Report of On-Site Evaluation

Undergraduate

2009 – 2010

Draft Copy*

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
NOTE: This copy is only a draft of the final report. It may contain errors. School and university representatives may file challenges of fact and judgment with the team chair during the three weeks following the visit. The Accrediting Council makes the final accreditation decision.
Report of On-Site Evaluation
ACEJMC

2009–2010

Name of Institution: California State University, Chico
Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: President Paul Zingg
Name of Unit: Department of Journalism
Name and Title of Administrator: Glen L. Bleske, Department Chair

Date of 2009-2010 Accrediting Visit: Oct 25-28, 2009

If the unit is currently accredited, please provide the following information:
Date of the previous accrediting visit 2003
Recommendation of the previous accrediting team Reaccreditation
Previous decision of the Accrediting Council Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2009-2010 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair
Name and Title: Jerry Ceppos, Dean
Organization/School: Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada, Reno
Signature

Team Members
Name and Title: Jan Quarles, Professor
Organization/School: Department of Electronic Media Communication, Middle Tennessee State University
Signature

Name and Title: Susan Gage, managing editor for online and community news
Organization/School: The Oregonian, Portland
Signature

Instructions to the site team

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT:
Part I — General Information: The team should include here the General Information pages prepared by the unit in advance of the visit. Some of this information was contained in the original self-study and some is updated information. The unit is expected to prepare these pages before the team’s arrival on campus and print them for inclusion in the team report.

Part II — Evaluations regarding individual standards: To enter material into the report, click into the template in the spaces provided and type; the spaces will expand to accommodate your writing. The sections of the report addressing each standard are structured as follows:

Full statement of the standard: For your convenience, this report form includes the full statement of each standard, complete with lists of indicators and suggested evidence.

Unit performance regarding indicators: The report should address the unit’s performance regarding each of the five indicators for each standard. If the unit has requested a waiver of any indicator, the team must consider this request. The decision to grant or deny such a waiver must be clearly explained and supported in the report.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance: The team must conclude its evaluations of the unit’s performance regarding each of the nine standards with either “compliance” or “non-compliance.”

Part III — Summary by site visit team: This section summarizes the team’s major findings and evaluations.

GENERAL NOTES:

Overall recommendation regarding accreditation: Accreditation status is determined by the degree to which the unit’s program complies with the standards of accreditation and the degree to which the program accomplishes its stated goals. An accumulation of inconsistencies and weaknesses, or a major shortcoming in one or more of the standards, may jeopardize the accreditation status of a unit.

Clarity and accuracy: The Accrediting Committee and the Accrediting Council will base their decisions on the information and explanations presented in this report, so the site visit team has an extremely important obligation to provide complete, clear and accurate information. Teams must avoid words that can have different meanings for different people and must use clear, concrete language.

Non-prescriptive evaluation: Team chairs and members must not suggest to schools or departments that they follow model curricula designed by another organization, because these curricula have not been adopted by the Accrediting Council. The site visit team may offer suggestions for improvement but should avoid stipulations about specific courses, faculty composition or other improvements, because each unit must be free to structure its program to meet its own goals and to meet the standards.

Individual sequences: For the curriculum standard, teams MUST describe and evaluate individual academic sequences in the unit. For other standards, it may be appropriate for the team to comment about individual sequences. However, most of the team’s comments should address general compliance or non-compliance with the standards.
PART I: General information

The team should include here the General Information pages prepared by the unit in advance of the visit. The team should ensure that the unit’s assessment plan is included with the General Information section.

PART I

GENERAL INFORMATION

This general information section will be included in its entirety in the site team’s report, and it must present the most current information available. Before the site visit, the unit should review its responses to the questions below (especially 13 – 20) and update them as necessary. The unit then should print a copy of this section for each team member and present the new material to the team when members arrive on campus. The team will include the revised material in the site team report. In addition, if any significant changes not covered in this section have occurred since the original self-study report was submitted, the unit should describe and document those changes and present this new material to the team when members arrive.

Name of Institution: California State University, Chico
Name of Unit: Department of Journalism    Year of Visit: 2009

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
   ___ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
   X  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.

See attachment at end of section
4. Has the journalism/mass communications unit been evaluated previously by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications?

   X Yes
   ___ No
   If yes, give the date of the last accrediting visit: 2003

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

   1997

6. Attach a copy of the unit’s mission statement.

   See attachment at end of section

7. What are the type and length of terms?

   Semesters of 16 weeks
   Summer session varies by class: three weeks to 12
   Intersessions of 3 weeks (Note: Journalism rarely offers intersession or summer classes)

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

   X 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.

   Before fall 2009, 124; fall 2009 catalog, 120. See other sections on curriculum changes.

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

    One credit hour per semester. Total number of units in degree cannot exceed two units.
    (Note: all students earn at least two semester units for required lab; cannot exceed four units.)

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

    Name of Sequence or Specialty   Person in Charge
12. **Number of full-time students enrolled in the institution:**

16, 230 (Spring 2009)

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):**

(Spring 2009; we will update for fall 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sequence or Specialty</th>
<th>Undergraduate majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared journalism</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News-Editorial</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>312</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>J260 Writing for Mass Media</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J321 Public Affairs Reporting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J325 Magazine Writing</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J327 News Editing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J341 Writing for PR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J351 PR Publications</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J353 Photojournalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J355 Internet Newspapers</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J453 Advanced photojournalism</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. **Total expenditures planned by the unit for the 2009 – 2010 academic year:**

- Best guess at this point: $528,000 (probably won't have budget until 2010)
- Percentage increase or decrease in three years: Decrease of 20 percent
- Amount spent this year on full-time faculty salaries: $515,000
  (Note: this item does not include administrative and clerical salaries, which are paid by the college office and not controlled by the unit.)

16. **List name and rank of all full-time faculty. Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc.**

- Glen L. Bleske, professor
- Kurt Nordstom, professor
- Matt Blake, assistant professor
- Susan Brockus, assistant professor
- Morris Brown Jr., assistant professor
- Aaron Quinn, assistant professor
- Debra Johnson, professional-in-residence, lecturer
- David Waddell, professional-in-residence, lecturer

17. **List names of part-time faculty teaching at least one course in Fall 2009. Also list part-time faculty teaching in Spring 2009. (Those schools whose accreditation visits occur in Spring 2010 should provide an updated list of faculty names at time of visit.)**

- Fall 2009: None
- Spring 2009: Lewis Brockus, Leslie Layton
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>80 or more semester hours outside the major</th>
<th>65 or more semester hours in liberal arts/sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009 academic year</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008 academic year</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

**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.

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

(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.

