

Report of ACEJMC Evaluation

Undergraduate program
2025-2026

Name of Institution: University of Minnesota

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Rebecca Cunningham, President

Name of Unit: Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Name and Title of Administrator: Elisia L. Cohen, Ph.D., Director

Date of 2025-2026 Accrediting Visit: October 19 - 22, 2025

Date of the previous accrediting visit: October 21-24, 2018

Recommendation of the previous site visit team: Reaccreditation

Previous decision of the Accrediting Council: Reaccreditation

Recommendation by 2025-2026 Visiting Team: Reaccreditation

Prepared and submitted by:

Team Chair

Name and Title: Gregory Pitts, Ph.D., Professor, School of Journalism and Strategic Media

Organization/School: Middle Tennessee State University

Signature

Team Member

Name and Title: Jennifer Greer, Ph.D., Dean, College of Communication and Information

Organization/School: University of Kentucky

Signature

Team Member

Name and Title: Heidi de Laubenfels, Founder and Principal

Organization/School: Arcus Pace, Inc.

Signature

Team Member

Name and Title: Jessica Pucci, Senior Associate Dean, Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Organization/School: Arizona State University

Signature

Part I. General Information

Name of Institution: University of Minnesota

Name of Unit: Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Year of Visit: 2025

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

Higher Learning Commission

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

New England Commission on Higher Education

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

If the unit seeking accreditation is located outside the United States, provide the name(s) of the appropriate recognition or accreditation entities:

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

Private

Public

Other (specify)

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

The University of Minnesota was originally established under Chapter 3 of the Territorial Laws of 1851 with the purpose of providing territorial citizens "...the means of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the various branches of Literature, Science and the Arts (see Section 3)." In 1974, the state legislature amended the Minnesota Constitution to incorporate Chapter 3 of the Territorial Laws, under Article 13 - Miscellaneous Subjects, Section 3, "All the rights, immunities, franchises and endowments heretofore granted or conferred upon the University of Minnesota are perpetuated unto the university."

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

Yes

No

If yes, give the date of the last full accrediting visit. If there was a revisit, give the date of the last full visit and the date of the revisit: October 21-24, 2018

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

The Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication's first ACEJMC accreditation occurred in 1948.

6. Insert here the unit's mission statement. Statement should give date of adoption and/or last revision.

Last revised, May 2025

Mission

To improve the practice of journalism and strategic communication through trailblazing advancements in teaching, research and community outreach.

Our Purpose:

The Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication prepares students to become trailblazers and industry leaders in journalism, media, information and strategic communication fields.

Our Promise:

We deliver professional preparation and a rigorous education rooted in the arts and social sciences. We are committed to teaching students to think critically in an environment that is diverse, dynamic, globally aware, interactive and intellectually challenging.

Our Potential:

Hubbard School teaching, research and outreach will have a transformative impact on journalism, media, information and strategic communication fields in Minnesota, the nation and the world.

7. What are the type and length of terms?

Number of weeks in a semester: 15 weeks

Number of weeks in a quarter: NA

Number of weeks in summer sessions: 8 weeks

Number of weeks in intersessions: 3 weeks

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

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. degree

9. List the specific undergraduate degrees as well as the majors or sequences being reviewed by ACEJMC. *Indicate online degrees.

Journalism major

Strategic Communication: Advertising and Public Relations major

10. Credit hours required by the university for an undergraduate degree: (Specify semester-hour or quarter-hour credit.)

120 semester-hour credits

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

One semester-hour credit (S/N) is earned in conjunction with an internship. Students may register for up to three internships for a total of three credits. Internship credit does not count toward major requirements.

12. List each professional journalism or mass communications sequence or specialty offered and give the name of the person in charge. Add lines as needed.

Major

Journalism BA

Strategic Communication: Advertising and Public Relations BA

Person in Charge

Elisia Cohen, director

Elisia Cohen, director

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

41,303 (full-time undergraduate students Fall 2024 (found [here](#)))

14. Number of undergraduate majors in the accredited unit, by sequence. (If the unit has pre-major students, list them as a single total). Give the semester and academic year represented. Add lines as needed.

Name of Sequence or Specialty	Spring 2025 Undergraduate majors
Strategic Communication	586
Journalism	202
Media and Information	48
Pre-majors	118
Total	955

15. Number of students in each section of all skills courses (newswriting, reporting, editing, photography, advertising copy, broadcast news, public relations writing, etc.). List enrollment by section for the term during which the visit will occur and for the preceding term. Submit two semesters with the self-study and update the list as needed for spring 2026 visits. Include a separate list for online skills courses, which also must meet the 20-1 ratio. (The Council has ruled that campaigns courses are exempt from the 20-1 ratio.)

Spring 2025

- Jour 3101W.1, News Reporting and Writing--14
- Jour 3101W.2, News Reporting and Writing--13
- Jour 3102.1, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--15
- Jour 3102.2, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--18
- Jour 3102.3, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--17
- Jour 3121.1, Intermediate News Reporting and Writing--14
- Jour 3121.2, Intermediate News Reporting and Writing--10
- Jour 3155.1, Editing-Print/Digital Audience--15
- Jour 3173W.1, Magazine & Feature Writing--14
- Jour 3241W.1, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
- Jour 3241W.2, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
- Jour 3241W.3, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
- Jour 3241W.4, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
- Jour 3279W.1, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--19
- Jour 3279W.2, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--18
- Jour 3279W.3, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--17
- Jour 3321.1, Media Design--20
- Jour 3321.2, Media Design--11
- Jour 3321.3, Media Design--19
- Jour 3321.4, Media Design--20
- Jour 3451.1, TV, Radio/Digital News Reporting--8
- Jour 4172.1, Sports Reporting--14
- Jour 4174.1, Magazine Editing and Production (2 instructors)--35
- Jour 4175.1, Brovald-Sims Community Journalism--16
- Joru 4196.1, Field Based Practicum--7
- Jour 4242.1, Advertising Portfolio and Development--16

Jour 4243.1, Digital Content for Brand Communication--19
Jour 4243.2, Digital Content for Brand Communication--20
Jour 4263.1, Strategic Communication Campaigns--13
Jour 4263.2, Strategic Communication Campaigns--16
Jour 4263.3, Strategic Communication Campaigns--15
Jour 4263.4, Strategic Communication Campaigns--15
Jour 4263.5, Strategic Communication Campaigns--17
Jour 4263.6, Strategic Communication Campaigns--15
Jour 4263.7, Strategic Communication Campaigns--16
Jour 4264.1, Campaigns/NSAC--22
Jour 4279W.1, Advanced Strategic Writing--14
Jour 4203.1, Advanced Visual Storytelling--19
Jour 4452.1, Newscast Producing--6

Fall 2025 (as of 7/1/2025)

Jour 3101W.1, News Reporting and Writing--17
Jour 3101W.2, News Reporting and Writing--14
Jour 3102.1, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--20
Jour 3102.2, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--20
Jour 3102.3, Multimedia Production and Storytelling--20
Jour 3103.1, Interactive and Data Journalism--18
Jour 3121.1, Intermediate News Reporting and Writing--20
Jour 3173W.1, Magazine & Feature Writing--19
Jour 3241W.1, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
Jour 3241W.2, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
Jour 3241W.3, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
Jour 3241W.4, Advertising Strategy and Creative Development--20
Jour 3279W.1, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--20
Jour 3279W.2, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--20
Jour 3279W.3, Professional Writing for Strat Comm--20
Jour 3321.1, Media Design--14
Jour 3321.2, Media Design--17
Jour 3321.3, Media Design--17
Jour 3321.4, Media Design--20
Jour 3451.1, TV, Radio/Digital News Reporting--12
Jour 4131.1--In-Depth Reporting--4
Jour 4171.1, Covering the Arts--11
Jour 4173.1, Podcast Production--18
Jour 4196.1, Field Based Practicum--15
Jour 4242.1, Advertising Portfolio and Development--20
Jour 4243.1, Digital Content for Brand Communication--20
Jour 4263.1, Strategic Communication Campaigns--18
Jour 4263.2, Strategic Communication Campaigns--20
Jour 4263.3, Strategic Communication Campaigns--19
Jour 4263.4, Strategic Communication Campaigns--22

Jour 4302.1, Photojournalism--20

16. Total expenditures planned by the accredited unit for the 2025–2026 academic year:

~\$15 million (includes major building renovation expenditures)

Amount expected to be spent this year on full-time faculty salaries:

\$4,658,437 (all full-time tenure-track and contract faculty; does not include administrator or administrative salaries, nor "instructional staff" – full-time lecturers/senior lecturers.)

