

MESSAGES FROM OUR LEADERS

Analog to digital: Strengthening ACEJMC for the future

As ACEJMC celebrates its 80th anniversary – 1945-2025 – progress continues as we strengthen and advance excellence in professional education in journalism and mass communications

What a wonderful ride! Thank you to our ACEJMC leaders and staff, program directors and all who support our work for three terrific years! Working together, we have accomplished a great deal since I began presiding over the Council in 2022-2023.

Partnerships

We established a partnership with the **Freedom Forum** (www.freedomforum.org),



Del Galloway
ACEJMC
president

which generously hosted our Council meetings in 2024 and 2025 and will do so again in 2026. We, in turn, have supported the Freedom Forum by sharing with the ACEJMC network the

programs and opportunities the Freedom Forum offers students, educators and the general public. We extend a big, warm thanks to **Jan Neuharth and the Freedom Forum team for their hospitality and support.**

The **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** awarded us a \$125,000 grant to ensure even more perspectives guide our work.

FUTURE continued on Page 7



Walton takes the helm as ACEJMC executive director

ACEJMC's new executive director, Susan Balcom Walton, was introduced by ACEJMC president Del Galloway during the May 1 Council meeting at the Freedom Forum in Washington, DC. See more images from the Council meeting on Page 4.

Continuing steadfast in ACEJMC's mission

The Accrediting Council begins its ninth decade amid mounting anxiety for higher education, the media professions we serve and the collaborative and rigorous evaluation process itself. As our new president, I am ready for the challenges ahead.



Steve Geimann
Incoming
ACEJMC
president

From the outside, political leaders attack accrediting bodies as being out of touch or for pursuing a liberal agenda. Parents watch as tuition and other costs skyrocket. Student debt soars. Government support wanes. Interest in attending vocational schools is on the rise as students reassess the value of a college degree.

Within our professions, journalism as an industry operates

STEADFAST continued on Page 8

Why accreditation matters to me

In the past few months, we've experienced heightened conversations about accreditation and why it matters. My response, like many of yours, has been forged by years of witnessing the positive impact of certification and accreditation on institutions and their faculty, on the dedicated professionals and educators who review units, and on the students they serve.



Susan Walton
ACEJMC
Executive
Director

I've seen the positive impact of accreditation on faculty and staff as they've participated in the recognition events for accredited programs. I've shared their deep satisfaction in knowing the quality of their program has been recognized and validated by qualified third parties. I've also seen how appreciative these programs are to

ACCREDITATION continued on Page 8

Standard Four revisions uphold commitment to equity

Accreditation and the ACEJMC standards exist to ensure excellence and continuous improvement in journalism and mass communication education—a commitment we’ve upheld for 80 years. We conduct a comprehensive review of our accreditation standards every 10 years to assess alignment with our mission. The most recent revisions were adopted in 2021. However, we also evaluate annually whether adjustments are needed based



Greg Pitts
ACEJMC
vice
president,
standards
revision
task force
chair

on reaccreditation findings or evolving circumstances.

I extend my sincere thanks to **Heidi de Laubenfels** and **Dorothy Bland** for serving with me on the subcommittee charged with reviewing our standards and proposing changes adopted at the Spring 2025 Council meeting. Over seven months, the subcommittee examined our values and competencies and accreditation language. Ideas were exchanged, not only among members but also in response to feedback from the Council, Committee, and leaders of accredited units. We also took into account relevant governmental policies and actions.

This collaborative process led to revised language in Standard Four and a new name for the standard. Importantly, the spirit of the standard remains unchanged: an accredited academic program must offer a curriculum that promotes equal opportunity, fair

Standard Four workshop at AEJMC conference

Thursday, Aug. 7 from 10:15-11:30 a.m. PT.

At this year’s AEJMC Conference, ACEJMC will hold a workshop to discuss the recently revised **Standard Four: Advancing a Culturally Proficient Workforce**. ACEJMC leaders will discuss what programs need to know as they prepare to apply for accreditation or reaccreditation.

