** are required to take three courses out of five as part of the College core, two within the department core and then five within their specialty, with a maximum of 10 hours in electives. **EMC production majors** require three courses out of five within the College, and three in the department two of three in the specialty and 9 to 13 hours of electives. Production students also must take a computing or a management information

course. The students also need computing or management information systems.

**Digital animation students** must take three of six courses in the College core, four in the department core and six in their specialty, with a maximum of four hours of electives. Animation students are required to take an art minor.

In spring 2010, the EM-Production faculty revised the curriculum to make Intro to Broadcast Media or Survey of New Media for the EMC core and for candidacy. Sight, Sound and Motion will be replaced by Intro to Field Video or Intro to Studio Video. Requirements for advanced seminar courses in the concentration have been expanded to nine hours.

### **Journalism (Newspaper/Magazine)**

Journalism students learn media history, law, sociology and culture in courses such as Introduction to Motion Pictures; Music as Popular Culture; Media History and American Culture; Mass Media and the American Public; Mass Communication and Society; Global News and World Media Cultures; Ethics and Mass Communication; and Seminar in Media Issues (with topics such as Race and Gender, and Media and Politics). These courses contain writing components in the form of essays, scholarly papers, position papers and examinations. Two courses contain “media minutes” (current media issues presented by students for class discussion) to foster reading, research and discussion on media topics such as diversity, professional practices, media criticism and literacy, and globalization.

Students may elect a concentration within the unit and, depending on the concentration chosen, will have choices of electives from College offerings to complete the hours required for their concentration. Additionally, the course entitled Individual Problems in Mass Communication is available as a choice for students who wish to study or undertake specialized projects or research beyond the traditional offerings. Recently the School made curricular changes to insure that multiplatform journalism is taught from the beginning of the student’s matriculation.

### **Media Design**

The Media Design sequence is in transition. Students take a variety of writing, editing and design courses and say they feel as though it makes for a well-rounded education. They want more web and web design classes, however. The sequence has been fairly isolated, according to some of the students. But there are efforts within the College to rectify that. Administrators say that the anticipated new Media Center will incorporate the program. Students praised most of their professors, but said they wish that faculty would let them know about the importance of internships as soon as they’re admitted to the program so students could be even more competitive.

## **Photography**

The professors within the Photography sequence do not have a unified mission. The sequence is one that includes classes in everything from black-and-white film photography and printing to digital photojournalism classes. There is also a photojournalism law and ethics class. It should be noted that all of the Basic Black & White Photography classes exceed the ACEJMC maximum numbers of students in a skills course.

One student said, "I'm in love with my department." And although others agreed, some said they needed more digital class work. "I'm sure I will never use C4I processing again," said a student, referring to a color printing class. The program prepares students for a variety of careers including commercial advertising photography, corporation photography, photojournalism and gallery work. Part of the emphasis in the program is on personal vision.

## **Public Relations**

In addition to the two foundation courses required of all students in the School of Journalism, public relations students in the general program must take 15 credits of writing/design courses. They must also take nine credits of conceptual courses, three credits designated as professional topics, a senior topics course, Public Relations Campaigns, and an internship/practicum or upper division elective.

Public relations students in the Recording Industry specialty take three writing classes, two design courses, and may choose a course designated as professional topics. These include Artist Management (RIM 3720) Concert Promotion and Touring (RIM 4320), and several others. They also must take Public Relations Campaigns. They also complete an internship/practicum worth one to three credits.

Students in the sequence praised the faculty members for their expertise, their dedication to providing excellent learning experiences, and their help in preparing them well for the "real world."

### **(c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.**

Nineteen faculty members received grants, made conference presentations or attended workshops in new/digital media over the past six years. Examples include a presentation on using blogs in the classroom, a paper on computer-assisted reporting that won an AEJMC award in 2010, and a grant to attend an advanced multimedia boot camp.

- (d) **Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1.**

With the exception of the four Basic Black and White Photography (PHOT 2050) classes and an advanced photography class (Editorial Photography), all Fall 2010 skills classes had 19 students or less. Most classes enrolled 15-17 students.

- (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.**

Internships are strongly encouraged, both within the School of Journalism and the Department of Electronic Media Communication. Some sequences, such as Public Relations, do require an internship. Student internship placements include Sinclair Broadcasting, High Five Entertainment, Fletcher, Rowley, Riddle, Inc., Nashville Public Television and the *Shelbyville Times Gazette*.