17. List name and rank of all full-time faculty in the accredited unit. (Full-time faculty refers to those defined as such by the university.) Identify those not teaching because of leaves, sabbaticals, etc. Regular Faculty (21)

Professors (8)

Matthew Carlson	Professor
Elisia Cohen*	Professor & Director
Jisu Huh	Professor & Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Programs
Jane Kirtley	Professor & Director of the Silha Center
María Len-Ríos	Professor & Associate Director for Faculty and Administration
Erich Sommerfeldt	Professor & Academic Director of the Professional MA Program in Strategic Communication & Strategic Communication Hub
Emily Vraga	Professor & Director of Graduate Studies for the Academic MA/PhD program in Mass Communication
Marco Yzer	Professor

Associate Professors (10)

Colin Agur	Associate Professor
Sidney Bedingfield	Associate Professor
Valérie Bélair-Gagnon	Associate Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies
Sherri Jean Katz	Associate Professor
Rebekah Nagler	Associate Professor
Amy O'Connor	Associate Professor
Adam Saffer	Associate Professor
Claire Segijn	Associate Professor
Christopher Terry	Associate Professor
Benjamin Toff**	Associate Professor & Director of the Minnesota Journalism Center

* unit administrator role

** not teaching in 25-26 due to leave (Fall) and sabbatical (Spring)

Assistant Professors (3)

Haseon Park	Assistant Professor
Carolina Velloso	Assistant Professor
Alvin (Yixiao) Zhou	Assistant Professor

Contract (Teaching) Faculty (9)

Professors (2)

Luis Garrido Contract Professor
Eric Kramer Contract Professor (joint appointment with Communication)

Associate Professors (3)

Diane Cormany Contract Associate Professor
Susan LoRusso Contract Associate Professor
Shayla Thiel-Stern Contract Associate Professor

Assistant Professors (4)

Jill Spiekerman Bonham Contract Assistant Professor
Matthew Cikovic Contract Assistant Professor
Ruth DeFoster Contract Assistant Professor
Allison Steinke Contract Assistant Professor

In addition to the tenure-line regular and teaching contract faculty members, the unit has additional academic staff members who teach and support instructional programs full-time, including:

Senior Lecturers and Lecturers (9)

Gayle Golden Senior Lecturer
Jennifer Johnson Senior Lecturer
Erik Kvålseth Lecturer
Scott Libin Hubbard Senior Fellow
Regina McCombs Senior Lecturer
Rich McCracken Lecturer
Sara Quinn Senior Lecturer
Stacie Swenson Lecturer
(Christopher) Scott Winter Senior Lecturer

18. List names of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching at least one course in fall 2025. Also list names of part-time faculty teaching spring 2025.

Alissa Anderson Spring 2025
Bryan Anderson Spring 2025
Susan Andre Fall & Spring 2025
Mark Derks Fall & Spring 2025
Marissa Evans Fall & Spring 2025
Brian Gabrial Spring 2025
Steve Gill Fall & Spring 2025
Susan Hamerski Spring 2025
Stacie Kammerling Spring 2025
Andy Kruse Fall 2025
Troy Longie Spring 2025
Andrew Mannix Fall & Spring 2025
Fred Melo Spring 2025
Alyx Orstad Fall & Spring 2025
Dominic Papatola Fall 2025
Michael Rand Spring 2025
Tom Scheck Fall 2025

Peggy Snook	Spring 2025
Michelle Wood	Fall & Spring 2025
Andrew Zoellner	Spring 2025

19. For each of the last two academic years, please give the total number of graduates from the unit.

2024-25 academic year: 266 students

2023-24 academic year: 254 students

PART II — Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The University of Minnesota is the land-grant university in Minnesota and flagship institution of the University of Minnesota system. As with many universities, the high school graduation peak in 2025 will impact the university going forward. The university president suggests a “rightsizing” of the campus that will likely result in lower overall enrollment. Few tenure-track lines have been authorized in recent years. But in the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, in the College of Liberal Arts, enrollment is strong, especially for the Strategic Communication degree. The School celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2017. Minnesota was one of the first 35 schools to be noted as “accredited” in 1948 when the process that is now known as ACEJMC review began. The new dean of the College of Liberal Arts is supportive of the School and notes the need to recognize its many innovative and entrepreneurial actions. He describes Hubbard as a great School among 31 units in the college, meriting support and noting Hubbard’s actions are good for the college and are an example for how Schools can succeed in a challenging era.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The Mission statement is posted prominently in the About Us section of the School’s homepage.

The unit posts its mission statement and strategic plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

These items are found in the About section of the School’s homepage.

<https://hsjmc.umn.edu/about-us/mission/mission-history>

and here

<https://hsjmc.umn.edu/about-us/additional-links/strategic-plan>

Describe in detail how the mission statement/strategic plan is implemented, plays into the daily life of the unit and its effectiveness in driving progress. Who has responsibility for keeping the plan updated? Is it revised regularly to deal with rapidly changing issues of instruction and technology?

The Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication is part of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, the flagship institution of the University of Minnesota system. The university ranks in the top 15% of U.S. universities nationally. In conjunction with the university’s stature, the Hubbard School follows a forward-thinking strategic planning process to advance the School within the university and enhance opportunities for students and faculty, both nationally and internationally. Continuous short- and long-term strategic planning has been part of the planning process. Under requests from the College of Liberal Arts, Hubbard has prepared three-year plans of study in 2017-2018, 2020-2021 and 2023-2024. Planning efforts were led by the Hubbard School director and a group of administrative and academic leaders in the unit. They are responsible for keeping the plan updated and responding to calls for plans from the dean.

The Hubbard School’s strategic plan, called “Trailblazing Together,” outlines four goals to advance the teaching and research missions:

- **Advance** the School's leadership position in journalism and mass communication education through student program success and career development
- **Expand** the School's reputation as an innovative hub focused in journalism, media ethics and the law, strategic communication and health communication to broaden and deepen students' academic and practical work
- **Accelerate** the dissemination of industry insights and engagement. Since the pandemic, the School has enhanced partnerships with industry through knowledge sharing via advisory boards, labeled as "teach the teacher" experiences
- **Build** a sustainable and innovative financial infrastructure

Unit administrators and some faculty have at times felt frustrated in efforts to implement strategic planning goals, most notably under an interim college dean in 2023 and 2024. The School has experienced student enrollment demand for the Strategic Communication program. In the strategic plan, the School notes a desire to expand the School to 1,000 enrolled students, but Hubbard received little support from the interim dean to hire faculty to match enrollment growth or even to replace departing faculty. The self-study also describes an unpredictable incremental budget request system during that time. While this narrative was alarming to read in the self-study, it does not fully reflect the current reality. The new dean (on the job for less than one year at the time of the site visit) describes the School as one of the college's most collaborative partner units, willing to look for opportunities that help not just Hubbard but also other units. While enrollment in other units has declined, the School continues to produce the college's second-highest enrollment. Unless the college faces additional budget cuts, the dean anticipates allowing the School to add a new tenure-line faculty member in Strategic Communication in the future. The School has experienced fundraising success, with endowment resources of more than \$67 million in donated funds, an 81% increase (+\$30 million) in endowed support since the last self-study report. Standard 7 offers further explanation of budget and resource topics.