The session will be moderated by ACEJMC president Del Galloway, and panelists will include Steve Geimann, incoming ACEJMC president; Greg Pitts, ACEJMC vice president; and Susan Balcom Walton, ACEJMC’s new Executive Director.

treatment, and dignity for all students and faculty. Our goal is to prepare graduates who move through their professional and personal lives as engaged and proficient communicators in a culturally dynamic world.

We educate students to gather, evaluate, and convey information. While technological advancements have reshaped how information is delivered, the ability to critically assess that information still relies on a broadly educated student—one who is digitally proficient yet deeply grounded in the liberal arts and social sciences. Above all, our students must be prepared to navigate and contribute to an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Cultural proficiency goes beyond mastering digital tools. It requires critical thinking, openness to diverse perspectives, an identification of both opportunity and inequity, and a commitment to authentic, meaningful dialogue. Every accredited program must outline how it fosters a standards-based, inclusive curriculum and cultivates a

culturally proficient faculty, staff, and student body. A defining feature of Standard Four is the expectation that schools will articulate goals, strategies, and measurable outcomes to promote fairness and inclusion. Programs should describe their efforts to engage underrepresented communities in journalism and media communication—and share these efforts transparently with students, faculty, and staff. Indeed, the name of Standard Four has changed but the commitment to supporting opportunity across our body of students remains.

As incoming Council President Steve Geimann notes elsewhere in this edition of Ascent, higher education faces increasing anxiety—and that unease extends to the media professions. Our eight accreditation standards connect academic programs to the democratic role of journalism. No standard speaks more directly to our commitment to equitable access and opportunity than Standard Four.

Council member updates



Louisa Ha

AEJMC names new representatives

Louisa Ha was elected by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to serve as representative to the Accrediting Council. She will serve a three-year term. Jairo Lugo-Ocando will serve the remaining two years of Chris McCollough’s term. McCollough left Jacksonville State University to become school director at Kennesaw State University.

Ha is a University Distinguished Research Professor in the School of Media and Communication at Bowling Green State University. Lugo-Ocando is dean of the College of Communication at the University of Sharjah.

Other AEJMC representatives are Jessica Pucci, senior associate dean in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona

State University, and Dorothy Bland, professor in the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas.

NAHJ returns as member organization

Alicia Ybarbo will serve in the Knight Foundation-funded Council seat for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists beginning with the Council’s virtual fall meeting on Aug. 16. Ybarbo is an Emmy Award-winning producer, author, and professional storyteller. At NBCUniversal, she is producer and coordinating producer for NBC News, TODAY. Ybarbo is based in New York.



Alicia Ybarbo

2024-25 Accreditation Decisions

Accreditation decisions were made for 18 schools by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) at its May 1 meeting. Two were initial program accreditations, one school received accreditation for both an undergraduate and a professional master's program, and two schools were removed from provisional accreditation status.

ACEJMC accredits 120 schools in the United States and other nations.

Schools accredited but found to be in noncompliance on a standard are subject to the new noncompliance policy, mandated by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the agency that recognizes ACEJMC. The policy states deficiencies must be addressed within three years. Schools subject to the policy are indicated below with the standard in noncompliance.

Undergraduate programs removed from provisional after successful revisits:

- Bowling Green State University, School of Media and Communication
- Iowa State University, Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication

Undergraduate programs receiving initial accreditation:

- American University in the Emirates, College of Media and Mass Communication
- Mississippi State University, Department of Communication (Noncompliance in Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes)

PROGRAM REVIEWS / Noncompliance findings in the 8 Standards

Standard	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
1 Mission, Governance and Administration			1	1
2 Curriculum and Instruction	2		1	3
3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes	3	3	4	10
4 Diversity and Inclusiveness	2			2
5 Faculty		1		1
6 Student Services		1		1
7 Resources, Facilities and Equipment	1	1		2
8 Professional and Public Service				
Total Noncompliances	8	6	6	20
* Programs Reviewed	32	32	19	83
Totals include revisits	26 undergraduate 6 graduate programs	27 undergraduate 5 graduate programs	18 undergraduate 1 graduate programs	71 undergraduate 1 graduate programs

*undergrad/professional master's programs reviewed separately
Judgments of compliance/noncompliance required on **revisits***

Programs reaccredited:

- Auburn University, the Journalism Program in the School of Communication and Journalism (Noncompliance in Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction)
- Eastern Illinois University, the Division of Journalism in the School of Communication and Journalism
- Elon University, School of Communications
- Florida A&M University, the Division of Journalism in the School of Journalism and Graphic Communication
- Nicholls State University, Department of Mass Communication
- South Dakota State University, the undergraduate and professional master's degrees in the School of Communication and Journalism
- Southern University and A&M College, Department of Mass Communication (Noncompliance in Standard 3:

Assessment of Learning Outcomes)

- Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Gurabo Campus, Program of Communications
- University of Florida, College of Journalism and Communications
- University of Georgia, Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- University of Montana, School of Journalism
- University of Oregon, School of Journalism and Communication (Noncompliance in Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes)
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Richard T. Robertson School of Communication

Provisional reaccreditation:

- University of Arizona, School of Journalism (Noncompliance in Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration; and Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes)

Council elects leaders, appoints new Accrediting Committee members

At its May 1 meeting, the Accrediting Council elected Kim Baca and Mark Nylander to serve three-year terms on the Accrediting Committee as industry representatives.

Baca is president and CEO of KB Consulting, based in Albuquerque, NM. Nylander is principal of Nylander + Partners, based in Cleveland.

The Council also reappointed industry representatives Andy Alexander and Peter Bhatia, and educator representative Gracie Lawson-Borders, to their second three-year terms.



Kim Baca



Mark Nylander

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the Council elected Steve Geimann as its president and re-elected Greg Pitts to a second three-year term as vice president.

The Council also elected Rafael Lorente as Accrediting Committee chair and Diana

Martinelli as vice chair.

Geimann, a retired Bloomberg news editor, has served on the Council several years and has been a team member and chair on several site visits.

Pitts is a professor in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media at Middle Tennessee State University. He has served as Council representative for the Broadcast Education Association for several years and has been a team member and chair on several site visits.

Lorente is dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. He was elected to the Accrediting Committee in 2022 and served as Committee vice chair since 2023. He has been a team member and chair on several site visits.

Martinelli is vice dean in the College of Creative Arts and Media at West Virginia University. She was elected to the Committee in 2022 and has served on several site visits.



The Accrediting Council is unique in its practice of making accreditation decisions in a public forum. Above, Council members vote unanimously to reaccredit the Department of Mass Communication at Nicholls State University.

With gratitude to the Freedom Forum



Hub Brown, dean of the College of Journalism and Communication at the University of Florida, responds to questions from the Council.

ACEJMC is grateful to The Freedom Forum for hosting the Council's May 1 meeting. The Freedom Forum's focus is to promote and advance our First Amendment and its five freedoms - assembly, petition, press, religion and speech -- bedrock values that strategically align with the work of ACEJMC.

ACEJMC extends appreciation to Jan Neuharth, Chair and CEO at The Freedom Forum, and her team for their warm hospitality.

Photos courtesy of Brook DeWalt



From left, David Kurpius, Heidi de Laubenfels and Dorothy Bland participate in accreditation discussions.



Rochelle Ford listens as Steve Geimann discusses proposed policy changes during the Council business meeting.

ACEJMC staff and office update

New location and mailing address

This past spring, ACEJMC established a new address in Meridian, Idaho (Boise metro area), where new Executive Director Susan Walton operates ACEJMC's central office. ACEJMC's new mailing address is:

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
3327 N. Eagle Road,
Ste. 110-53
Meridian, Idaho 83646

Please direct all mail correspondence, including payments by mail, to this address.

Central Office staff members and contact information

ACEJMC's new office location in Meridian serves as not only the base of operations for Susan, but also for ACEJMC's new Executive Assistant, Denise Baar, who also lives in the Boise area.

It was recently announced that Cindy Reinardy, ACEJMC Assistant Executive Director, has been named ACEJMC Associate Executive Director, in recognition of her high level of support and strategic contributions to ACEJMC's success. Cindy joins

Susan and Denise to form the three-person Central Office team. Cindy will continue to be based in Kansas.