An internship coordinator within the School and department informs students of internship opportunities via Tweets and other postings. Students who complete an internship are required to submit journal entries about their work; internship supervisors must complete an evaluation of their interns and return it to the coordinator. The document specifies terms of the internship, including hours of work for credit, evaluation and supervision.

Students who complete internships in the School and department may earn up to three credits for their work. Internship supervisors who were contacted by team members spoke highly of MTSU students they'd supervised.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness**

*The unit has a diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects society.*

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

- (a) The unit has a written 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.**

During the 2004 site visit, the team cited the aggressive diversity plan that the College had developed, exceeding the University's affirmative action goals for the student population. That plan seems to have worked well for the unit, since the diversity of the student body has increased since then. However, there was limited detail about a systematic plan for diversifying the student body, faculty and staff or the curriculum.

After the last accreditation site visit the unit had only unsystematic assessments of progress toward achieving its briefly outlined diversity goals. In 2010 the unit now has a revised diversity plan that closely follows the University's model, which defines diversity in the broadest sense possible. The new plan includes specific measurable goals and strategies with timeframes. The plan was approved in March 2010 and specifies when and how assessments should be tracked in the future. At the time of the site visit, not enough time had passed to assess the revised plan's effectiveness.

- (b) The unit's curriculum fosters understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.**

Although the unit reported that a number of courses included an understanding of the diversity of groups, a review of the syllabi did not reveal a focused, systematic approach to students' understandings of the domestic minority issues that are raised in their country or offer, for discussion, other more global diversity issues. Some students reported that they did discuss these issues in some of their classes, but most said they were in classes outside of the College.

- (c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and supports their retention, progress and success.**

Since 2004 the count of Caucasian faculty in the unit has remained steady at 89 percent, the gender count has also remained steady (74% male, 26% female), while the African-American count remained about the same, going from 7 to 6 percent with negligible numbers of other minority groups, as well.

The numbers for faculty members are: 16 of the 20 full professors are white, 2 are Asian and 2 African-American; 9 of the 12 associate professors are white and 2 are Asian; and 8 of the 10 assistant professors are white with 1 Asian and 1 black. With a student body that has grown considerably more diverse in the past five years, the decision makers seem not to have been as aggressive about diversifying the faculty members as they were about diversifying the student body. The latest hires resulted in the unit hiring white faculty staff members, even while diversifying the faculty was one of the stated goals. The advertisements for these faculty positions (included in the self-study) revealed that the unit had not advertised in publications that might have resulted in more candidates from domestic minority groups applying for the positions. The College noted that the University no longer requires this specialized advertising due to its high cost. As a result, for most of the advertised positions, a majority of the applicants were white.

Recently, the College hired a director for the School of Journalism who is African-American. Some concerns were raised about gender-related issues, and women, who comprise just a quarter of the faculty, indicated that some inappropriate conversations related to gender occur with regularity. Effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff have not been instituted.

- (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 underrepresented groups.**

Domestic minorities comprise approximately 18.57 percent of the students in the unit, a number that meets that of minorities for the general population of the state and is a strong showing.

The domestic minority student population in the unit has made a steady climb in the past five years in the School of Journalism rising to 24 percent from 14.5 percent; and in the Department of Electronic Media Communication rising to 21 percent black and 2 percent Asian American.

The unit credits the McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program with helping to improve the success rate for some of their students of color.

- (e) The unit has a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination, accommodates the needs of those with disabilities, and values the contributions of all forms of diversity.**

The College has an atmosphere that is free of harassment and discrimination. However, the unit's broad interpretation of diversity (which includes age, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, physical appearance and/or abilities, cultural life style, intellectual thought and opinion), and acquired characteristics (such as education, socio-economic class, religious beliefs, work experience, language skills, and geographic location) may cause it to lose sight of the original intent of ACEJMC's diversity and inclusion standard. This standard focuses on domestic minority groups that were systematically and legally disenfranchised, keeping them out of the mainstream of the media industries, and systematically marginalized away from most power positions as managers or owners and out of most talent pools for on-air positions in U.S. media. This standard focuses, as well, on faculty, staff and students within JMC programs in higher education where a similar pattern of marginalization and powerlessness prevailed for many years.

**Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE**

**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.**

**Selecting full-time and adjunct faculty**

The self-study briefly describes the College's processes and criteria for the selection of full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff. The process is transparent; the flowchart for hiring is available on the MTSU website. Briefly, the Executive Vice President and Provost oversees the process of hiring full-time faculty members. An academic dean submits a request to recruit a faculty member. Once that approval is granted, the search chair is appointed and a search committee is formed. This committee writes a job description, advertises the position, and reviews candidates. The Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action office must approve the recruitment ads and the recommended finalists. The search committee and the Dean interview finalists. References are checked and recommendations forwarded to the Executive Vice President and Provost before an offer is tendered to a candidate.

Part-time faculty do not undergo the extensive hiring process, which new full-time faculty candidates must follow. Adjunct faculty are selected from a pool containing names, CVs and references of applicants who complete an on-line application. The lone exception to following this procedure is the case of a last-minute hire or when none of the prescreened candidates is available. A new procedure for hiring adjunct faculty was introduced in the Fall 2010. This process requires that applicants qualify for the adjunct pool maintained in Human Resource Services before they can be considered for part-time teaching. The team noted that the weakness cited in the previous reaccreditation report about adjunct faculty was not evident during this visit. Apparently the new procedure helped fix the problem.

### **Evaluating full-time and adjunct faculty**

Evaluations of faculty are regularly administered and follow standard procedures of the University and College.

The self-study spells out the promotion and tenure procedures for the College of Mass Communication. The School of Journalism and Department of Electronic Media Communication have separate documents for promotion and tenure. Copies of those procedures are included in the appendix of the self-study.

The Tennessee Board of Regents mandates that teaching performance be a part of all tenure, promotion and reappointment decisions. The College requires student evaluations of all courses and senior faculty every year and of untenured faculty every semester. The evaluation sheets are electronically scanned and, due to a recent change in University policy, unfortunately do not allow students to make extended comments, although their direct responses are invited. The faculty member, the department chair and the Promotion and Tenure Committee (in the case of pre-tenure faculty) review the results. If problem areas are detected, the chair works with the instructor to strengthen the teaching. A senior faculty member also observes the classroom teaching of pre-tenure faculty members annually. The Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews dossiers of tenure- and/or promotion-seeking faculty, evaluates their supporting documentation, and renders a decision to the director or chair and then the dean. The chair and director provide a written evaluation to each faculty member annually based on that instructor's course evaluations, University and public service and research and/or creative activity.

The chair and Peer Evaluation committee also coordinate a program of classroom observations of nontenured and part-time teachers and graduate teaching assistants. Unit heads visit adjunct professor classes as practicable. The goal of this activity is to improve teaching and the intent is to provide formative information rather than simple summative or evaluative judgments.

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

During the year of the self-study, the College's 42 permanent full-time faculty shared the primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service. Of these, 20 (48%) held the rank of full professor, 12 (29%) were associate professors and 10 (24%) were assistant professors. Nearly three quarters (74%) are males. Eleven women are full-time faculty members. Almost 4 out of 5 (79%) are white. Nine full-time faculty are non-white. Ethnic diversity on the faculty is represented by three black males (2 full professors, 1 associate) and one black female (assistant professor); one Asian female (full professor), one Asian male (full professor) and four Asian males (1 full professor, 2 associate professors, 1 assistant professor). In addition to the permanent full-time faculty, there are two full-time temporary faculty members, both of whom are white males.

The number of part-time faculty teaching at least one course or part of a course during the academic year preceding the site visit was 16. Two graduate teaching assistants also taught courses. Of the 16, one was a black female and one a Hispanic male; five were women.

Full-time faculty members teach most of the courses. In the year of record for the self-study, 81 percent of the courses were taught by full-time faculty. In the 2007-08 year, the number was 69 percent, and 2008-09 full-time faculty members taught 77 percent.

The faculty workload at the University is 15 credits each semester, as mandated by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Tenured and tenure-track faculty typically teach four 3-credit hour courses per semester, plus a credit of 3 hours for advising. They sometimes receive released time from teaching for special projects or research. The average number of credit hours taught by faculty in Journalism is 9 and in Electronic Media Communication, 12.

**(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.**

During the year of the self-study the full-time permanent faculty in Journalism and EMC included: 20 full professors, 12 associate professors, 10 assistant professors. All but one of the 42 full-time faculty members held advanced degrees: 30 (71%) Ph.D.; 1 (2%) Ed.D.; 6 (14%); M.F.A. 4 (10%) M.A.; 1 (2%) B.A. The range of full-time professional experience varied from no experience to 36 years, with an average 14.5 years.