(b) 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.

Dr. GerShun Avilez is dean of the College of Liberal Arts; he had been in his position for slightly under one year at the time of the site team visit. Dr. Elisia Cohen is in her third term as director of the Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication and holds the rank of professor. She reports directly to the dean, as do 30 other unit leaders in the college. She was hired in 2017, and five years later, the School celebrated its 100th Anniversary. Professor María Len-Ríos is the associate director for faculty and administration. She joined the School in 2022.

The dean describes the School as well run and an area of strength within the college, with dynamic leadership and supportive faculty and staff. He notes the School is financially solid and that the director is an administrator with not only knowledge of her unit but a view of the college's and university's goals and priorities. Through this view, the School has worked to establish significant partnerships with any interested units across the college and in other parts of campus. Examples of partner units include political science, psychology, business, computer science, kinesiology, athletics and statistics. The newest partnership is an interdisciplinary minor in sports media and promotion.

Faculty similarly sing the director's praises. "She keeps an eye on what people need to do their jobs. That's the real hallmark of her directorship." She insulates the faculty, they report. "To have a director who is open to listening to ideas...was critical to us growing in a good way." One called her an

“administrator’s administrator,” noting her role as an “an academic air traffic controller, keeping an eye on multiple events” in the School to enhance opportunities for faculty and students but also to be aware of bigger university issues. Another said she is hard-wired to be an administrator. “She has a high attention to detail,” said another. Under her leadership, “Hubbard is well-positioned for the future,” a faculty member said. Several faculty noted her comfort and success with fundraising, saying she has been a great steward for the School’s finances, helping raise more money but also actually spending the funds to advance opportunities for students and faculty. One faculty member said: “She’s a superstar, by the way. She could be president of the university.”

A senior faculty member noted the high level of cohesion among faculty and staff, due in part to the well-functioning School. They get along well, sharing ideas and support for teaching and pursuing opportunities within the School. While there are two faculty hiring tiers (tenured/tenure-track and contract faculty) and lecturers and senior lecturers (classified as "instructional staff"), members of the unit didn’t cite issues with the differences. The research expectation is higher for tenure-track faculty, but contract faculty can similarly be promoted for effective teaching and research or creative work and service. Lecturers and senior lecturers are fully integrated into the culture and are valuable members in delivering the curriculum.

(c) The unit annually updates its data on the ACEJMC searchable database website (<https://lookup.acejmc.org>).

The searchable database for the University of Minnesota, Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication is up-to-date.

(d) The unit gathers, maintains and analyzes enrollment, retention and graduation data and posts them annually in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its websites.

Enrollment and graduation data are found on the homepage and in the ACEJMC searchable database. The information is easy to find. The Hubbard School graduation rates are among the highest at the university.

On indicators (e), (f) and (g) the site team should make sure the unit operates within accepted academic norms and need only report in detail on extraordinary situations, cases or variances from policy.

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

The Regulations of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication set the governance policies for the Hubbard School. The document presents the shared governance model for the administration and faculty to work together. The Hubbard faculty, under the leadership of the Director, has final authority in all matters of Hubbard policy and curriculum, subject to the rules of the college or other campus authorities. School voting faculty are all tenured or tenure-track professors, associate professors and assistant professors (“regular faculty”); full-time term faculty with renewable appointments (contract); and full-time Academic Professional and Administrative (P&A) staff with teaching responsibilities.

The faculty met at least monthly during the 2024-25 academic year. Since 2024, a consent agenda has been used for informational items shared by committees and School leadership. This new agenda structure allows faculty to enjoy more robust engagement in strategic conversations.

Provisions exist to allow affiliate faculty, those with an appointment in another department or administrative unit, to serve on graduate student examination committees and participate in department discussions when appropriate, but they do not have voting rights in the unit.

Student representatives are involved in School governance and decision-making. At least one student member or student group liaison is typically appointed to standing committees in the School.

The Hubbard School Director is advised by members of the strategic planning advisory committees for areas of programmatic importance (i.e., mentoring program chairs, strategic communication program committee) and a Board of Visitors.

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

Directors may be appointed for terms of three to five years, and the college dean appoints and renews the Hubbard School director in consultation with faculty, members of the communications professions and others.

The current director was selected by a previous dean after a national search; she was hired in 2017 and has had two comprehensive reviews and is in her third term as director. Within the Hubbard School, most administrative appointments are made by the School director in consultation with faculty and are subject to review by the faculty. The director of graduate studies is an exception to this procedure. The director of graduate studies is nominated and elected by the School graduate faculty in the last meeting of each spring semester and is then approved by the college.

The dean reviews college unit administrators on an annual basis according to collegiate processes and conducts a comprehensive multi-year review before renewal of the School's director.

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

Faculty and staff may take concerns and complaints to the Hubbard School director, associate director for faculty and administrative affairs or the School chief of staff for resolution. General college or university-level policy concerns affecting the unit are openly discussed in faculty meetings, with ad-hoc groups of faculty providing feedback to the director or relevant committees who recommend unit-level policy changes before such policies are reviewed and voted on by the faculty as a whole. The unit administrator provides policy interpretation to faculty after consultation with relevant university offices.

If needed, faculty and staff concerns may be filed with the associate dean for faculty or the college Human Resources office. Violations involving legal issues or policy matters may be reported anonymously on the University of Minnesota human resources website.

Student complaints and grievances follow processes in place to ensure that complaints are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. The [One Stop student services](#) website contains information to help students. The Director of Undergraduate Studies receives complaints and concerns from students and seeks to facilitate timely and equitable resolution based on university policies and procedures.

Course syllabi convey information on university policies concerning issues such as discrimination, sexual harassment and academic misconduct.

With academic complaints, students are encouraged to first discuss their problems or concerns with the person with whom they have a grievance. If the approach is not satisfactory, students may file grievances in writing with the director of undergraduate studies or the director of graduate studies. If necessary, they may also file grievances with the Hubbard School director but are not required to do so as the University of Minnesota offers independent grievance review processes for academic concerns involving undergraduate and graduate students. Related, all scholastic dishonesty concerns involving students are referred to the [Office of Community Standards](#), which ensures equitable review and resolution of complaints.

Students may approach the University of Minnesota's [Student Conflict Resolution Center](#) with campus-based concerns such as grading or instructional issues. A full description of [student conduct code procedures](#) for the University of Minnesota is available online.

SUMMARY:

The Hubbard School is strong, with enrollment growth in Strategic Communication and stable Journalism enrollment. The dean and faculty offer nothing but praise for the director, now in her third term as head of the School. The Hubbard School is supported by more than \$67 million in endowed funds. That said, the School, the college and the larger university are dealing with changes in higher education that lead to feelings of uncertainty, even as the School is described as a jewel of the college. Faculty say they are insulated from some issues by the director, but they are appropriately involved in the School's present and future planning. Policies and procedures ensure faculty involvement in governance.

Overall evaluation compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Students in the unit complete academic requirements for a baccalaureate degree that meet the liberal arts and sciences/general education requirements of the institution. Programs may identify classes within the unit that contribute to a liberal arts and social sciences perspective for graduates from the unit.