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

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

**Evidence:**

A mission statement

A strategic or long-range plan

A faculty policy manual, handbook or other document specifying the roles of faculty in governance and the development of educational policy

Minutes of faculty meetings, committee meetings and reports

Assessment of unit administrator by faculty and by administration outside the unit

Files on searches and hiring decisions

Files on concerns and complaints

**Team evaluation:**

(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.
Beginning in the late 1980s, the faculty worked to move journalism and public relations from the Department of Information and Communication Studies to a new Department of Journalism, which was first accredited in 1997. The department, now a part of the School of Communication in the College of Communication and Education, was re-accredited in 2003 and now has eight full-time faculty members and 338 majors. The department offers a B.A. in journalism, with options in news-editorial and public relations.

The written mission statement calls for the department to prepare students by teaching professional skills and research techniques; to educate students “for life,” not just for living; to retain training in information-gathering, writing, editing, media law and ethics while “adapting the curriculum to dramatic changes in mass communication professions”; to contribute to the body of knowledge in mass communication; to promote professionalism, and to prepare students for working in a multicultural society.

The department’s strategic plan calls for it to become the “foremost instructional institution of print and multimedia journalism and public relations” in Northern California. However, the department plans to add to its long-range plan an emphasis on community journalism because that’s where print jobs seem to be and because of the number of community journalism jobs in the Chico region.

However, it is clear that long-range planning could be affected by future cuts in state funding. The dean says that an additional 10 per cent cut in funding—which is entirely possible—will mean that the university has suffered a 27 per cent budget cut in four years. The effects of the cuts are serious: The university has been told to drive down enrollment 9.5 per cent in two years, a dramatic reduction for a system that traditionally has served many minority students and first-generation college students. The campus even will close three days each semester to accommodate furloughs—and, on top of that, each faculty member must choose three other days per semester when he or she will not work. In addition, the department has shed its adjuncts to save money. Finally, about 96 per cent of the budget goes to salaries, leaving little room for creativity in other areas.

The team believes that the department has been treated fairly, as does the chair; the dean says that she has “protected” journalism. The team’s job is to look at today’s budget, not to predict the future. But it is worthwhile to wave a warning flag because budget uncertainty—caused by late legislative decisions and the state’s dismal financial climate—are a part of the story of this unit: Further cuts probably would mean the loss of two valued full-time lecturers. That loss could well test the viability of the department.

\((b)\) The unit has policies and procedures for substantive faculty governance that ensure faculty oversight of educational policy and curriculum.
The chair is appointed by the president upon recommendation of the department faculty and the college dean. The chair reports directly to the dean. The term of appointment is three years and is renewable. Glen Bleske has served since summer 2005 and is in the second year of his second term. The faculty meets at least twice a year. Standing departmental committees handle assessment and retention, tenure and promotion. The university’s Faculty Personnel Policies and Procedures document guides journalism’s actions.

(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 faculty praises chair Glen Bleske, giving him a 4.85 on a 5-point scale for overall effectiveness in 2008. Dean Phyllis Fernlund’s 2008 evaluation said that the faculty values “the collegial environment and support provided by the department and your leadership.” She praised his “excellent chair review.”

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

The university requires the department to select a nominating committee, which submits the names of acceptable candidates to the department. Faculty members vote by secret ballot; the winner must receive a majority of the votes of full-time faculty members. The result goes to the dean, who sends it with a recommendation to the provost. The journalism chair serves for a renewable three-year term.

The dean evaluates chairs based on fiscal management, leadership, management and departmental and university responsibilities.

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

Students are asked to first meet with the faculty member involved, then with the chair, then with a Student Judicial Affairs representative. Faculty and staff members may complain to their unions; procedures are outlined in collective-bargaining agreements.

Since summer 2005, students have brought three complaints to the chair and all were resolved; faculty members have brought none.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**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.

Professional Values and Competencies:
The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

• understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
• demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
• demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
• understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
• demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
• think critically, creatively and independently;
• conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
• write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
• critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
• apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
• apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

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. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement.

ACEJMC requires each unit seeking initial accreditation to include in its self-study report the number
of semester or quarter hours taken in non-journalism and mass communications and in liberal arts, sciences and social sciences by all members of each graduating class in the two academic years before an initial accreditation visit.

Units seeking re-accreditation must determine the percentage of students meeting the 80/65 or 116/94 requirement, but they are not required to provide a full census of classes.

(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.

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

(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.

(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 one semester course (or its equivalent) if the internship is away from the institution, and, for the most part, supervised by media professionals rather than academics.

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.

Evidence:

Student records and transcripts
Unit bulletins and brochures
Syllabi and other course materials
Records of teaching awards and citations, curricular and course development grants, attendance at teaching workshops, and publications and papers on teaching
Class rosters
Records and statistics on and evaluations of internships, with and without academic credit

Team evaluation:
(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 university.

The unit reports 100 per cent compliance with the minimum of 80 semester credit hours or more outside mass communication in the last two academic years (106 students in 2008-2009 and 93 students in 2007-2008). It also reports 100 per cent compliance with the minimum of 65 semester credit hours in both of those years.

Team members examined the paper documents, checking compliance in both areas during the visit. The unit is also developing an electronic system for evaluating compliance: at present the unit is using redundant systems.

(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 department states that the ACEJMC student competencies are central, and in its assessment plan it has developed a set of student learning objectives based on those competencies. The self-study states that professional values and professional behavior are at the core of the department’s approach to teaching. Ethical and professional values are central to the entire Ethical Problems in Mass Media capstone course (which every student must take) but students also reported that ethics were discussed in almost every class they took. The primary faculty member assigned to the ethics course is one whose research has focused specifically on journalism ethics. He produced several peer-reviewed articles, has a forthcoming book on media ethics, and has lectured nationally and internationally on media ethics.

A faculty member who specializes in journalism history and has published peer-reviewed research in the field teaches the History of American Journalism course. The course touches on some of the major time frames of journalism history as well as the journalistic techniques that define them. Mass Communication Law used to be taught by two faculty members but the adjunct, an attorney, was let go because of budget cuts. The full-time faculty member teaching law has developed the area as a specialty. The course focuses on offering students the vital legal tools for journalists – copyright, defamation, privacy, etc. – but includes intensive discussion about historical legal cases and the arguments that brought their decisions.