**(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.**

Evaluating the performance of all full-time faculty is a multifaceted process. See Section A for more details.

The promotion and tenure process is fully described in the self-study. Discussions with faculty and students revealed no irregularities or complaints about this process.

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

The site team met a number of members of the College's Board of Professional Advisers, area professionals, and leaders from across the campus. They praised the College, its faculty and students. The College has an enviable reputation for serving the profession, and the citizens of Tennessee and beyond. It is seeking more opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

**Overall evaluation: 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.**

Faculty members have produced a significant amount of scholarly research and creative and/or professional activity over the past six years, especially given their heavy teaching loads. Since the last reaccreditation visit, faculty members have written 10 books, 60 journal and magazine articles, 35 book chapters, 178 presentations, 46 exhibitions, 16 online articles and publications, 37 creative projects, and 42 book reviews, among other work. Two faculty members were cited by AEJMC for their productivity in producing convention papers. Although the University is suffering from the country's economic downturn, the College has made special efforts to provide funds for non-tenured faculty members to travel to conferences to present papers.

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

The College's Hiring, Promotion and Tenure documents are provided to all faculty members. At the time faculty members are hired, expectations for their research/professional activity are spelled out. Nearly every faculty member is supposed to devote 30 percent of his or her time to research/professional activity. Progress in meeting their teaching, service and research goals is reviewed annually.

**(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 College provides a document that clearly spells out guidelines for assessing faculty members' professional and/or scholarly specializations. Specific examples of what constitutes creative activity are cited in the promotion and tenure document.

**(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.**

Over the past six years, faculty members have participated in 178 presentations, 46 exhibitions, 9 professional activity projects, and others.

Additionally, the College has revived its Communication Research Forum, which meets on a monthly basis and provides opportunities for faculty to share their research and professional/creative activities.

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

According to several faculty members, the past two years have seen an increase in opportunities to share research and creative activity with other faculty members. Additionally, even though funds for travel to conferences have shrunk considerably in the past three years because of the state of the economy, the current Dean has provided some money for assistant professors to travel to conferences and present papers. The faculty also has reprised the Communication Research Forum, where faculty members can communicate with each other about their research and professional activities.

Several junior faculty members said the Dean had been very supportive of their efforts to engage in research/professional activity.

**Overall evaluation: 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.*

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

- (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.**

It appears that students are well informed about unit and institutional requirements for graduation throughout their time at the College. The forms that students fill out to track their progress toward graduation are standardized and comprehensive. Student records are locked up or, if they're online, only students and their faculty and other advisers can access them. The records are not available to anyone else.

Some students complained about the quality of advising from the College's advising counselors. They say that the advisers are too busy and not always as helpful as faculty members who advise them.

- (b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.**

Faculty make themselves available to students for advising by extending their office hours. They post office hours, oversee independent projects and are available online as well. Many students praised the quality of faculty advising, saying that many faculty members went out of their way to ensure quality advising. Some students, however, said that some faculty members were not as helpful and didn't offer advice about the best way to plan for graduation.

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

Students are informed about activities and events by the College website or numerous other social networking websites. Departments also use e-mails to notify students about special activities within their majors. Posters, flyers and an electronic messaging board help keep students abreast of information.

- (d) **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.**

There are many extracurricular activities and opportunities for students. In Electronic Media Communication, there is a student-run broadcast outlet: *Middle Tennessee Television (MTTV)*. This offers students experience in all aspects of television broadcasting, which helps prepare graduates for professional careers. Many students work on *Sidelines*, the student newspaper, which is produced in print and online.

There are Twitter feeds, YouTube channels, and a special sports Tweet that provides updates to every sporting event that reporters cover. There are numerous slide shows and videos. Staffers continue to explore new ways to communicate via social media.

There are several professional student organizations. In Fall 2009 the College became the newest member of Kappa Tau Alpha, a national college honor society.

*WMTS-FM* provides alternative music, news and public affairs programming. *WMOT-FM* is a National Public Radio station, and selected students are hired to work there as well.

- (e) **The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention, graduation rates and other aggregate information for improving student services and reducing barriers to student success.**

The College maintains records on enrollment, retention and graduation rates. The College, however, does not have a unified way of assessing the quality of advising and counseling by faculty members. Journalism majors are asked about the quality in their senior exit interviews. The Electronic Media Communication (EMC) Department does not have a formalized procedure to assess the effectiveness of advising and counseling.