The university requires 120 hours for graduation. Both the Journalism and Strategic Communication programs require 37 credit hours within the major, with 83 hours completed outside the programs (including the general education/liberal arts core and a foreign language requirement). A small percentage of students (estimated at 20%) may find an opportunity to take additional classes within the School, but most of these are from the “context course” selections.

Some courses within the major may count as part of the university’s liberal education (LE) core requirements; hours completed outside of the major requirements ensure the representation of liberal arts classes. The liberal education courses within the School are noted below. Required and elective courses within the School are also below.

(b) The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills to achieve the range of student values and competencies listed by the Council.

Students earn a Bachelor of Arts in the College of Liberal Arts. The core courses and major curriculum provide a balance between theory (context) and skills. The self-study includes a nicely documented matching of all curriculum courses with ACEJMC values and competencies. The School has worked to infuse skills and theoretical foundations throughout the curriculum, including ethics, writing, multimedia and recent additions in data and numeracy, and generative artificial intelligence. A review of syllabi affirmed the self-study’s course review. Some students and graduates note the strength of the advertising focus within strategic communication, but lament some missed opportunities for public relations studies.

Students identify the faculty as an encouraging group. Faculty members know students’ names and provide real-world deadlines and professional perspectives to help students develop career understanding. Clubs, organizations and activities that compliment coursework are available, and participation is encouraged by faculty.

Three courses are completed by all students:

- JOUR 1001: Media in a Changing World
- JOUR 3004: Information for Mass Communication
- JOUR 4999: Capstone (1 credit)

Journalism students complete these core courses:

- JOUR 3101W: News Reporting and Writing
- JOUR 3776: Mass Communication Law

Strategic Communication students complete these core courses:

- JOUR 3201: Principles of Strategic Communication
- JOUR 3241W: Advertising Strategy and Creative Development or JOUR 3279W: Professional Writing for Strategic Communication
- JOUR 4263: Strategic Communication Campaigns OR JOUR 4264: NSAC/ Campaigns

Journalism Major

After completing Core and required major courses, students with advising assistance select 15 credits of additional courses to create a track or sequence. At least two courses must be at the 4000 level.

JOUR 3102: Multimedia Production and Storytelling
JOUR 3103: Interactive and Data Journalism
JOUR 3121: Intermediate News Reporting
JOUR 3155: Editing for Print and Digital Audiences
JOUR 3173W: Magazine & Feature Writing
JOUR 3321: Media Design
JOUR 3451: TV, Radio and Digital News Reporting
JOUR 4131: In-Depth Reporting
JOUR 4171: Covering the Arts
JOUR 4172: Sports Reporting
JOUR 4173: Podcast Production and Storytelling
JOUR 4174: Magazine Editing and Production
JOUR 4175: Brovald-Sim Community Journalism Practicum
JOUR 4302: Photojournalism
JOUR 4303: Documentary Photojournalism
JOUR 4451: Advanced Multimedia Storytelling
JOUR 4452: Newscast Producing
JOUR 4196: Field-Based Practicum

Strategic Communication: Advertising and Public Relations Major

After completing Core and required major courses, students with advising assistance select 15 credits of additional courses to create a track or sequence. At least one course must be at the 4000 level.

JOUR 3102: Multimedia Production and Storytelling
JOUR 3241W: Advertising Strategy and Creative Development (can't repeat from above)
JOUR 3279W: Professional Writing for Strategic Communication (can't repeat from above)
JOUR 3321: Media Design
JOUR 3251: Strategic Communication Research and Analytics
JOUR 3253: Strategic Brand Planning
JOUR 3261: Media Planning
JOUR 3275: Digital Strategy in Strategic Communication
JOUR 4174: Magazine Editing and Production
JOUR 4242: Advertising Portfolio Development
JOUR 4243: Digital Content Development and Production for Brand Communications
JOUR 4244: Crisis Communication
JOUR 4258: Corporate Social Responsibility Communication

JOUR 4259: Strategic Communication Case Analysis
JOUR 4262: Management for Strategic Communication
JOUR 4279W: Advanced Strategic Communication
JOUR 4543: Campaigns for Social Good

Context Courses

Journalism students take an additional 9 credits in elective “context” courses with at least one at the 4000-level or higher. Strategic Communication students take an additional 6 credits in elective “context” courses with at least one at the 4000-level or higher.

JOUR 3005: Media Effects (social science core)
JOUR 3006: Visual Communication
JOUR 3007: The Media in American History and Law: Case Studies (LE historical perspectives core)
JOUR 3201: Principles of Strategic Communication (option only for Journalism majors)
JOUR 3551: Business of Digital Media (LE technology and society theme)
JOUR 3552: Internet and Global Society (LE global perspectives theme)
JOUR 3614: History of Media Communication (LE historical perspectives core and technology and society theme)
JOUR 3741: Diversity and Mass Communication (LE race, power and justice in the U.S. theme)
JOUR 3745: Mass Media and Popular Culture (LE arts/humanities core and race, power and justice in the U.S. theme)
JOUR 3751: Digital Media and Culture (LE arts/humanities core and technology and society theme)
JOUR 3757: Principles of Health Communication Strategy
JOUR 3758: Kids, Media and Information
JOUR 3771: Media Ethics (LE civic life and ethics theme)
JOUR 3775: Administrative Law and Regulation for Strategic Communication (LE civic life and ethics theme)
JOUR 3776: Media Law (LE option only for Strategic Communication majors)
JOUR 3786: Media and Politics
JOUR 3950: Special Topics in Mass Communication: Context
JOUR 4251: Psychology of Advertising
JOUR 4272: Digital Advertising: Theory and Practice
JOUR 4274W: Advertising in Society
JOUR 4501: Communication, Public Opinion and Social Media
JOUR 4601: Trauma-informed Journalism
JOUR 4542: Principles in Health Messaging: Media and Mental Health
JOUR 4552: Law of Internet Communications
JOUR 4605W: History of Journalism
JOUR 4606W: Literary Aspects of Journalism
JOUR 4721: Mass Media and U.S. Society (LE social science core and race, power and justice in the U.S. theme)
JOUR 4733V: Honors Thesis Seminar
JOUR 4725: Management of Media Organizations
JOUR 4801: Global Communication
JOUR 5541: Mass Communication and Public Health
JOUR 5777: Contemporary Problems in Freedom of Speech and Press

Students take 18 credits of 3000-level or higher credit outside the major and complete all requirements for the degree: liberal education, writing-intensive (at least one course must be in the major) and second language, all courses totaling 120 credits.

All bachelor's degree students complete the liberal arts curriculum, which consists of one course in each of the following areas:

- Arts and Humanities
- Biological Sciences with a lab
- Physical Science with a lab
- Mathematical Thinking
- Historical Perspectives
- Social Sciences
- Literature

Students must take one course in the Race, Power and Justice in the United States theme and three of the following four themes: Civic Life and Ethics, the Environment, Global Perspectives and Technology and Society.

Students are required to complete four courses designated as writing intensive, of which two must be at the 3000-level or higher, and one of these two must be in the major (3101W for Journalism and 3241W or 3279W for Strategic Communication).

Students earning the Bachelor of Arts in the College of Liberal Arts (Strategic Communication and Journalism) complete a second language requirement, amounting to a fourth semester of knowledge in the second language area.

(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, synchronous or asynchronous, is demanding and current, and is responsive to professional expectations of digital and technological media competencies.

The School describes using forward-thinking curricular actions to ensure that instruction is demanding and technologically current. An ongoing process for reviewing and revising the curriculum ensured that the 10 ACEJMC values and competencies were fully articulated in course requirements. Hubbard has significantly revamped its undergraduate coursework, including updates on publicly available “course profiles” that encourage rigor and consistency across courses and ensure alignment with ACEJMC learning objectives. Faculty enthusiastically share syllabi, notes and assignments among each other to ensure course integrity and bring new instructors into the fold.