These courses are supplemented by other optional offerings including Race and Diversity in the Media, Entertainment/Media/American Culture, Women/Men/Media, Public Opinion and Propaganda or Politics and the Media.

(c) Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.
All students in the department take three core courses, including an Introduction to Mass Communication, Writing for Mass Media and an Introduction to Online Journalism. The latter course examines the broad implications of online news and other forms of journalistic Internet communication. It was piloted in 2007.

Faculty have been working to address the changing demands in media industries today, and several other courses have been initiated or redesigned. Internet Newspapers and Magazines has been modified to include modern Web-design techniques and substantive multimedia. Public Relations Publications has been updated to include Web publishing and to teach students how offline publications work in conjunction with online organizational communication. Advanced Photojournalism includes substantial multimedia with an emphasis on advanced picture editing, video reporting and video production. A new course, Online Presentation of News and Public Relations, introduces students to sophisticated Web site production and multimedia post-production. These courses are important but they are not offered every semester. As the Internet and the department mature, the emphasis on the Internet needs to pervade every course and the staff of The Orion and the Tehama Group.

Public relations

Students in public relations take a major program core, an option core and additional courses from three thematic course groups. Core public relations courses include an introductory course, Writing for Public Relations, PR Strategy and Public Relations Laboratory. By examining syllabi, observing classes and talking with faculty, the currency of the classes as discussed in the self-study is apparent. Students were completing assignments in social media and thinking about the many aspects of new media. Next semester or next year, students in the writing classes (in both news-editorial and public relations) will be required to buy Flip cameras and learn to incorporate video on Web sites and blogs. They already are learning about Twitter and about writing across platforms. A fifth core class in public relations research will be taught in Spring 2010 to enable the department to apply for a Public Relations Student Society of America chapter.

Students said their public relations professors were their hardest teachers, but said they appreciated the rigor in the classes, the hands-on nature of their courses and the close attention paid to writing. "It's really hard, but they want you to learn, and they will spend the time with you," one student said. The students also praised the level of professional experience and the accessibility of faculty. All felt they were a step ahead of peers in other colleges because they had already developed strong resumes and portfolios.
News-editorial

News-editorial students take a core of four courses, Mass Communications Law, Public Affairs Reporting, News Editing and Copyreading and the lab newspaper (The Orion).

In the Internet Newspapers/Magazines class, students learn both conceptual aspects of new media and the development of Web pages with HTML coding.

Students in this sequence also praised the rigor of their classes and appreciated the hands-on experience they got at The Orion.

Achievements

The Chico faculty members have received numerous awards, with many being national. The student newspaper, The Orion, received a $5,000 grant from CELT (the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching) in 2006 for providing a high-quality learning environment. The money was used to create a new journalism scholarship.

(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.

Enrollment in most skills classes for the academic year 2008-2009 ranges from 13 to 20, with one class, magazine writing, having high enrollments of 26. The PR Publications and Internet Newspapers classes have enrollments of 20. The department chair said that the high magazine writing enrollment evolved when budget cuts removed part-time positions for faculty to teach the class, which is very important to news and public relations students alike. The solution was to create one larger class. Other classes not in skills areas will have even larger enrollments given the recent budget pressures. For example, several sections of Ethical Problems in Mass Media will be combined into one section. But students responded that even when they were in bigger classes, they felt that their journalism professors were more accessible for their questions than other professors on campus.

(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 available in both the news-editorial and public relations programs as described below and both areas have professionals-in-residence who supervise and evaluate those internships.
Public Relations Internships

Students may take one graded internship, and the unit counts toward the major. When public relations students sign up for the internship course, they have a choice of applying to be chosen to work at the Tehama Group agency, Chico’s highly lauded student agency, or choosing an on-site internship with an organization off campus. Students must meet specific guidelines before applying for an internship (a 3.0 GPA in the major, two favorable recommendations from journalism faculty and completion of Writing for Mass Media (JOUR 260) and Writing for Public Relations (JOUR 341).) Students develop their own internship placements, or work with the internship supervisor.

She must approve any off-site internship. She then visits the internship sites (funds allowing) or communicates by telephone with the intern supervisors and interns. When students are assigned to an internship, they must write a progress report and submit it each week, including work samples. A final progress report written by students reveals their overall satisfaction with the placement. Upon completion of the internship, on-site supervisors evaluate interns by completing a questionnaire and providing anecdotal information. In evaluating intern performance, the faculty coordinator looks for evidence of good writing, initiative, professionalism, reliability and overall contributions to the organization. Students have been placed locally as well as in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles and San Diego when they return home for the summer. Internship placements range from national nonprofits such as the American Cancer Society to local nonprofits such as Computers for Classrooms, from small businesses such as Lulu’s fashion boutique to the regional hospital, Enloe Medical Center. During student interviews, one senior mentioned that she treasured her internship experience because she was not allowed to be paid, and the experience made her develop her work ethic to a greater extent.

Many students in the Public Relations Laboratory (JOUR 445) perform work for local and regional clients. The students who choose this option have applied for consideration, and been interviewed and chosen to work in the agency. Students who are accepted into Tehama Group Communications, the department’s student-managed public relations agency, work on diverse public relations activities with clients such as the Chicken Soup for the Soul book series authors, and the California Hospice Foundation. Local clients include the Chico Unified School District, Catalyst Domestic Violence Services, and small businesses. The members of the Tehama agency are supervised and evaluated directly by the professional-in-residence and by their clients.

News-editorial internships

News editorial internships are optional but encouraged. Many students choose to work in lab classes at The Orion during the regular academic year. Internships that take place during the academic year are with local media companies such as the Chico News & Review or in-house communications departments such as Chico Performances.
The vast majority of journalism internships are taken during the summer, but the cost of enrollment for a single academic unit has to be considered. In addition, the growing number of media organizations requiring that internships be funded by the unit or student has added an additional challenge. The department has obtained a 12-week internship each summer since 2001 at The Sacramento Bee. The Bee is the region’s leading newspaper and each year receives several hundred applications from throughout the nation for a handful of internships. The department has also made creative use of its annual Scripps-Howard Foundation internship grant to work with newspapers and literally create internships that would otherwise not have existed. The department chair and the professional-in-residence are working to obtain funds for more news-editorial students who wish to apply for internships at larger papers where funding is not possible.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

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

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

**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.

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

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to recruit women and minority faculty and professional staff and provides an environment that supports their retention, progress and success.

(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.

(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.

**Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.**

**Evidence:**

A written plan

Syllabi and other course materials

Records and statistics on faculty and staff hiring and on promotion and tenure decisions

Records and statistics on student recruitment, retention and graduation

Records on part-time and visiting faculty and speakers

**Team evaluation:**

(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 last review, in 2003, the unit was challenged to continue improvement in this area. Recent turnover, including layoffs, resulted in fewer women and minorities on the faculty, which the self-study
acknowledges is problematic. The unit has taken on a student-recruitment program, which has proved successful in increasing the number of applicants from students of color.

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

The unit has one elective course that addresses diversity, Race and Diversity in Media (JOUR 411), which was added in 2003 and is open to both news and PR students. Another course, Women, Men and the Media (JOUR 311) is an approved general-education class.

Department policy encourages faculty to include diversity issues throughout the curriculum, from bias in reporting to enhancing the understanding of multiculturalism and the contributions of women, ethnic minorities and those of different sexual orientations. Students indicated that diversity was a significant topic of assignment throughout their coursework, from the diversity newsletter that Tehama Group Communications produces as part of the campuswide Building Bridges program to various word choices discussed in news editing to writing assignments that encourage inclusion of diverse sources.

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

The faculty membership includes two women (25 percent of the small faculty) and one African-American male professor, the only person of color. These percentages are down, due in large part to turnover of senior women faculty, including the budget-necessitated layoff of a longtime adjunct instructor who was female and a fluent Spanish speaker. Given the faculty’s small size, a change of one person can affect the overall percentages dramatically. The self-study acknowledges that faculty diversity is a problem – one without an immediate solution, given the inability to hire under the current budget. Too, if further budget cuts are necessary, a woman faculty member would be at risk, leaving the unit only one.

(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 2003 team noted that student diversity at Chico State was a significant deficiency, particularly in a state as racially and ethnically diverse as California. However, the immediate service area for the university is 75 percent white, which presents challenges in recruitment. Currently the unit’s student makeup is 72.4 percent white, compared to 66 percent for the university. The only minority group in which the unit exceeds the university is African-American students, who make up 4.2 percent of the unit compared to 2 percent of the university population.

The unit has aggressively sought student diversity in several ways.
First, a faculty member used his sabbatical to visit minority-oriented high schools in Northern California, a major commitment for the department and the professor. That work led to a four-year, $59,000 grant from MediaNews Group that has helped fund minority scholarships and internships. Included in that was money to pay the travel costs of the same faculty member, who spends a week per semester visiting area high schools and community colleges with diverse student bodies to students to think about Chico State for their education. Such partnerships have led to increased applications by minority students, even as the university as a whole has seen declines.

Through the MediaNews grant, the unit also successfully placed minority interns at metro newspapers that had previously not taken Chico students: The Denver Post, the Salt Lake Tribune and the San Jose Mercury News. The MediaNews Group Journalism and Diversity Partnership is in its final year of funding, and the unit will work to renew that money, plus work to create other scholarship sources.

The university views the unit’s efforts as among the strongest on campus, with faculty seen as having a true commitment to not only the recruitment, but also the retention, of students of color.

To that end, the unit added a special-topics course to engage students of color and give them tethers to one another and the campus by having them work on a community-service project. That course grew into a campus club, Journalists United for a Stronger Tomorrow, which continues to try to raise scholarship money as well as work on other community-service projects.

Of serious concern is the effect further budget restrictions may have on these efforts. The faculty member who has taken on this work is at risk of layoff if the budget is further cut; in addition, limits placed on the number of incoming students may hamper the unit’s ability to bring in students of color, who may face additional obstacles to university admission. (The university already has been told to drive down enrollment 9.5 per cent over two years.)

(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 faculty and its leadership are committed to a learning and working environment that stresses inclusiveness and cohesion. Faculty members speak with pride about the tight-knit nature of their group and the support they show one another.

Faculty work with the university’s Disability Support Services program ensures that disabled students’ needs are legally accommodated. It also makes students aware of the university’s monthly “Conversations on Diversity” series or other campus speakers on diverse topics.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**
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.

Indicators:

(a) The unit has written criteria for selecting and evaluating the performance of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff.
(b) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity and service.
(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.
(d) The unit regularly evaluates instruction, using multiple measures that include student input.
(e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.

Evidence:

Faculty and staff manuals or relevant policy procedural documents
Vitae for full-time and part-time faculty
Course evaluations and other methods of determining teaching effectiveness
Evaluation process for annual review of faculty contributions and performance
Search and hiring records

Team evaluation:

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

Hiring

The Department of Journalism has specific written criteria for hiring and evaluating the performance of all faculty. Hiring of new faculty is done according to university guidelines that mandate a departmental hiring committee for each position. Tenure track (probationary) positions and full-time temp positions are advertised on a national basis. The committee screens applicants for evidence they meet the minimum criteria for appointments. These criteria include teaching ability or potential, scholarly activity, preparation for teaching including a terminal degree, discipline-specific skills and compliance
with university policies on AA/EoE. The committee provides a short list and eventually invites the top three candidates to campus. The committee makes a recommendation to the dean, who then makes the hiring decision. No full-time positions have been advertised since 2005-2006. Salary is set by negotiations between the California Faculty Association and the CSU administration in Long Beach.

Part-time faculty are chosen from a self-identified pool following union rules, which dictate that applicants are ranked by a committee according to their qualifications for each course they are qualified to teach, that they are hired after all full-time faculty have classes and that first choice goes to those with at least six years of teaching for the department. Currently there are no part-time faculty in the department.

Evaluation

Probationary (tenure track) faculty are reviewed at least once every academic year by the RTP committee, and they must compile a record of their achievements for submission each year. Two members of the department’s RTP committee evaluate their teaching. The annual reviews become a part of the permanent employment file and an important part of the retention/tenure/promotion process, as are the annual student evaluations of every faculty member. Probationary faculty members, according to union guidelines, receive letters each year designating their progress. For all levels of promotion and tenure, four areas of evaluation are considered: Teaching effectiveness, professional growth and achievement, other contributions to the university and to organizations external to the university, and competence required for, and willingness to adjust to, the university-approved department/unit master plan. Promotion, tenure and salary administration are governed by the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Trustees and the California Faculty Association and The Department of Journalism Retention Tenure and Promotion (RTP) Evaluation Criteria, which reflects, in great measure, the procedures prescribed in university policies.

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

During the year of the site team visit, the eight full-time faculty have complete responsibility (100%) for all aspects of departmental life – teaching, research/creative activity and public service. The state’s budget problems have dictated that cuts be made; so all adjunct positions were eliminated last year. In the 2008-2009 school year, 88 per cent of the courses were taught by full-time faculty, inn 2007-2008, 76 per cent, and in 2006-2007, 78 per cent.