ACEJMC's Central Office staff can be reached at:

Susan Walton, ACEJMC Executive Director: susan.walton@acejmc.org

Cindy Reinardy, ACEJMC Associate Executive Director: cindy.reinardy@acejmc.org

Denise Baar, ACEJMC Executive Assistant: denise.baar@acejmc.org

AT RIGHT:
An accreditation site team visited the Department of Communication at Southern University and A&M College. Team members, from left, were Caesar Andrews, Debra Miller, team chair Shirley Staples Carter and Kelly Kissel.



BELOW:
An accreditation site team visited the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida in February. Team members, from left, were Brian Butler, Brian Sheehan, Janet Rose, Will Sutton, Chip Mahaney, Diana Martinelli, Barbara Cochran and team chair Marie Hardin.



Traveling to the American University in the Emirates to conduct an initial accreditation review were, from left, site team members Andy Alexander, Kenn Gaither, team chair Steve Geimann and Shari Veil.

In appreciation of 2024-25 site team members

Sixteen accreditation site visits and two revisits were completed during the 2024-25 visit cycle. In addition, one school submitted both its undergraduate and professional graduate programs for review. Seventy-one individuals volunteered their time and service for these visits. Some individuals served on two site visit teams.

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Sonny Albarado | 18. Vince Duffy | 36. Helen Katz | 54. Dan Shelley |
| 2. Andy Alexander | 19. Katie Foss | 37. Kelly Kissel | 55. Bill Silcock, chair |
| 3. Caesar Andrews, chair | 20. Diana Fuentes | 38. David Kurpius, chair | 56. Hyunjin Seo |
| 4. Sandy Banisky | 21. Kenn Gaither | 39. Mark Lodato | 57. Brian Sheehan |
| 5. Marianne Barrett, chair | 22. Aileen Gallagher | 40. Rafael Lorente, chair | 58. Amy Simons |
| 6. Peter Bhatia, chair | 23. Del Galloway | 41. Chip Mahaney | 59. Jennifer Sizemore, chair |
| 7. Dorothy Bland, chair | 24. Steve Geimann, chair | 42. Diana Martinelli | 60. Marquita Smith |
| 8. David Boardman, chair | 25. Kristin Gilger, chair | 43. Kathryn McManus | 61. Johnny Sparks |
| 9. Denise Bortree | 26. Jennifer Greer | 44. Emily Metzgar | 62. Al Stavitsky, chair |
| 10. Ann Brill, chair | 27. Michel Haigh | 45. Debra Miller | 63. James Stewart |
| 11. Jenny Buschhorn | 28. Marie Hardin, chair | 46. Charles Mitchell | 64. Amy Struthers |
| 12. Brian Butler | 29. Matthew Haught | 47. Mickey Nall | 65. Ingrid Sturgis |
| 13. Shirley Staples Carter, chair | 30. Joanna Hernandez | 48. Mark Nylander | 66. Will Sutton |
| 14. Barbara Cochran | 31. Barbara Hines | 49. Holly Overton | 67. Earnest Perry, chair |
| 15. Laura Coffey | 32. Suzanne Horsley | 50. Greg Pitts | 68. Deb Potter |
| 16. George Daniels | 33. Don Hudson | 51. Jessica Pucci | 69. Cheryl Procter Rogers |
| 17. Heidi de Laubenfels | 34. Jackie Jones | 52. Brad Rawlins | 70. Shari Veil |
| | 35. Joel Kaplan, chair | 53. Janet Rose | 71. Yong Volz |

Program updates

Arkansas State University

– Professor Lillie Fears is serving as interim director of the School of Media and Journalism, effective July 1. She succeeds Gina Hogue, who served as interim director.

Baylor University – Jim Kendrick will become interim chair of the Department of Journalism, Public Relations & New Media, effective Aug. 1. He succeeds Mia Moody Ramirez, who is returning to full-time faculty.

California State University, Northridge

– Marcella De Veaux will become chair of the Department of Journalism, effective Aug. 20. She succeeds Jennifer Fleming, who is returning to full-time faculty.

Hofstra University

– Victoria Semple will become interim chair of the Department of Journalism, Media Studies, and Public Relations at The Lawrence Herbert School of Communication, effective Aug. 31. She succeeds Jeffrey Morosoff, who will return to a full teaching schedule and head up the school's ACEJMC accreditation review.