The School hosts a general orientation session for adjuncts and new faculty before the start of each semester. Adjunct instructors receive a packet of School materials, including syllabi.

Post-pandemic, Hubbard has reexamined the role and availability of technology across its courses, hosting discussions with faculty, staff, professionals and administrators to review skills courses and ensure alignment on course concepts and rigor.

(d) The unit demonstrates efforts to connect faculty and administrators to the professions they represent, with a specific understanding of the changing skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

The Twin Cities is an exceptional media and corporate market for the School, students and faculty. Media outlets (including those of the School's namesake, Hubbard Broadcasting), major corporations, sports teams and technology companies, provide rich and robust opportunities to interact with professionals. Students are often embedded in professional organizations for courses or engagement experiences, thus faculty regularly interact with professionals. Most part-time faculty work for companies, agencies and newsrooms in the Minneapolis-St. Paul market and share news of their professional circumstances with students and faculty members. Feedback comes from alumni, visiting industry professionals, professional/academic conferences and trade shows, as well as faculty conclusions drawn from these interactions.

Faculty demonstrate engaged approaches to draw students into skills building perspectives. A site team member observing a section of JOUR 3102: Multimedia Production and Storytelling class observed the instructor "lecturing" about matched action in video production. The instructor stated, "On me!" and all students instinctively put up their finger "camera frames" (they had clearly done this before) to observe the action. Students held up their fingers in a square and "filmed" the instructor, holding the "lens" in place while she walked in and out of the frame. Students were engaged, despite being in front of screens.

Full-time faculty and instructional staff have access to professional development funding to support classroom innovation and professional development. Funded activities include professional development through attending these and other professional events: Online News Association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, Society for Professional Journalists, National Association of Black Journalists, Minnesota Newspaper Association, American Academy of Advertising, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Academy of Marketing Science, Future of Journalism Conference, Society of Professional Journalism Foundation meeting, National Association of Broadcasters Show, American Marketing Association, International Conference on Research in Advertising and International Public Relations Research Conference, among others.

(e) Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses. Except for campaigns courses, the ratio in skills and laboratory sections, whether on-site or online, should not exceed 20-1.

No skills or professional courses, whether in-person or online, exceeded the 20-1 ratio. Even the campaigns classes generally enrolled no more than 20 (two sections reached 22 students). Given the staffing pressures within the unit, this is commendable performance. The School's total instructional faculty-to-major ratio is 1:25, and the tenure-line faculty-to-major ratio is 1:47, identified as the highest in the college.

(f) 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. Units may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed six semester credits (or nine quarter hours).

Students may earn up to three credits (one credit per semester) for internship experience, but internships

are not required for graduation. Few students enroll to receive academic credit for an internship. This does not mean students are failing to participate in external professional development experiences: The School reports that the tight local labor market often means that students accept paid experiences, sometimes viewed as part-time work and sometimes as an internship.

The School offers course-based fieldwork experiences, including JOUR 4175: Brovald Sim Community Journalism Practicum (an in-depth written and visual coverage of a community with content posted on a dedicated website.) The class has focused on communities of disability, addiction and recovery, rural students, nontraditional students, Black communities, students with mental health conditions, LGBTQ+ communities and first-generation students. Two other fieldwork experiences are JOUR 4171: Covering the Arts and JOUR 4196 Field-Based Practica.

When students take courses for internship credit at appropriate professional organizations, the unit must show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals.

Three faculty serve as assigned faculty administrators for the for-credit internship course as service to the unit. The academic credit portion of the experience requires students to identify skills or competencies developed during the experience. The University of Minnesota awards academic credit, not for time spent in an internship but for the accompanying academic work and contact with faculty during the course. For this reason, the self-study notes that faculty believe students are best served by the internship course earned in the college with mentoring from Hubbard faculty.

Students may take up to nine semester credits (or their equivalent) at professional media outlets 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.

Students may earn up to three credits (one credit per semester) in media opportunities owned by the institution (such as a course dedicated to the National Student Advertising Competition) and practica that include significant fieldwork and professional experiences.

SUMMARY:

Faculty have examined the School's curriculum with a critical eye, and they are not afraid to adopt new objectives for student learning. Notable is the commitment to add further instruction in data, numeracy and artificial intelligence for both Journalism and Strategic Communication. A collegial atmosphere ensures sharing of course syllabi and notes among faculty to provide instructional continuity. Students have rich opportunities to gain professional skills and experiences, whether through classes, paid media work or fieldwork. Students report professional encouragement from their professors. While students complete only 37 hours in the major, they have opportunities to take additional courses and gain fieldwork or other professional experiences.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The Accrediting Committee and Council seek site-team reports on assessment that are appropriately detailed for a judgment on compliance that is informed, fair and consistent from one team to another.

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit has a written assessment plan that has been implemented, is up to date and addresses contemporary curricular issues, including instruction related to the rapidly changing digital media world.

The unit posts its assessment plan in a prominent, easy-to-find place on its website.

The School's assessment plan is publicly accessible at <https://hsjmc.umn.edu/about-us/additional-links/assessment-plan>, prominently linked under the "About Us" menu on all School pages. It also appears as the top result in a site search for "assessment plan" on umn.edu.

Originally adopted in 2013, the School's assessment process was revised in 2018 and again in 2020-2021 in response to site team feedback. The 2018 site team raised concerns about the breadth of items assessed and the absence of minimum performance targets. In response, a faculty and student success working group undertook a comprehensive revision.

Key updates in 2020-2021 included:

- Focusing assessment on 4000-level (senior) courses, enabling consistent tracking across cohorts nearing program completion.
- Distributing assessment results to all faculty, fostering broader and inclusive curricular discussions.
- Refining the curriculum matrix to align with updated Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), incorporating new and revised courses.
- Establishing an 80% benchmark for students meeting expectations on each assessed PLO.

Further updates in 2022 and 2023 involved revising course learning outcomes and integrating the 10 PLOs into syllabi. Faculty now indicate which PLOs are addressed in each course and at what level—awareness, understanding or application—ensuring alignment between Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and program goals. This transparency reinforces the connection between course content and program objectives for both students and faculty.

The assessment process is managed by the assistant director of curriculum and instruction, a role created since the last reaccreditation. The core team includes assessment leads for Journalism and Strategic Communication and the associate director of student services. They meet biannually with the assistant director of curriculum and instruction. Faculty involvement occurs throughout the year. Each fall, the assistant director presents the prior year's results and outlines the upcoming assessment cycle, which evaluates three to four senior-level courses annually on rotation. Faculty and administrators engage in meaningful discussions to improve courses, curricular pathways, and overall program effectiveness. Planned course modifications are reported and implemented throughout the year based on these insights. The cycle continues with data collection and analysis throughout the year, culminating in a new round of faculty review the following fall. Under the plan, advanced courses are assessed on a rotating basis, typically every two to three years.

The biggest shift over the last five years, according to one member of the assessment work group, is that not only are all faculty involved, they truly embrace the process as a way to improve what they do. Having all faculty, regardless of courses being assessed in a given year, work in groups to discuss the results each fall keeps assessment top of mind throughout the year. "We have a faculty that believes in

this process,” she said. This collaborative culture was cited by many interviewed, with the School’s process recognized as a model for other units. One administrator called the Hubbard process “the gold standard.”

(b) The unit defines the goals for learning that students must achieve, including the “Professional Values and Competencies” of the Council. (See Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.)

The School uses 10 Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) taken nearly verbatim from Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications core values and competencies. See: <https://hsjmc.umn.edu/about-us/additional-links/assessment-plan>. These PLOs are aligned with the university’s. They also align closely with the university’s seven Student Learning Outcomes (see: <https://slo.umn.edu/undergraduate-experience/university-student-learning-development-outcomes>). As noted above, each course includes stated CLOs that map to the overall desired program outcome goals.