While California State-Chico began primarily as a teaching institution, and good teaching is seen as an absolute requirement for tenure and promotion, the team sensed a growing emphasis on research. Strong research records are hard to maintain given the institution’s 4/4 teaching load, but many junior
Faculty continue to produce an impressive amount of work. All faculty members do some university and public service (some senior faculty do much more), and they say they would like to do more, but explain that the heavy teaching loads and funding issues make that difficult at present.

(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 department is small, with eight faculty, and all of the tenured or tenure-track faculty hold doctoral degrees and have worked in professional settings. Some continue to consult in their chosen professions. The news-editorial professional-in-residence has a doctoral degree, and the public relations professional-in-residence has a master’s degree. Before joining the faculty, the professionals-in-residence had long careers in newspaper and public relations settings. The last two positions are non-tenure-track positions and are threatened if further cuts occur. Faculty members remain active in professional associations even as the budget has tightened. The department chair has worked hard to assure that funds are available for faculty development and research for tenure-track faculty to help them as they build their portfolios for tenure and promotion.

At the time of the site visit, there were no part-time faculty, a result of the latest round of budget cuts. In previous years, the department had had at least two part-time faculty. A visiting scholar from South Korea will be in residence in the spring.

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

Student evaluations are done for all faculty members in the spring of each year, with additional evaluations done in the fall for special cases (promotion, tenure or part-time, fall-only faculty). These evaluations also become part of the faculty record and are taken into consideration as faculty are considered for tenure and promotion. As part of the review process for probationary employees, two members of the department’s RTP evaluate their teaching yearly, and those evaluations become a part of the faculty record.

In addition, the department’s assessment plan utilizes outside review by members of the board of advisors, and this evaluation is discussed yearly at a departmental meeting and curriculum reviewed for any necessary changes.

(e) The faculty has respect on campus for its university citizenship and the quality of education that the unit provides.
Individuals from other departments on campus noted the excellence and profile of the Department of Journalism. Some said the program was one of the stellar programs on campus, and that the program was a “destination decision” for many California students. Students either start as freshmen at Chico or transfer from community colleges specifically for the “applied rigor” of the journalism program. In addition, one faculty member from another area said, “there’s no doubt that a free press will never be denied as long as the journalism program is around. Their reputation and status keep that from being threatened.”

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**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.

Indicators:

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

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

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

(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.

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

Evidence:

Faculty guides or manuals on tenure and promotion
Records of sabbatical and other leaves, travel funds and grant support
Records on faculty promotion, tenure and other forms of recognition
Faculty vitae and unit reports on research and creative and professional activities

Team evaluation:

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

The department requires its faculty to teach four courses each semester and therefore puts first and greatest emphasis on quality of instruction. Nevertheless, members of the unit are to be commended for their ability to maintain a research, creative activity and professional activity record in light of the heavy teaching demands and additional duties. One faculty member has a book contract, many have impressive publication and presentation records, and the professionals in residence have extensive professional activity portfolios.
In terms of support and encouragement, opportunities for grants, conference papers or creative activities are regularly circulated. The department takes every avenue possible to assure that adequate financial support is extended to probationary faculty to attend conferences, present papers, and work on publications. Four of the eight faculty members are tenure-track and must pursue those activities for the reward of tenure and/or promotion. But the heavy teaching loads often preclude time for research and revision, and this is another concern arising from recent budget cuts. Released time for conducting or revising research or replacement teaching by adjunct faculty is hard to come by in tight budget times.

New faculty usually are granted additional support for research, including expanded travel funding, a new computer and other equipment for creative and teaching purposes. At the university level, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs provides financial and resource support for faculty. The services offered include searching for funding sources, proposal writing and budget preparation. The office provides training for creating grant proposals and information concerning grant support and availability and holds an internal research grants competition every fall and spring. Grants are available for assigned time, operating expenses, travel funds, student assistance and summer stipends.

Sabbaticals are available every six years, but only one faculty member, the professional-in-residence in news-editorial, has had a sabbatical in recent years. (Only three faculty members in the department qualify at this time – the other faculty members do not have the required years of residence yet). He used the sabbatical to develop relationships with teachers and students at diverse schools with strong journalism/newspaper programs and to establish a more diverse program in the department. His success was followed by a grant in the same area from MediaNews.

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

Faculty are expected to excel in areas of professional growth and achievement, areas that include, but are not limited to, scholarship, research and professional activity. Departmental policies outline those expectations. Research is divided into two areas: professional development and professional achievement. Both are required but there is no exact formula to measure development and achievement. Probationary faculty meet formally with a department committee and the chair to discuss their teaching, scholarship and service. The committee and chair then write formal reports and recommendations that become part of the faculty member’s file. Union rules require yearly letters of review.

Professional growth requires that faculty maintain an active presence in their areas of expertise or designated discipline. Professional achievement is the demonstration of “tangible” examples of
expertise. Most frequently this category is measured through publication, whether in peer-reviewed academic journals or journalism publications in local, state, national or international general circulation newspapers or trade publications. In addition, academic publications include refereed conference presentations, books and book chapters, and reviews of publications, including textbooks. Consultation for government and non-governmental organizations is considered professional achievement, as are awarded grants and contracts. Lastly, recognized creative works may be considered professional achievement.

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

As noted in (b), there is no exact formula to measure development and achievement and they are determined by meetings within the department. This allows for determination and acknowledgement of activities appropriate to each faculty member.

(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.

Since the last accreditation report, faculty members have attended national and international conferences, published book chapters and articles, and completed professional activities in public relations and journalism that have furthered the mission of the department and institution. Given the restraints faced by this small but very active department, its list of accomplishments in research, creative and/or professional activity is quite impressive, and the unit supports those activities to the extent it can. During the last six years, more than $40,000 has been spent to assist faculty members in communicating the results of their activities, although the bulk of that funding came prior to the last academic year. The department has traditionally provided full-time faculty $1,500 annually in travel funding to be used for conference attendance or other scholarly activity, but this is now severely limited by the state.