Howard University

– Kimberly Moffitt will become dean of the Cathy Hughes School of Communications effective Aug. 1. Chukwuka Onwumechili, a full professor in the school, is serving as interim dean.

Jacksonville State University

– Teddi Joyce was named chair of the Department of Communication, succeeding Chris McCollough, who took a school director position at Kennesaw State University.

Loyola University New Orleans – Shaniece Bickham was named director of the

School of Communication and Design, effective July 1. She succeeds Sheryl Kennedy Haydel, who is now dean of the College of Music and Media.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

– Masudul Biswas was named chair of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, effective July 1. He succeeds Professor Yahya Kamalipour, who served as interim chair.

Ohio University – Hans Meyer was named director of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, effective July 1. Meyer has served as associate director of the school since 2020. Meyer succeeds Eddith Dashiell, who retired after five years in the leadership position. She was the first woman to hold the director position.

Pennsylvania State University

– Denise Bortree was named interim dean of the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, effective July 1. Bortree, who served as associate dean for academic affairs in the college, succeeds Marie Hardin, who is now president of Quinnipiac University.

San Francisco State University

– Cristina L. Azocar will serve as chair of the Department of Journalism, effective Aug. 21. She succeeds Jesse Garnier, who is returning to faculty.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

– Jeffrey S. Magee has been named interim department head for the Department of Journalism. He succeeds Mira Sotirovic, who is retiring.

University of Kansas

– Scott Reinardy has been named interim dean of the School of Journalism and

Mass Communications, effective Aug. 18. He succeeds Ann Brill, who will step down after 20 years in the leadership position to return to faculty.

University of North Alabama

– Tim Worley will become chair of the Department of Communication, effective July 31. He succeeds Patricia Sanders, who is stepping down to return to the faculty in her position as Intercultural and Engagement Initiatives Director for the College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering.

University of South Dakota

– Rob Turner is serving as interim chair of the Media and Journalism Department, effective July 21. Michelle Van Maanen, who has served as chair since 2010, is retiring.

Virginia Commonwealth University

– Scott Sherman was named interim director of the Richard T. Robertson School of Communication, effective July 1. He succeeds Peyton Rowe, who stepped down to return to teaching. Sherman was serving as associate director of the school.

West Virginia University

– Emily Corio was named director of the Reed School of Media and Communications. She succeeds Diana Martinelli, who is now vice dean of the College of Creative Arts and Media.

Accreditation lapses

The Department of Communication at the **University of Louisiana Lafayette** and the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at **New York University** allowed their accreditation status to lapse in the 2024-25 accreditation review cycle.

2025-26

Site Visit Schedule

ACEJMC will send nine site visit teams to journalism and mass communications programs in the 2025-26 academic year for accreditation reviews.

ACEJMC invites comments by third parties, limited to written comment speaking directly to a program's compliance with ACEJMC's accreditation standards. Comments should be submitted by the date of the site visit to Susan Walton, ACEJMC's executive director, susan.walton@acemc.org.

2025 FALL SEMESTER

Oct. 19-22

University of Minnesota

Oct. 26-29

Ohio University

Nov. 2-5

Pennsylvania State University

Nov. 9-12

University of Memphis

Nov. 16-19

Washington and Lee University

Abilene Christian University

2026 WINTER/SPRING SEMESTER

Jan. 25-28

Savannah State University

Feb. 1-4

Columbia University

University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras

Meetings calendar

- Council business meeting: Virtual, Saturday, Aug. 16 Noon to 3 p.m. EST
- Accrediting Committee Thursday, March 20 Chicago
- Accrediting Council Date TBA Washington, DC

Future

Continued from Page 1

The grant, spread over five years, funds Council membership for more multicultural organizations to join ACEJMC. The grant also includes training to help ensure we're preparing culturally proficient students for a global workforce. Thank you to **Jim Brady**, previously at the Knight Foundation, for his support.