The minimum benchmark is set to at least 80% of students “meeting expectations” on the PLOs in the senior-level courses, assessed through multiple measures in multiple ways (see below). If student competency on any of the PLOs fails to meet the minimum over multiple years or in multiple assessed classes, the assessment team works with faculty to make revisions in courses throughout the curriculum as described above.

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

The plan and a review of the data analyzed present a convincing case that the School uses a variety of direct and indirect measures.

Direct measures mentioned in the plan include:

- Professional outcome assessment
- Aggregate internship and practicum performance ratings
- Direct review of coursework from faculty
- Capstone senior assessment

Direct assessment involving professionals (professional direct assessment and internship and practicum ratings) is explained below. Direct assessment from faculty related to coursework is accomplished by instructors choosing one or more PLOs to assess on a class performance indicator, developing a rubric or measure with the help of the assessment leads, and gathering the data to share with the assessment team for presentation. In the required JOUR 4999 Capstone course, students in both majors take a standardized assessment of six of the 10 PLOs. These are designed to show a mastery of concepts taught in JOUR 1001, 3004, 3201 and 3776.

Indirect measures include:

- University of Minnesota’s Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey reports on student perceptions of academic experience
- The University of Minnesota Institutional Data and Research Office’s Post Graduation Survey reports on career outcomes
- Seniors’ self-reflection on skills and competencies for Journalism and Strategic Communication

The School relies on multiple indirect measures provided by the University of Minnesota, including the Student Experience in the Research University survey, which captures student perceptions with emphasis on key PLOs, and the Post Graduation Survey, which tracks career outcomes and educational

plans using diverse data sources. Additionally, students complete reflective essays in the JOUR 4999 Capstone course, qualitatively coded to align with all 10 PLOs, offering insights into their acquired skills and competencies.

(d) At least one direct and/or indirect measure should include journalism and mass communication professionals engaged in assessment data collection.

Professionals from journalism, advertising and public relations industries—many of whom are School alumni or have supervised Hubbard students as interns—play an active role in the assessment process through direct measures of student performance each year. In addition to professional supervisor evaluations for those students doing internships and practicums for credit, the School invites professionals to directly review work in senior-level classes.

Assessment leads invite professionals to evaluate student work in each course using rubrics that measure performance related to the School's PLOs. When professionals agree to participate, they receive detailed forms and rubrics with instructions to guide their evaluations. The process typically involves professionals reviewing one comprehensive assignment for all students in a senior-level course. The student information on the assignments is de-identified. Professionals provide a quantitative score for each student on each PLO (for example, 1 = does not meet expectations; 2 = meets expectations; 3 = exceeds expectations). Typically, multiple PLOs are assessed this way, so a professional evaluator may rate four or five PLOs for each assignment. Professionals also can provide qualitative comments, which are shared with faculty during “closing the loop” sessions (see below). These evaluations are combined with any other assessment for that class, and the data is presented to faculty for review. At least one faculty member said she asks her students to complete the same assessment as the professionals and compares how they see the same work. She uses both the student and professional evaluations to help her better connect the assignment to real-world social analytics work.

Professionals are involved in the journalism major as they rate practicum and internship student work on criteria aligned with the 10 PLOs. Additionally, the School's administration gathers feedback from advisory councils and boards and periodically shares assessment data with that group, an indirect measure. Informal industry feedback on the performance of new graduates is another way in which professionals participate indirectly in the assessment process at Hubbard.

(e) The unit collects and reports data from its assessment activities and applies the data to improve curriculum and instruction. There is substantial, concrete evidence of “closing the loop. Multiple examples of “closing the loop” are evident.

The process described in (a) above provides clear evidence of faculty reflection on using the results to improve curriculum. The sharing of the data by the assessment team throughout the year and the assistant director of curriculum at the fall faculty meeting is accompanied by a robust discussion designed to ensure they “close the loop.” Faculty generate ideas on possible improvements based on the patterns that emerge, and further consider actionable curriculum revisions. Curriculum mapping is reviewed in relation to the results to guide adjustments to the program. These data review and brainstorming sessions are designed to translate assessment insights into meaningful curricular improvements.

During the review period, the School has made a series of strategic changes based on assessment data, professional and alumni input, and recommendations from ACEJMC site teams. These changes include enhancing numeracy across the curriculum by embedding “data state of mind” skills into course objectives, implementing the Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC), and introducing a framework for

Excellence in Journalism and Strategic Communication. For example, when numerical literacy was highlighted as a concern, faculty in the writing and reporting classes at all levels got together to revise their syllabi to include more assignments and discussions integrating quantitative reasoning. Additionally, adjustments have been made in Strategic Communication classes to enhance numerical literacy. The instructor of JOUR 4272 Digital Advertising, for example, integrated this PLO more intentionally by using more tables, graphs, and data visuals in her lecture slides. Students now are asked to interpret these assets to help them learn to apply data insights. An example of a class-level assignment around PLO 2 (diversity) included JOUR 1001 Media in a Changing World instructors developing a new assignment to integrate concepts from the Excellence Framework. Students analyze the coverage of a single news event across multiple media and formats, comparing how the five components of the framework appear (or are missing) across outlets. Additional revisions based on assessment results including updating courses to integrate multimedia, visual communication, artificial intelligence, and ethics, ensuring students are prepared for the evolving media landscape.

SUMMARY:

The School has a well-established and continuously refined assessment process. Its publicly accessible assessment plan, revised in response to accreditation feedback, focuses on senior-level courses and sets a clear benchmark of 80% student proficiency across Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These outcomes align with both ACEJMC's professional competencies and the university's learning goals and are integrated into course syllabi. Assessment at Hubbard uses a mix of direct and indirect measures, including faculty evaluations, capstone projects, internship data, student surveys, and self-reflections. Professionals routinely evaluate student work, offering both quantitative scores and qualitative feedback. This input is used in faculty "closing the loop" discussions and planning to drive curricular improvements. Since the last review, the School has implemented significant changes based on assessment data, including enhanced data literacy, cultural competency, writing and multimedia.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

OPTION 2 for schools using the new Standard 4 language adopted in 2025:

PART II — Standard 4: Advancing a Culturally Proficient Workforce

The unit demonstrates it offers a program that fosters equal opportunity, respect for a range of points of view and provides participatory opportunity for all elements of society while educating culturally proficient communicators prepared for a global society. The unit ensures that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity, emphasizing shared values of professionalism, personal responsibility, and excellence. The unit focuses on empowering all individuals through equal access to opportunities and the promotion of skills, regardless of background or identity.

Indicators:

(a) The unit has a written plan, implemented and discussed annually, that promotes a standards-based and inclusive curriculum and fosters a culturally proficient faculty, staff, and student population. The program embraces differences and offers a supportive climate for learning, working, and collaborating, and it assesses progress toward the achievement of the plan. The plan includes the unit’s definition of equal opportunity and standards-based success. It identifies current populations and groups with limited representation in the field of journalism and media communication and focuses on identifying opportunities to broaden intellectual and ideological diversity, ensuring all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity.

The School’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Plan states that its efforts are meant to ensure “all members of our community have equitable access to the university and its resources.”

It continues: “We center underrepresented populations who face systemic barriers that impact their experiences on campus. Our goal is to remove barriers for all members of our community so that all can fully participate and benefit from the educational opportunities our programs provide.”

The associate director for faculty and administration noted that the School’s definition of equal opportunity is that everyone feels they belong.