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

Much of the climate is created by the very nature of this small department. Faculty members talk to each other on a regular basis as offices are close, and they can seek out discussions with their peers. The research and professional activities in the unit cover a wide range. When asked about the climate in the department, students readily said they were exposed to many different ideas in class and in discussions with their professors. Because the faculty is so small, some professors mentioned that their mentors come from outside the unit, often in professional associations or from across campus. When queried, faculty said they discussed the importance of critical analysis and media literacy in developing the curriculum.
The department regularly hosts guest speakers to expose faculty and students to a variety of viewpoints. Once a year, the department’s advisory board visits and those members bring alternative points of view. Departments outside of journalism, specifically within the College of Business, regularly host speakers from a journalism background who bring additional perspectives to students and faculty. In the self-study, the department says it focuses on its major strategic task: serving students. It says it expects the individual faculty member to seek his or her own path toward intellectual fulfillment that can enrich instruction.

**Overall evaluation, 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.

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.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

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

(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.

(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.

Evidence:

Student records, transcripts and files
Advice guides, manuals, newsletters and internal communication
Statistics on enrollment, scholarships, retention and graduation
Examples of student media and information about student professional organizations

Team evaluation:

(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.

The department has a mandatory advising program, which ensures that every student is in regular contact with faculty to ensure the correct coursework for timely movement through the program. Students sign up for appointments, and most arrive with their programs prepared and ready for approval. Students have access to the academic catalog, degree requirements and four-year course plans online at both the campus Web site and the department home page. Many students praise the advising program.

Once approved, students turn in their schedules to the department office and register by computer. If they have not seen an adviser, the department puts a “hold” on the registration file. The unit reports
excellent pre-registration among majors (60 to 85 percent for two years) compared with the campus at large (40 to 50 percent).

The process has ensured the unit’s uniform compliance with accreditation requirements. And its success with mandatory advising has drawn followers on campus, chiefly the colleges of Agriculture and Engineering.

The department added an accreditation-assistant position, typically filled by a graduate student who has signed a confidentiality agreement, in 1995. This student works under the direction of the chair in assisting new students to review previous course work, direct students toward their degrees and finalize applications for graduation. Additionally, the department administrative coordinator also does informal advising for students who come to the office with questions.

Faculty advisers have access to the academic records of students from their office computers. Each journalism major also has a file in the department office that supplements the computer record system, and the master file is retained in the central records office. The department file, which is in a secure file cabinet in the department office, includes department and university paperwork and holds the graduation clearance forms. Through a new Web-based campus portal, students have access to a degree audit listing all previous coursework.

The unit also has been chosen as a pilot program for a new electronic graduation-clearance process that will enable graduation checks in real time. The new system, targeted to begin in May 2010 but which may be delayed, allows students and advisers to see clearly where students still need credits for graduation and the courses they’ve taken to complete those requirements.

(b) Faculty are available and accessible to students.

Students are exuberant in their praise of the faculty’s willingness to help them on everything from individual assignments to internship and job opportunities. (Likewise, employers are enthusiastic about the professionalism of Chico State interns and graduates.) Campus policy requires that faculty keep five regular office hours per week; journalism faculty frequently keep longer hours and are available to students after hours at home. Students report that they appreciate the time and accessibility.

The mandatory-advising program also ensures that students get face time with faculty at least once a semester. Some students, however, report that even though they have gone through the mandatory-advising process, they find out too late that they still have unexpected requirements for graduation that they wished had been noticed earlier. Budget cuts that have restricted the number of available class sections also have affected students’ ability to get courses completed in a timely manner for graduation.

Some students raised concerns about advisers, chiefly that, because they are assigned an adviser when they enter the unit, that adviser doesn’t necessarily match their major. A few noted that in some cases they did not feel comfortable with an adviser from a different discipline or that an adviser not of their
major might not fully grasp what they needed to graduate. Overall, though, students said they felt comfortable going to any faculty member for advising, and that faculty made themselves available. Students generally feel that faculty members care for them and want to do whatever’s necessary to help them succeed. One student remarked that even a professor she’s never had in class called her by name in the halls, and that another waved to her across campus, incidents she cited as showing that faculty members are deeply engaged with students and their well-being.

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

Mandatory advising ensures that students are aware of where they are each term with regard to their requirements. The unit’s Web site offers not only the degree requirements, but also degree plans, guides, self-advising tips and graduation forms.

The small size of the department also ensures close communication, through announcements delivered by faculty or posted in classrooms, and via postings outside faculty offices or on student club bulletin boards. The Orion and Tehama Group Communication offices also offer an outlet for information about activities or departmental policies, given the large number of students who participate in those workplaces. Wildcat e-mail, the university’s mandatory account for all students, also enables the university and the unit to distribute 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.

News students have the opportunity to work on the weekly laboratory campus newspaper, The Orion, for as many semesters as they wish beyond the one-semester requirement in the curriculum. That offers not only real-world newsroom experience but students also hear outside critiques by professionals. Public-relations students have Tehama Group Communications, a unit-run agency and the opportunity for other outside internships. The unit hopes to offer a public-relations research course, enabling it to establish a PRSSA chapter.

Students, alumni, and staff and faculty outside the unit had high praise for the foundation those outlets provided. Public relations students in particular felt that leaving with a portfolio of work already in hand was of high value.

The unit encourages outside internships, particularly during the summer, to further supplement the experience students can get from the classroom. The changing news industry in particular has made some placements difficult unless students come with scholarship money to serve as a summer stipend.

(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 department uses indicators and indirect assessment to evaluate its advising and counseling services. One such indicator is the graduation clearance form, completed when students are two semesters from graduation. This serves as an evaluation of the students' and advisers' adherence to academic rules and requirements. Despite student concerns noted above, the unit reports that only twice in the past three years have students contacted the department with questions about why they had failed to graduate as expected; in both cases, the student had followed university counselors rather than departmental forms, according to the self-study.

The unit does track minority students, in particular, through one faculty member who has taken special interest. He acknowledges that a more formal system of knowing when students are struggling would be helpful.

An alumni survey, used to evaluate career counseling in the unit, has shown improvement, with 84 percent of respondents saying they agree or strongly agree that they received good career counseling while in the program.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

**COMPLIANCE**
PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

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

**Indicators:**

(a) The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.

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

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

(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.

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

**Evidence:**

A detailed budget
Inspection tour of the library, facilities and equipment

**Team evaluation:**

(a) *The unit has a detailed annual budget for the allocation of its resources that is related to its long-range, strategic plan.*

The department does have a detailed annual budget, but the department chair says he often does not see the actual line-item budget until midyear. His best guess for the 2009-2010 year is a budget of around $511,000, of which 96 per cent is salaries. In terms of the relationship of the budget to the long-term strategic plan, the observations made in Standard 1 are worth repeating here: The team’s job is to look at today’s budget, not to predict the future. But it is worthwhile to wave a warning flag: Further cuts probably would mean the loss of two valued full-time lecturers. That loss could well test the viability of the department and certainly impact the department’s strategic plan, its introduction of new courses, its use of technology and its drive to create the best learning environment for its students.