Brand Identity

In 2024, we introduced a new brand identity, based on research conducted to better understand the perceptions and beliefs of ACEJMC and its mission by Council and Committee members, as well as program directors and other stakeholders. The research results guided our new brand and visual identity, and we introduced a new logo, a Seal of Accreditation for use by accredited schools, a website redesign, and a new email protocol for Council and Committee members.

Metriq, our digital partner, and its owner **Shawn Nichols**, helped drive this progress, which continues as we explore a "digital transformation" initiative, looking at how ACEJMC can automate, simplify, improve and scale the way we do business. Exciting stuff. Thank you, Shawn and team.

Governance

We examined and strengthened our governance model – expanding our executive committee, increasing engagement and transparency across the organization, and codifying policies and procedures. Our finances received needed attention, and an audit will soon be completed.

To advance our mission, we established standing committees: Engagement, Governance and Membership. In brief, we applied business principles to our operations and governance – making us even more responsive to those we serve.

Strategic Planning

Last year, we adopted a new, five-

year strategic plan, with clear deliverables and outcomes tied to a timeline. Special thanks to our Strategic Planning Committee and **Lucy Dalglish**, its chair.

Standards Review

Earlier this spring we announced revisions to our accreditation **Standard Four, Advancing a Culturally Proficient Workforce**, which requires programs seeking accreditation or reaccreditation to foster equal opportunity, respect for a range of points of view, and provides participatory opportunities for all elements of society, while educating culturally proficient communicators.

We will present a workshop on the Standard Four revisions at the **AEJMC conference in San Francisco – Aug. 7 from 10:15-11:30 a.m.**

Kudos and accolades to the folks who led this important work – **Greg Pitts (chair), Dorothy Bland and Heidi de Laubenfels**.

Leadership

A number of changes are occurring with our ACEJMC leadership and staff. This August I will complete my term as president, and Council member **Steve Geimann** will be our new leader. **Greg Pitts** will continue as Council vice president, and **Rafael Lorente** has been elected chair of the Committee, joined by **Diana Martinelli**, our new Committee vice chair.

Congratulations and thank you to Steve, Greg, Rafael and Diana for their leadership. ACEJMC is in very good hands!

Special thanks, too, to **Marie Hardin**, outgoing Committee Chair. Marie has served ACEJMC for decades, and we're better and stronger because of her contributions.

Susan Balcom Walton is our new executive director, based in Boise, Idaho. Susan was a public relations faculty member at BYU and BYU-Idaho and a former corporate communications executive.

She previously oversaw PRSA's Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) program. **Cindy Reinardy** continues her work with ACEJMC and has been named associate executive director, and **Denise Baar** has joined our team as administrative assistant, based in Boise, along with Susan.

As we transition ACEJMC's headquarters to Idaho, it's an opportune time to recognize and thank **Rafael Lorente and Lucy Dalglish** for allowing ACEJMC to call the University of Maryland home since 2021. Lucy was dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland and made the relocation of our offices happen, and Rafael has continued to offer support since becoming dean in 2023. Thank you, Lucy and Rafael.

In Closing

It seems only fitting that as we celebrate ACEJMC's 80th anniversary, we continue to evolve, grow and prosper. We've made the transition from analog to digital, both in terms of our online presence and our continued efforts to improve our efficiency and flexibility to those we serve. Our focus on and commitment to a well-run accreditation process continues, as we apply sound business practices to our operations.

Looking forward, incoming headwinds are strong and the path before us is challenging, no doubt. In the face of these challenges, we remain fully committed to advancing excellence and high standards in education in journalism and mass communications – as we produce culturally proficient communicators prepared for the workforce: locally, nationally and globally.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Together, we've made great things happen.



C. Del Galloway, APR, Fellow PRSA, President | Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications

Steadfast

Continued from Page 1

amid unfavorable economic trends. Podcasters and independent journalists add competition for legacy media. Reporters create their own brand and audience.

Public relations and advertising are grappling with artificial intelligence disruptions. Generative AI software is helping PR agencies create releases for niche markets. Some ad campaigns are created, produced and placed using AI software.

Amid the challenges, this Council remains dedicated to excellence in professional education. We cannot - we will not - abandon that mission. Our professions have never been more essential for democratic government in a free society.

