The 2021-2022 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for the Communications, BA program in the College of Communications (CCOM) concluded with a culmination meeting on May 9, 2023. The program is accredited by the **Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).**  The Communications, BA program submitted ACEJMC accreditation documents in lieu of program review documents.

The following people attended the meeting: Amir Dabirian (Provost), Ed Fink (AVP for Undergraduate Academic Programs, AVPUAP), Bey-Ling Sha (Dean, CCOM), Deanna Leone (Associate Dean, CCOM), Jason Shepard (Department Chair), and Su Swarat (Senior AVP for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, SAVPIEP).

The Provost congratulated the program for successfully completing the accreditation cycle, with the outcome of receiving the full reaccreditation until 2027-28. The following specific accomplishments were highlighted during the reaccreditation process:

* The program has been accredited by ACEJMC since 1971 and continues to be one of the largest ACEJMC-accredited programs in California and one of the largest programs on campus.
* The program leadership has increased faculty morale, achieved race/ethnicity demographics to be more representative of the campus population, and maintained a high retention rate (89%) of faculty members.
* Faculty have a strong presence in research, producing 374 documented works of scholarship and creative activity in the past seven years (2015-2022).
* Since 2015, over $350,000 in scholarships have been awarded to more than 400 students.
* The program continues to engage with the community through media outlets, faculty participation in campus communities, and the hosting of a variety of events for students and alumni.
* The program enhanced its curriculum in various ways to ensure learning experiences are aligned with current workforce and academic needs. Some additions to the curriculum include adding digital skills as a required course for all major concentrations, adding and revising courses, launching three new certificate programs, requiring a digital skills portfolio assessment, updating academic roadmaps, and more. The Chair added that the program offers 25-30 HIP experiences through classes and clubs, giving students preparation for professional opportunities.
* The department was one of seventeen programs nationwide awarded $500,000 from NBCUniversal/Comcast in 2021 to support journalism training and diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. This grant resulted from Department and College collaboration with other campus partners (i.e., government relations).

Major recommendations and issues raised through the reaccreditation process were discussed as follows:

1. Academic advising:
* The external reviewers recommended the program to consider expanding academic advising services to be more accessible to students, and to utilize program staff for advising.
* The Dean commented that the college has a Student Success Team composed of professional advisers working in tandem with faculty advisers, faculty internship coordinators, and a Career Center adviser. The college’s approach is aligned with the direction of the university.
* The site team recommended mandatory advising, but the Department indicated the University does not have the resources to provide this for all students each term. The program is exploring the possibility of mandatory group advising, which may be a creative way to meet ACEJMC’s recommendation. The Provost is in favor of this idea.
* The Chair raised the issue that no assigned time is available for faculty academic advising during the academic year. This is particularly problematic during registration season when demand for advising is high. Ideally, faculty advising is supported with assigned time.
	+ The Dean stated that assigned time cannot be provided due to college budget deficit.
	+ The Provost suggested the “tandem” advising model, with professional advisors as “first advisors” followed by faculty advisors. This may help reduce the advising load on faculty.
* The Provost recognized the benefit of having proper faculty advising structure, and recommended the program to work with HRDI, the Dean’s office, and the Provost’s office to explore options.
1. Department budget:
* The external reviewers pointed out that while faculty are supported in their research and scholarly activities, the 4-4 teaching load and reduced opportunities for course release and for sabbaticals present challenges to the faculty.
* Additionally, the external reviewers suggested that there is a lack of clarity in long-term or strategic budgeting for the needs of the department, which seems to create frustration and uncertainty in the department.
* The Provost acknowledged the challenges, and stated that he is examining the budget and working to bring budget transparency to the department level. He plans to develop a budget model that ensures equitable teaching and workload for the faculty.
* The Chair indicated one of the top department priorities was filling the unfilled ASA staff vacancy that provides support to the graduate program, high-impact practices, clubs and activities, department accreditation and assessment, data collection, external communications and alumni outreach, among other things. The Dean noted that all campus departments have unmet staffing needs, and the College is engaged in a multiyear re-examination of staffing levels across the CCOM to determine ways in which shared needs can be met with shared staff resources.
1. Assessment:
* ACEJMC recognized that assessment in the program has improved, and can be further enhanced by ensuring that data informs curriculum and pedagogy for improvement. The program should also explore ways to streamline the methods and measures to be more impactful and effective.
* The Chair reported that the external reviewers felt that the program assessment is too complicated. He commented that there are several good practices of assessment including the internship assessment, the portfolio approach, multi-section course assessment, and the use of professionals in evaluating student performance. However, the challenge remains in terms of how to bring faculty together to develop common assignments for core courses so that assessment could be more systematic.
* The SAVPIEP recommended the program to work with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning to address these assessment issues.
1. Curriculum:
* The Dean recommended the program to streamline the curriculum. She pointed out that the concentrations could be better coordinated so they do not “act like different majors.” She recommended the idea of reinstating concentration coordinators with the support of assigned time.
* The Chair reported that the faculty have examined and improved the curriculum, which the site team commended. He stated that he does not agree with the need for concentration coordinator positions. Those positions were eliminated by the previous chair, with the support of the then-faculty and then-dean. The previous site team report in 2014 commended the elimination of concentration coordinators in favor of assigned time for other strategic priorities, including curriculum diversification, HIPs/internships/clubs, alumni connection, external relations and mentoring of part-time faculty. That assigned time has largely been eliminated since 2014.
* The Provost reiterated that more budget clarity will help address staffing needs.

The Dean commended the Chair for unifying the faculty, and the Provost thanked the Chair for leading the accreditation process. Both acknowledged the very positive reviews of the program from ACEJMC, and expressed appreciation for the hard work of the department faculty and leadership.