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

In discussions with faculty, the department chair and the dean, all agreed that the department has been treated fairly in a harsh budget environment and in some cases sheltered because it has so few places where cuts could be made. As stated before in Standard 1, the team believes that the department has
been treated fairly, as does the chair; the dean says that she has “protected” journalism. A look at base budget allocations across the college shows that journalism has been treated equitably or protected.

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

Available facilities currently meet the needs of students, faculty and staff, but future growth would call for additional resources. The department is housed in Tehama Hall, a $9.5-million, four-story building that opened in April 1992. The department is part of the College of Communication and Education and also shares the building with the College of Business. Tehama Hall is 82,000 square feet, which includes college, department and faculty offices, classrooms and laboratories. The Orion, the department’s award-winning lab newspaper, is housed in the basement of an adjacent building. Tehama Hall classrooms range in size from 20 to 70 seats and are equipped with a variety of communication technologies. Several of the larger rooms are “smart” classrooms. Because it is a relatively new building, faculty members say that Tehama Hall generally meets their needs. On observation, the equipment is functional and frequently used, classes are clean and neat, and the environment helps the department accomplish its objectives.

(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.

The journalism department sponsors and coordinates a computer writing lab (Tehama 312), used for both classroom teaching and open hours during which students may work on assignments. A course fee helps to pay for lab materials. Purchase of a course-specific instruction manual, required for all courses that meet in the lab, helps pay for student lab assistants and funds open hours for the labs so students have adequate access and can use software programs they cannot personally afford. The laboratory houses 23 Macintosh computers and many peripherals. Software includes the Adobe Creative Suite (CS3). The computers are linked to the CSU network, which allows access to the Internet, the World Wide Web, all CSU libraries and student e-mail.

Advanced public relations students manage and operate Tehama Group Communications, housed next to the department computer laboratory. The student agency has 10 Apple computers and supporting hardware and software. But the Tehama Group says it needs to replace computers, get more site licenses, buy a high-end camera with video capability for client work and add video conferencing equipment. The Orion is housed in the basement of Plumas Hall, adjacent to the main journalism department building. Orion reporters have 18 computers in the main areas and editorial staff and advertising designers share an additional 10 computers and numerous peripherals. There is a writer's quiet room with computers. The Orion photo staff has computers, several fully equipped digital cameras and several camcorders. Business and advertising staff are adequately equipped as well, and
tying this all together is one Mac G5 Xsev server and a 2-terabyte Nas device. The Orion also has its own Web server to hold additional data not kept by its third-party web host.

The Plumas instructional photo lab is a state-of-the-art digital imaging classroom with 20 work stations and numerous supporting devices. It can accommodate 20 students.

Faculty in the journalism department have, to date, received replacement Apple computers each year, as the department is a “Mac” facility. All faculty members in the journalism department now have an assortment of newer Apple computers and printers in their offices. All computers have Internet connections and databases, e-mail, presentation, spreadsheet and word-processing software. Several faculty members have additional software (e.g., desktop and Web publishing relevant to their particular teaching areas).

In addition, many faculty members are committed to new-technology use in their individual research efforts. In terms of individual faculty development, the technologically savvy train colleagues who are interested, and the department just voted to spend some one-time monies on Flip cameras for all faculty members to help them develop more video-based assignments in classes. (For the first time, students in the two second-level writing classes will be required to bring Flip cameras to school beginning either in the spring or the fall.)

The department has added some new courses – Intro to Online Journalism (JOUR 255), Internet Newspapers and Magazines (JOUR 355), and Online Presentation of News and Public Relations (JOUR 455) – to address what is happening in media industries today and to strengthen student competencies. But this may be problematic, because the department will need more and better equipment as technology evolves. Funding is likely to be in doubt.

A second computer lab for teaching online-related classes is on the faculty’s wish list, but budget constraints make a new facility unlikely. As the self-study reports, “It is more likely that we will begin to work within the constraints and challenges of student-owned laptops.”

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

The department no longer uses its small reading room. Books and newspapers are housed in the central library. The department and the library together budget only about $1,400 a year for books, which they choose together. But the library pays for a large selection of databases and local newspapers as well as such resources as the complete online archives of The New York Times. The library’s online research service also links to appropriate journalism sites.
Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:
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.

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.

(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.

(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.

(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.

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

Evidence:

Faculty vitae
Unit records, brochures and publications of public service activities related to its mission and strategic plan
Alumni newsletters, surveys, reunions and other activities
Travel and other support for faculty involvement in academic and professional organizations
Information about courses and services available to professionals and the public

Team evaluation

(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.

Faculty keep current on instruction and curriculum by attending professional workshops and by maintaining memberships in several professional organizations.

The unit has tried to forge stronger ties with alumni. From 1998 to 2006, the unit has surveyed graduates a year after their departure to get guidance on curriculum and about whether students were ultimately prepared for the workplace. The unit also has brought alumni back to campus each semester as guest speakers in classes, to student professional organizations and for weekly critiques of The
Orion, giving students the chance for interaction, networking and career advice. Each fall, alumni are inducted into The Orion and PR Halls of Fame.

Additionally, the department has set up an advisory board that meets each spring to review curriculum, participate in assessment and review professional practices.

At the college level, the School of Communications hosts an annual event, CONNECT, that brings alumni with 10 or more years’ professional experience back to campus to visit with faculty and students. They critique student work, interview students for internships and jobs, and speak to classes as part of the visit.

Alums report that Chico students are always well-prepared and professional during their interactions, showing that the faculty are in touch with current practices, particularly in PR, and that faculty seek feedback on student work and other matters to ensure that students remain competitive.

PR faculty have made a strong push since 2005 to increase alumni involvement in career planning and placement, and to get students advanced training that’s not available in-depth as part of the curriculum. Such efforts include media-pitching workshops for upper-classmen, visits to PR agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area or Sacramento, and the PR Career Center Web Site, which offers alumni advice about job hunting.

(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 unit sponsors Chico State Journalism Days, which allows both faculty and students to share their journalism expertise through small breakout sessions.

One faculty member is an internationally recognized scholar in ethics, and through his work, the unit stands to gain recognition and the opportunity to offer specialized instruction to both students and professionals on new ethical challenges as the industry changes.