We are guided in our work by the eight standards that reflect the deeply collaborative effort of educators and practitioners to set high standards for excellence in preparing professional communicators. We are steadfast in our commitment to continuous improvement in teaching, as well as accreditation.

I am honored to serve as president alongside re-elected Vice President Greg Pitts, professor at Middle Tennessee State's School of Journalism and Strategic Media; Committee Chair Rafael Lorente, dean at the Merrill College of Journalism at Maryland; and Committee Vice Chair Diana Martinelli, vice dean the College of Creative Arts and Media at West Virginia University. Rafael replaces Marie Hardin, who devoted a decade to serving in ACEJMC leadership before joining Quinnipiac University as president.

Accreditation

Continued from Page 1

receive practical, actionable observations that facilitate continued improvement.

More than once, as a program reviewer, I observed a faculty member using a truly transformational teaching tool or lesson concept. I'd make a note of it, and later—after the program review was complete and the vote had taken place—I'd contact the faculty member and ask permission to use it in my own classroom.

Several years ago, a group of students asked my help in articulating our school's certification and accreditation status

I joined the Council almost 30 years ago, representing the Society of Professional Journalists. I was overwhelmed, asking questions I'm sure some educators thought were simplistic. I now see ACEJMC service as my way of giving back to my profession, and a way for me to help prepare future journalists and communicators as they begin their careers. This is important work.

I hope to expand industry membership, to add diversity and voices from the journalism and mass communications professions. I also aim to recruit journalism, PR and advertising veterans who can serve on visit teams. ACEJMC is a collaboration, and practitioners must play a key role in our evaluations.

Finally, I must thank Del Galloway for three years of exceptional dedication and energy that led to important alliances with the Knight Foundation and the Freedom Forum, development of a digital partnership, redesign of the website, adoption of a five-year strategic plan and creation of a logo for accredited programs.

Building on Del's success with Knight and the Freedom Forum, he has requested and I have agreed he will create a "Giving Campaign" strategy and plan to drive ongoing, sustainable financial support for the important work of the Council. I know he will succeed."

One of Del's lasting contributions is helping lead the selection Susan Balcom Walton as executive director. She brings years of accreditation experience to the table. You can read more about her in this newsletter. I look forward to working with her, the office staff and everyone involved.

on their resumes and in their signature blocks in job application emails. Poised to enter the professional world, they, too, understood the value of accreditation and certification and wanted to leverage that value.

As I embark on this work with ACEJMC, I'm grateful to my predecessor, **Pat Thompson**; our Associate Executive Director, **Cindy Reinardy**; and our new Executive Assistant, **Denise Baar**. I'm also grateful for the support of the ACEJMC Executive Committee.

-- Susan

Susan Balcom Walton, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA

REMINDERS

Council members: You've got mail

Earlier this year, acejmc.org email accounts were set up for Accrediting Council members, executive committee members, ACEJMC staff, and several task force members. The accounts are intended to create a community of Council members and our discussions, and to help avoid clutter in your work email box.

As a reminder, please check the account periodically throughout the summer and then more frequently in the lead up to the site visit season and spring meetings. Meeting materials are shared through acejmc.org.

The central office will reach out to new Council members to help set up email accounts and to remind current Council members to activate and use their accounts.

Accreditation seal

A seal of accreditation is available for use by ACEJMC's accredited schools. Access the seal and guidelines for use at acejmc.org under Resources.

Student data update

Accredited programs are required to annually update student retention and graduation data on their website by Aug. 15. Information is available at acejmc.org under Resources.

Searchable database

Accredited programs should continue to update as needed information in ACEJMC's searchable database. The digital tool allows users to compare accredited programs side-by-side. The database is at <https://lookup.acejmc.org>.

Program dues increase

Annual dues for ACEJMC accredited programs will be \$2,500, starting with the 2025-26 academic year. Administrative fee for site visits will be \$750. International schools will pay a \$1,500 one-time application fee; domestic schools pay a \$1,000 fee.

Noncompliance policy

ACEJMC policy requires accredited or reaccredited units with a standard out of compliance to demonstrate within three years that deficiencies have been rectified. See Accreditation Status, under Process at acejmc.org.