**Overall evaluation: 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.**

Funding for Tennessee higher education has declined and published reports say a 9 percent cut looms. The burden to make up some of the lost funds has shifted to students, who have seen tuition rise 5 percent to 12 percent in the past six years. “The budgeting process in 2008-09 was especially painful in light of massive cuts in higher education in Tennessee,” said the self-study. MTSU was asked to cut 6 percent of its budget, or \$19.3 million.

Federal stimulus money, which was passed through the state government, helped to halt this cut and any that were to happen the following academic year. Stimulus dollars only provided a one-time cash infusion. The governor has announced that the state’s higher-education system will decrease by \$180 million once stimulus funds run out.

Bracing for this, the College has worked strategically by applying for funding from the University, which has given them plentiful and up-to-date technology, including approval to build and equip a \$1.4 million mobile production truck. In addition, the College has lined up \$586,000 for renovations to create a Media Center.

**(b) The resources that the institution provides are fair in relation to those provided other units.**

The John Bragg Mass Communication Building, a state-of-the-art facility when it opened almost 20 years ago, has held up well with upgraded equipment and an overhaul of the broadcast studio. The College described some equipment as outdated, although a tour of the building found state-of-the-art broadcast equipment and interviews with faculty and students elicited praise for the gear. Journalism and Mass Communication is one of three University-designated “signature” programs and has used its leverage to tap financial resources to keep equipment current.

The College reported that it has “fared as well as other units on campus in tight budget times” and said it lacked a direct comparison with other units.

The College believes expansion is crucial. The current recession and funding cuts by the state of Tennessee have shelved capital requests. The unit said continued growth of Electronic Media Communication, Journalism and Recording Industry programs will require additional classrooms, specialized labs, faculty offices and work areas.

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

Classrooms have audio-video capability, with broadband connections and multiformat playback capability. One classroom is an HDTV theater. The unit reported receiving \$35,500 from the technology access fee to improve “master classrooms” in summer 2009, and a College development officer and EMC are working with Sony for help with equipment costs.

EMC faculty offices are spread along the office corridor on the second floor, with a few additional offices on the first floor and in the nearby Photography Building.

EMC provides access to facilities and technical support for the student-run MTTV Channel 10 and to WMTS, the student-run FM radio station. MTTV Channel 10 was upgraded in 2008 with three studio cameras, a video switcher, a router and new DV decks. WMTS began operating in 1992 and during two decades has upgraded to stereo.

*Sidelines*, the twice-a-week student newspaper, has become a part of the College: it is produced in a second-floor office and has 16 computers, purchased in 2009. Reporters and photographers on assignment use two iBook computers and two point-and-shoot digital cameras. The newspaper also has two laser jet printers, an inkjet printer, two fax machines and an all-in-one copy/fax/printer system. The staff uses the website to update stories between publication on Mondays and Thursday.

The School of Journalism and EMC used technology access funds to buy a server in 2009 that combines a DVR and a search engine to help students and faculty record, schedule, search and archive thousands of hours of television and identify relevant video on the PC. The unit said the new server eliminates wait times incurred by using IT staff or teaching assistants.

The Dean is pushing a Media Center that will house the student radio station, record label, TV station and *Sidelines* student newspaper along with WMOT-FM, the University’s 100,000-watt NPR-affiliated radio station. The Dean intends the center to give students a place to work on multiple platforms – print, radio, newspaper, Web, magazine and TV – and “drive the

curriculum.” At the time of the site-team visit, construction was scheduled to start in early 2011. When completed by the fall 2011 semester, the center will incorporate Media Design’s five classrooms, four faculty offices and the office for the MTSU Poll and result in less space for classrooms and faculty offices.

- (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.**

### **ELECTRONIC MEDIA COMMUNICATION**

Studio C was upgraded in summer 2007 with four high-definition cameras and more than 150 lights. The studio is big enough to accommodate three sets: a news-anchor desk, an interview area and, at the time of the visit, an area set up for a game show. The studio is used for classes and is available for student projects. The TV control room has an HD video switcher, one of three in the Nashville area, and eight video-framing storage devices. The control room has a new HD-character generator and two 65-inch LCD panels to display as many as 32 video sources. The audio room has a 96-channel digital audio console and system displaying as many as eight sources. The tape room has DV decks and two digital disk record/playback systems with HD monitors. All rooms are linked with the video/audio router system. Students produce a twice-nightly newscast using the studio.