If the unit continues to consider its niche to be high school and community journalism, there seems to be an opportunity to share the valuable expertise of the faculty through a sponsored workshop for small regional newspapers, not unlike the high school journalism workshop it already offers. The unit could be a leader, helping small newspapers recognize opportunities through the changing industry landscape and providing thoughtful critique of the current publications.

(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 active in national organizations including the National Press Photographers Association, Society of Professional Journalists, the Association of Practical and Professional Ethics and the National Black Public Relations Society.

(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.

Chico State public relations students are abuzz on campus and in the community, serving more than 2,600 combined hours per semester on work for their clients. Those internships come through the PR laboratory course and are performed either through Tehama Group Communications, the in-house student-run PR agency, or at other locations in the Chico community.

The groups have served myriad community clients, from commercial enterprises to local nonprofit organizations. Students have done impressive media guide work for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society, a local domestic violence organization and Bertagna Son Kissed Vineyard. Clients get the benefit of lower-cost professional work – and in some cases work done for academic credit only – under the guidance of faculty professionals, and students benefit by getting real-world experience for their portfolios.

The Orion student newspaper serves the campus community both in print and increasingly online, offering a professional publication to report campus news.

Faculty offer their professional services through consultancy to groups of both local and state affiliation, such as a California Department of Social Services’ program targeting high school students who are pregnant, and North State Public Radio, which has asked for help in modifying its code of ethics and conflict-of-interest policy.

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

News-editorial faculty have been active in supporting high school and community college journalism programs and building relationships with those programs, particularly the MediaNews Group Diversity Partnership. The unit also sponsors Chico State Journalism Days, which offers not only breakout sessions targeting specific skills but also larger sessions about the industry overall.

The unit has participated in other ways, such as critiquing student newspapers through the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, inviting high school students from Pleasant Valley High School’s Saga newspaper to The Orion critique each semester and offering critiquers from The Orion for the Saga newspaper.
Faculty also participate in presentations elsewhere, such as speaking at the State High School Journalism Convention and presenting workshops for the California College Media Association as well as those organizations’ national counterparts.

**Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:**

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

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

Indicators:

(a) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of this Council. (See 2. Curriculum and Instruction.)
(b) The unit has a written assessment plan that uses multiple direct and indirect measures to assess student learning.
(c) The unit maintains contact with its alumni to assess their experiences in the professions and to gain feedback for improving curriculum and instruction.
(d) The unit includes members of journalism and mass communication professions in its assessment process.
(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and uses the data to improve curriculum and instruction.

Evidence:

A written statement on competencies
A written assessment plan
Alumni newsletters, surveys, reunions and other activities
Records on information collected from multiple measures of assessment and on the application of this information to course development and improvement of teaching

Team evaluation:

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

The department has outlined 14 “student learning objectives,” incorporating the council’s values and competencies in that list.

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

The department has an elaborate written plan using multiple measures. Collection of data began in 1997. The multiple measures include annual surveys of alumni one year after graduation; supervisor
evaluations of interns; reviews of student writing or portfolios by professionals; grammar exams of beginning and graduating students; qualitative feedback from visiting professionals, including guest speakers and journalism advisory board members; an exit exam pre-tested during the 2008-2009 academic year; student performance in regional and national contests, and job placement and movement.

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

Beginning in 1998, the department has contacted alums one year after graduation to ask how well they were prepared for their jobs (as well as to ask for general comments).

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

In addition to surveying alums after one year, the department’s professional advisory board members have served assessment in the following ways: scoring writing portfolios, reviewing syllabi and curriculum and interviewing students about their learning. They also have engaged in discussions with faculty about curriculum changes designed to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.

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

This is the most impressive part of the department’s efforts. After finding low grammar scores, the department says that it embedded new units in its basic writing course—and grammar scores increased 10 percentage points. After finding low awareness of multicultural issues, it embedded diversity units in all core courses—with a 24-percentage-point increase in multicultural awareness. Similar big increases were added to visual skills and information delivery.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE
PART III: Summary by site visit team

1) Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the unit.

This small, collegial department, located in a large college that covers everything from education to kinesiology to parks and recreation management, sometimes seems the little engine that could. Despite dramatic uncertainty about future budgets, the department keeps students and faculty members happy by focusing on one goal: teaching future news-editorial and public-relations practitioners in a way that gives them confidence when they walk into internships and jobs.

Strengths:
--A hard-working, caring, collegial faculty.
--An unusual amount of research for faculty members on a 4/4 schedule who also are advising students.
--Tehama Group Communications, an in-house public-relations agency that gives p.r. students practical experience—and, by the way, raises the profile of the department on campus because it is helping so many campus clients.
--Creative work on student diversity: A faculty member used his sabbatical to spread the word about Chico State at minority-oriented high schools all over Northern California and, as a result, won a grant to continue his travels once a week each year.

Weaknesses:
--A cloud of uncertainty about the future because of California’s consistently unresolved state budget crisis and consistently late legislative decisions. The existing budget problems do not rise to the level where the team believes that Chico is out of compliance on Standard 7. But the uncertainty about the future, including faculty members wondering if they should stay in California, easily could turn into a serious management problem.
--Three courses cover Internet theory and practice. However, it is not clear that the Internet pervades every class or the lab newspaper or agency. In addition, the three courses are not offered every semester. As the department and the Internet both mature, the department needs to ratchet up its interest in new media.

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

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

4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficiencies that must be corrected 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.

The 2003 report noted one significant deficiency: A need to increase diversity of the student body. Student diversity has increased thanks largely to an innovative program in which a faculty member used his sabbatical to introduce minority-oriented high schools to Chico State. The program has continued with annual visits to many of those schools.

The previous report found six other weaknesses, one of which was a small faculty strained by a heavy teaching load and declining budgets. The second was the precarious budget situation that existed in 2003. As the self-study notes, those weaknesses still exist—and have been exacerbated.

However, there is good news on some other fronts. The previous report noted the uncertain future of the College of Communication and Education. The college’s future is not in doubt, though configurations within the college are the subject of discussion as administrators try to save money. A fourth weakness was the lack of an opportunity for students to gain exposure to a variety of media platforms; that situation has improved greatly but needs continued focus. Another weakness was a lack of focused minority recruiting, recruiting which now occurs. A final failure was not taking advantage of academic assets offered by other parts of the university. The department since has collaborated with
the marketing and communication-design departments to form a minor in advertising, and with communication design and art to create a minor in photography.

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 report was complete and well-written.