The plan includes four priority areas:

- Recruiting, retaining and graduating a diverse student body
- Delivering curriculum that effectively incorporates cultural proficiencies in its learning outcomes
- Broad, engaged recruitment and retention of faculty and staff
- Climate – fostering inclusion and equity for all

The plan lays out goals and key performance indicators in each category. It is discussed monthly at meetings of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) standing faculty committee, which identifies opportunities for advancement and assesses progress. The committee chair told the site team that, having discovered some of the original KPIs are impossible to measure or outside the control of the School, the committee is working on modifying the KPIs. The School presented a current 10-point assessment of progress against the plan.

The plan is being continuously updated to ensure legal compliance with state and federal law.

(b) The unit’s curriculum develops skilled and culturally proficient communicators capable of collaborating through multicultural teams and understanding global perspectives. Curriculum instruction addresses a wide range of issues and viewpoints relevant to media communications in an interconnected world.

In spring 2023, the School used grant funds to bring in an industry leader to lead a half-day training for faculty on how to integrate learning across differences into their courses and to foster cultural proficiency in their course outcomes. One outcome of that workshop was the creation and implementation of an Excellence Framework to infuse all School courses with a common language for developing culturally proficient communicators.

One faculty leader said this approach is the first in her experience in which something systematic has been included in the curriculum to advance multicultural awareness. “It’s the true spirit of integration,” she said.

At the Framework’s center is an equation:

Excellence in journalism and strategic communications = context + complexity + voices + authenticity + proportionality

Each variable is defined in the framework. For example, “Proportionality is responsibly representing the story, issue or audience based on well-researched observations of the entire territory. Included in this concept is the importance of being mindful of whether you are including all relevant sources and stakeholders in your communication and fully capturing the breadth of the topic you are addressing.”

During the 2024-25 academic year, instructors piloted the framework in several courses: Media in a Changing World, Information for Mass Communication, Principles of Strategic Communication and News Reporting and Writing. Instructors had latitude to decide how to incorporate the concepts. In one example, students were asked to select three of the five framework criteria to analyze the way a given collection of news stories reflected them.

Faculty told site team members that students have generally been receptive and engaged in meaningful dialogue using the framework. One instructor who teaches at both the 1000 and 3000 levels said students seem more sensitive to multicultural issues by the time they reach higher level courses.

The success of the initial implementation of the framework has led the School’s faculty to expand its use across a wide range of skills and context courses.

(c) The unit demonstrates effective efforts to strengthen all faculty members’ awareness of the value of social and societal dynamics, plus fairness and accessibility in preparing students to embrace a variety of perspectives. The unit takes proactive steps to recruit and retain faculty and staff who bring professional expertise and varied perspectives, including from groups with limited representation in the fields of journalism and media communication, to enrich the educational experience.

The School’s associate director for faculty and administration co-authored the book “Cross-Cultural Journalism and Strategic Communication,” which contains material the faculty are using to infuse the curriculum with a consistent way to help students develop cultural proficiency. She is also the primary point of contact on the School’s diversity plan.

All faculty and staff receive two professional development days during the academic year to advance their skills in “community-building and improving climate” within the School, and the unit encourages each member to complete some sort of cultural-proficiency training each year. Faculty members the site team spoke with confirmed this is happening.

In addition to the Spring 2023 workshop on curriculum planning, which all faculty were invited to participate in, many staff and faculty have participated in Courageous Conversations book clubs and training that fosters inclusive and open dialogue and instruction. Several members of the faculty and

staff have participated in a multi-day training session called Inclusive YoU: Foundations in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This covered topics ranging from ableism and accessibility to cultural and identity practices with a goal to help participants adopt more inclusive practices. At least five current Hubbard School employees are trained as mental health advocates. Many include this title on their email signature to raise awareness. The Hubbard website has a page dedicated to mental health and well-being resources.

Instructors receive training in how to help students who are navigating difficult situations. Student services staffers review records of students with low success to understand driving factors and make needed referrals to resources.

The School has access to demographic data about faculty that is collected by the university for accreditation reporting, but it is prohibited from using the data in hiring and other personnel decisions. The data indicate the faculty population has become more racially diverse since the past accreditation cycle. The population of full-time faculty in the School who identify as White has decreased from 89.3% in 2017-18 to 76.3% in 2024-25. Of part-time faculty in 2017-18, 92.7% identified as White compared to 90.7% in 2024-25.

In the rare cases when the School has the opportunity to hire (see Standard 7 for more on this topic), it diversifies the candidate pool with active outreach to professional organizations to ensure inclusive representation in the fields of journalism and media communication.

Retention has been a consistent challenge in a market that has been able to offer talent opportunities for higher pay elsewhere. Still, since Fall 2019, the School has hired seven new tenure-line faculty members (retaining six), six new contract faculty members (retaining six) and 10 new professional and administrative staff members (retaining seven). Over the review period, the School has made numerous other hires and promotions, including promoting 10 tenure-track faculty members to associate professor and three tenured faculty members to full professor.

The college offers a postdoctoral faculty program that puts fellows on a path to tenure-track positions. The 2022 program sought “applicants whose research, teaching and service will contribute to diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity in higher education and at the university.” The School recruited an applicant with journalism expertise who served two years as a fellow and now is a full-time, tenure-track assistant professor.

In Fall 2018, the School launched a program now called Industry Inclusion Fellows that brings professionals with a range of perspectives and lived experiences to classrooms and projects—and provides a pipeline for instructional staff and faculty hires. The purpose of the program is to include and engage industry professionals who cannot make a semester-long teaching commitment, but to encourage them to consider teaching in their future. Fellows, all professionals working in the areas of journalism and strategic communication, partner with Hubbard faculty to offer guest lectures, lead workshops and labs and provide networking, one-on-one mentorship and support to Hubbard students.

Fellows have included an experienced creative director skilled in digital strategy, advertising and branding; an Emmy winning comedian, radio host and founder of SHElettaMakesMeLaugh, who mentors students in podcasting and digital content development; and the CEO and Founder of MRPP & Associates Communications and past president of the Minnesota PRSA Board.

Since the program’s inception, 33 fellows have brought diverse perspectives to topic areas such as data analysis, news photography, digital content, strategic planning and advertising. Many of these fellows go on to become adjunct instructors for the School, and one—who says he was persistently recruited by the School’s director—left an executive position at a global advertising agency to accept a full-time contract faculty teaching position.

One alumna said the program helped address her desire to see more people of color among the faculty. The School's 2024 Climate Survey indicated students think inclusion fellows have helped support their connection to Twin Cities' employers.

To boost success, retention and a sense of belonging, the School now assigns professional "buddies" to support and orient new hires.

Professionals told the site team programs like Hubbard's are doing important work by building capacity for communicating across differences during this time of political division. The college's interim director for diversity, equity, and inclusion said the School director has been proactive in raising this issue. He said that after the killing of political figure Charlie Kirk—who had been scheduled to speak at the University of Minnesota shortly after his assassination—the director asked her colleagues what more they could do to help people talk to each other effectively. The director is leading the way in terms of bringing the public to campus to engage on this kind of topic, he said, describing her as "very invested."

(d) In alignment with the institution's mission, the unit demonstrates efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate students from all backgrounds, reflecting the institution's commitment to preparing individuals for professional success in a global society.

While the School and college don't directly recruit students—that's handled by university admissions—the School's efforts to create more visibility among a diverse population of potential students has led to a student body that is more demographically diverse than that of the state. The white population comprises 82.3% of all people in the state and just 70.6% of the School's student body. Populations at the School have increased in domestic student diversity overall by approximately 10% since the 2017-18 accreditation cycle. According to the self-study, in the previous cycle, White students represented 80.7% of the School total. The self-study notes that race/ethnicity data is provided for accreditation compliance but is not used in Admissions decision making.