Two other studios are accessible to students in the Learning Resources Center, which also houses the student radio station and the University’s member-supported radio station. The electronic newsroom, equipped in summer 2009, uses the EZNews production system to replace Associated Press news software, with 18 iMac computers with boot-camp software for Windows. Cable television is available along with video projection.

The digital animation lab has 20 iMac workstations and is equipped with Final Cut Pro, Master Collection and Maya software. The digital imaging lab has 18 iMacs, with advanced input, imaging and output capabilities. All computers have Final Cut Pro and Adobe Master Collection.

The mobile production laboratory has five cameras, a switcher, digital still storage and a multi-format video-recording area. Two HD character generators, a 96-channel digital audio console and monitor wall were installed in summer 2009. EMC applied for University stimulus money to complete the upgrade. A new truck has been ordered, at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million, and the College expects delivery early in 2011.

Photography facilities cover all levels of experience. The College reported that two photography studios and \$200,000 of digital gear were added in 2004. Four years later, 14 basic enlargers and six advanced enlargers were added with \$35,700 from the technology access fee. A portable master classroom was added with \$28,000 from TAF in summer 2009. Students reported a lack of access to digital equipment and classes.

## **SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM**

The School of Journalism has a writing lab, two media design/writing computer labs, a media design lab, a multipurpose lab/classroom, 40-seat seminar classroom and an 83-seat lecture classroom. Larger classes are taught in the Learning Resources Center, less than five minutes by foot from the Bragg building. Journalism faculty offices are spread on two floors in Bragg, with three offices in nearby Ezell Hall.

The lecture classrooms have a PC computer hooked to a digital projector, overhead projector and equipment for sharing audio and video. Each teaching computer has software for Internet access, Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader and other applications. The Media Design sequence's lab/classrooms have Internet access. The server stores completed student projects, files for students to use for design projects and archived files.

The main Media Design lab classroom has 17 iMacs, two 52-inch LCD TVs and a digital projector hooked up to the teaching station. The room has two high-end, large-format color laser printer and two black-and-white laser printers. Applications include Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium, Microsoft Office, Audacity and SoundSlides. The Technology Access Fee funded the lab's equipment. A second lab has similar features without LCD TVs.

Advertising and Public Relations sequences use the multipurpose lab/classroom as a lecture room and lab. The room has 17 iMacs with the Adobe Design software, Microsoft Office and QuarkXPress linked to the Internet, and color and black-and-white laser printers.

With TAF funding, the room was revamped in summer 2010 to become a multimedia lab geared to collaborative teaching. It has five LCD TVs, an iMac teaching station and projector, and laptop computers configured with software to take advantage of the multimedia environment.

The writing lab has 17 PCs equipped with Microsoft Office and Adobe Creative Suite and two black-and-white laser printers.

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

The James E. Walker Library, the University's main library, houses journalism and mass communications volumes. The library, which is 0.1 mile or less than a two-minute walk from the Bragg building, has access to a wide variety of electronic resources. The library is open 95 hours a week, with extended hours during exams. The four-floor library houses periodicals and reference works on the ground floor.

The College doesn't have a reading room. The *Tennessean*, *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* are available in an open lounge area outside the Dean's office on the second floor.

The Center for Popular Music, on the first floor of the Bragg building, provides access to archives and publications related to the music industry.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service**

*The unit advances journalism and mass communication professions and fulfills its obligations to its community, alumni and the greater public.*

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

- (a) The unit is actively engaged with alumni, professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.**

Perhaps the best-known example of professional and public service at MTSU is in promoting First Amendment Studies. The John Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence and its programs have brought numerous scholars and journalists to campus to speak. A short list of recent visitors to campus includes: George Curry, Gloria Steinem, Carl Bernstein and Al Gore.

- (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.**

There appears to be a good amount of public service and professional activity throughout the College. And that service is not just regional, but national and international. Some examples: In 2008-2009 the College's Electronic Media Communication sequence was highlighted in a Sony Corporation journal and featured the high-definition television studio upgrade in an international webinar in 14 countries and four continents. The MTSU program is still on the College website. Other programs have been featured as well including a major music video production.

The College's Office of Communication Research has conducted one poll each semester for several years. These telephone polls gather public opinion data about social, political and ethical issues affecting Tennessee. Their findings have been published in major newspapers and magazines. The office has recently launched a website that distributes polling results.

- (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 have received numerous grants in support of involvement in academic associations and related activities. Several are listed in Standard 5 of this document.

**(d) The unit contributes to its communities through service projects, internship and job placements, and faculty involvement in civic activities related to journalism and mass communication.**

In the fall of 2008 the College produced several films in cooperation with the DR&A Studios in Nashville featuring a marching band and cheerleaders, a 12-person gospel choir and an award-winning hip-hop dance group and an actor.

In December 2008 campaign classes created an advertising campaign for Chevrolet's green products.

After a tornado struck Murfreesboro and Rutherford County on April 9, 2009, students from reporting classes interviewed residents who had lived through the storm, then wrote stories and produced slides and/or video clips of the interviews. A professor and student produced an interactive graphic that showed the tornado's path and the level of destruction. This and the interviews were published on the *Daily News Journal's* website. Residents wrote letters thanking the College for producing the documentary.

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

Faculty members work with professionals and organizations in a variety of ways. Their vitae are full of presentations, editorial reviews, publications and presentations and committee work within the school and in regional and national capacities. Many are active in AEJMC. Many faculty members have leadership roles in academic and professional organizations such as the Broadcast Education Association. One faculty member has served as interim executive director for the Center for Public Integrity.

**Overall evaluation: COMPLIANCE**

## **PART II — Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

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

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

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

In brochures and guides for prospective and newly admitted students and on its website, the unit defines the knowledge, skills and professional values, including the professional values and competencies listed by the Council under its Principles of Accreditation that the unit has designed its curriculum to teach. During odd-numbered academic years, the unit collects direct and indirect measures of its progress toward meeting these student-learning objectives. During the even-numbered academic years, the unit interprets, considers, and responds to this measure.

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

The unit now has a written assessment plan, but it was not developed until the 2009 Spring semester. Thus, the data collection process that focuses on direct and indirect measures over time could not be instituted in the manner recommended by ACEJMC. At MTSU, development of the plan started in the 2009 Spring semester, data collection began in the 2009 Fall semester, and the plan was adopted by the School of Journalism in November 2009 and by the Department of Electronic Media Communication in March 2010.

In 2009, the unit began a process for auditing its core courses and measuring student-learning objectives, and it designed a system for assessing direct and indirect measures of learning outcomes. The results of the establishment of this systematic assessment of learning outcomes cannot be measured and instituted to correct any curriculum issues until a few years from now.

However, in September 2001, the Council had adopted a schedule for the development and implementation of assessment plans. ACEJMC had notified all members that schools seeking accreditation or reaccreditation were required to have plans for the assessment of educational outcomes by September 2003 and to collect information for assessing student learning during the 2003-04 academic year. Schools were required to begin applying findings from the assessments to improve curricula, instruction and learning by September 2004.

The Council published a guide to assessment methods already in use by accredited schools. Copies were sent in October 2001 to administrators of all accredited schools. Thus in 2010, the MTSU unit is out of compliance on these assessment plans and guidelines.

**(c) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to gain feedback for improving curriculum and instruction.**

The self-study appeared to be realistically critical of the system used by the University for administering alumni surveys. The survey did not query alumni about their professional experiences or gain feedback for improving the curriculum and instruction. It is not clear how or if the results that were obtained from this survey were used by the unit for outcomes assessment purposes. It is also unclear why the unit did not conduct its own alumni survey, however, asking questions about majors, concentrations and employment status.

**(d) The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.**

A blind review by one of the unit's Board of Professional Advisers judged one pre-test/ post-test for the unit. Another review used six of the Board's advisors. It is unclear how that information may have been used. At any rate, having just one professional reviewer would limit the usefulness of the review.

**(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and uses the data to improve curriculum and instruction.**

Because the unit did not complete a written assessment plan until 2009 and did not begin using the limited findings to plan ways to improve the curriculum, there is no clear indication about how the College will become successful at assessing its curriculum and activities and use those data to improve the curriculum and instruction.

**Overall evaluation: NON-COMPLIANCE**

### **PART III: Summary by site visit team**

I) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

#### **Strengths**

- Dedicated, hard-working faculty and administrators.
- State-of-the-art equipment that is even more impressive given the number of grants and other hard-fought sources of funding needed to buy it.
- Student engagement in significant external productions and projects.
- Caring and knowledgeable EMC faculty advisers, praised by students for their academic and professional guidance.
- Highly visible and prestigious work that brings recognition to the College (e.g. Seigenthaler Chair, MTSU Poll, Center for Popular Music, and Photo Gallery).
- A decidedly resourceful group of administrators and faculty members who have confronted ongoing tough budgetary times to secure funding for the College.
- Skilled and caring faculty mentors who are readily recognized and appreciated by the non-tenured professors they guide and assist.
- The continued recognition as one of only three units at MTSU awarded “signature” status because of the prestige of the College.
- Location less than an hour away from Nashville, a hub for music, entertainment and the health-care industry, which the College takes advantage of for collaborations, internships, projects and work-study experiences.

#### **Weaknesses**

- An assessment plan that has not met ACEJMC deadlines to be fully implemented.
- A lack of a fully functioning diversity plan.
- Perception of a lack of general respect and understanding across the Journalism School and Electronic Media Communication (EMC) programs.
- A “silo” departmental structure that discourages a natural collaboration between the Journalism School and EMC department, and their sequences.
- Continued budget restrictions by the state that hinder advancing programs and expanding offerings.

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

Standard 3 and Standard 9

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

In terms of Standard 3, the College will need to use the diversity plan that was approved in March 2010 to meet ACEJMC guidelines, systematically assessing progress being made toward achieving its diversity goals. Faculty will need, as well, to develop ways to focus students' attention on domestic minority groups' marginalization in media industries, and incorporate within syllabi a strong sense of how domestic minority diversity issues are addressed within the curriculum. They will need to develop strategies to address the significant gender and racial gaps that prevail within faculty and staff ranks.

With regard to Standard 9, the College should fully implement the Assessment of Student Learning Plan by the next site visit so that a robust collection of data are gathered for all stated measures; all data should be analyzed and key results identified; and these results should be applied to curriculum review, which then can lead to the refinement and development of the College's curriculum. Deeper involvement of professionals throughout this assessment process should also be pursued.

- 4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that must be corrected before the provisional status can be removed.

Not applicable

- 5) In the case of a recommendation for denial of accreditation, clearly and fully explain the reasons that led to that recommendation.

Not applicable

- 6) If the unit was previously accredited, summarize the significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and the actions taken to correct them.

The previous site-visit report did not answer this question, so the College and the 2010 site team used the list of weaknesses cited by the team.

1. *The overall role and mission of the College needs to be formatted more clearly and agreed on by the faculty.* The faculty attended a retreat and meetings to devise and approve a revised mission statement and strategic plan. The Dean's Advisory Committee was also involved in the process and continues to work on strategies and benchmarks in concert with the Dean.
  2. *The budget is too small for the College because enrollment has grown so rapidly in recent years.* The College continues to maximize funds that it is given, but as the self-study states: "It fares no worse than others on campus in these tight budgetary times." The downward trend in the budget does not always allow the College to advance programs and expand offerings as desired, however.
  3. *The College has outgrown its space.* The College continues to need space. The University's long-term plan to build an addition to the John Bragg Mass Communication Building has been put on hold, but it has allocated funds to add a Media Center to the building.
  4. *At least one faculty member needs to retire.* Since 2004 many faculty members have retired from the College.
  5. *Some adjunct professors do not appear to be good enough in the classroom; students complained strongly.* This problem has been addressed. Problem adjuncts have been let go and a stronger team of adjunct professors created. The University's Human Resource Services is now involved in vetting adjunct applicants, which makes the new hiring process more rigorous.
  6. *The lack of a permanent director of the School of Journalism has been, and remains, a problem.* Since the last reaccreditation visit, the School has had two permanent directors and two interim directors. The current permanent director resulted from a national search and is complimented for his leadership and administrative skill by a number of faculty members.
  7. *Much more needs to be done to improve alumni records and alumni relations.* The College has corrected this weakness by creating Advancement Services and hiring a College Development Director to more fully and regularly improve alumni records and relations.
- 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 supervised by the steady hand of a senior faculty member who has now stewarded the process three times for the College. The three-volume report demonstrated her keen understanding of the accrediting process. The site team found the report to be useful in its work but also uncovered some grammatical mistakes, especially in the first few standards, which

were stumbling blocks. The narrative was surprisingly candid, which the site team found refreshing.