A few programs are helping to ensure all students have pathways to success.

Take Flight, a career-exploration externship sponsored by six local agencies (Carmichael Lynch Relate, Exponent, Hotwire, Padilla, Tunheim and Weber Shandwick), runs from September to April. It is designed for college students interested in marketing and communications careers in the Twin Cities area and seeks to foster a workforce representative of the varying interests, backgrounds, perspectives and lived experiences. Students receive a \$1,000 stipend for full participation. The program served 11 students in 2023-24, and one professional told the site team 30 students were participating at the time of the visit.

Numerous other partner programs offer opportunities for students from all backgrounds to get additional work experience. For example, in 2024, four students were selected to participate in the American Advertising Federation's Most Promising Students program. In 2023, six students were selected. The program's goal is to ensure the advertising industry is led by a wide variety of cultural influences and diverse perspectives. Students participate in an exclusive Most Promising Students Recruiters Expo and attend the Expo in New York City.

An alumna who runs a local agency shared a story about the School's director contacting him in pursuit of a short-term internship opportunity for a student who had been unable to secure internships earlier in her program. The director wanted to test whether the opportunity to work short-term in a local agency near graduation would be of special support to this first-generation student. He was able to bring her into his firm and eventually hire her. "That experience changed her life," he said, calling the director's

outreach a generous and thoughtful act. “You could sense the caring,” he said. The School says it is now looking into whether additional “micro-internships” may be beneficial for students.

(e) The unit demonstrates it has an inclusive climate of belonging, free of harassment and all forms of discrimination, consistent with applicable laws. The unit accommodates the needs of individuals with disabilities and values the unique contributions of each member of the community, including contributions from historically underrepresented groups, promoting fairness and respect for all.

Accreditation site visit teams will apply this standard in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the laws of the countries in which non-U.S. institutions are located.

In 2021, the School engaged the Community Pulse consulting firm to begin assessing the climate in the School every three years to provide insights they could act on. The first survey, conducted with 206 current students and 38 recent alumni, took place in the midst of the pandemic and in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis and social unrest in 2020. The second survey, conducted in spring 2024 with 174 undergraduate students—plus 14 people in focus groups—indicated student feelings of alienation had decreased among students in all categories. Students of color reported feeling more included and seen at the Hubbard School compared to three years previous, with a 37-point drop in students of color reporting a sense of alienation due to their race or ethnicity. The consulting firm noted that “a notable transformation is under way at the Hubbard School.”

Other findings indicated students:

- believed more strongly in the Hubbard School's ability to create an equitable environment
- recognized attempts to learn and improve regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
- saw efforts to improve curriculum

Nevertheless, survey findings showed room for improvement in developing a sense of belonging among students of color. Faculty met to discuss options and have begun to add activities and practices in the classroom to help encourage students from all backgrounds to feel like they belong in the School and the media professions. One faculty member talked about conducting a bi-weekly check-in with each of her students, particularly in larger classes. She asks questions about what can be done to make them feel safe and comfortable in class. She said students are disclosing more information in check-ins than they would otherwise.

In addition, the DEIA Committee has begun to bring upper-class students to casual gatherings with students newer to the program for coaching, reassurance and insights. The Student Success Committee has also begun offering snacks in student services, hosting welcome and end-of-year donut events and putting student profiles on electronic screens along the walls in the School’s building.

At the time of the site visit, the DEIA committee was again reviewing the latest climate survey results to determine priority actions to take in response.

In terms of providing mechanisms to report concerns, a special Hubbard feedback form provides an additional way (on top of university efforts) for people to report concerns. The form is managed by the associate director of student services and the associate director of the School. When a concern is shared, they convene to determine how best to address or report the issue along the appropriate chain of command.

SUMMARY:

From its investment in regular climate surveys to its commitment to professional development for faculty and to meaningful and comprehensive improvement in the curriculum, it is clear the Hubbard School is dedicated to creating an environment in which all people feel a sense of belonging. The School consistently brings creativity and tenacity to its efforts to ensure a range of perspective and experience exists among faculty, staff and students. Feedback from students and employers indicate the School's efforts are working.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 5: Faculty

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) Full-time faculty have primary responsibility for curricula, oversight of courses, research/creative activity and service.

Instructional personnel fall into multiple classifications at the university: Full-time tenure-eligible faculty and fixed-term contract faculty hold the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor and professor. The university also has a somewhat unusual classification of “instructional staff,” which includes full-time lecturers and senior lecturers whose primary role is instruction. Combining these groups, the School’s full-time instructors maintain primary responsibility for developing and delivering curriculum. In each year of the review period, the majority of core and required undergraduate courses were taught by full-time faculty and instructors, with 80.7% of classes taught by full-time instructors in the Fall 2025 semester. Undergraduate instruction is delivered largely by nine non-tenure-track contract faculty (all of whom have significant professional experience, and seven of whom hold terminal degrees), and nine lecturers or senior lecturers (whom the university classifies as instructional staff). Tenured and tenured-track faculty and highly qualified adjunct instructors supplement undergraduate instruction.

Since the last review, the School has added full-time contract faculty instructors to offset the flat proportion of tenure-eligible faculty and meet growing enrollment demands. While the School (with the support of the college) aims to increase the number of tenure-track faculty and increase undergraduates’ exposure to research, students voiced effusive praise for the full time contract faculty and lecturers/senior lecturers, who teach hands-on skills classes and who double as professional mentors.

Curriculum coordination and primary stewardship for course revision are fully centered with all full-time employees with instructional roles. The School’s largest committee—the Undergraduate Studies Committee—is composed of tenured, tenure-track and contract faculty, as well as lecturers/senior lecturers, other staff and student representatives. Subcommittees regularly create curricular change proposals and solicit input from the full faculty and relevant professionals before advancing changes to the primary committee and the full faculty for governance.

Full-time faculty enthusiastically advance research and creative activity—even non-tenure-track faculty who do not carry research expectations. They are also all actively involved in service. See below for details.

(b) The unit’s faculty (full- and part-time) are highly qualified and keep their expertise current through professional development opportunities and maintain relationships with professional and scholarly associations.

Taken together, the Hubbard faculty comprise academically well-qualified scholars with deep teaching and professional experience. As of Fall 2025, the 21 tenured- and tenure-track faculty all hold terminal degrees and average nearly 15 years of collegiate teaching experience and 5.5 years of professional experience. Among the 18 non-tenure-track instructors, 10 hold terminal degrees and nine hold master’s degrees; they average 10 years of collegiate teaching experience and 20 years of professional experience.

Hubbard faculty maintain active roles in both scholarly and professional associations, as well as deep relationships with the Twin Cities' professional media communities. Regular “teach the teacher” events embed faculty in professional environments for knowledge-sharing and upskilling; in the week prior to the site visit, both professional and research faculty spent a day at a local agency advancing their advertising savvy. On campus, Journalism and Strategic Communication faculty have formed the “Creative Collective” group to trade teaching and curricular ideas within visual media curriculum development—and advance their own skills and techniques.

The School also encourages faculty to keep their *teaching* skills fresh, offering regular programming and informal discussions to promote instructional excellence. At an annual Teaching Palooza event, faculty and staff present practice-based knowledge and training sessions to the School community. The 2024 agenda included sessions on navigating tough classroom conversations, feedback and rubric use for student growth, and strategies for interactive, accessible teaching. The assistant director of curriculum and instruction also offers individualized instructional coaching, providing goal-setting sessions, teaching observations and feedback to optimize instructional quality. The college, too, provides abundant instructional development opportunities. Offerings include a “Teaching Enrichment” webinar series, a “Teaching in Globally Diverse Classes” program and an annual “Teaching with Writing Faculty” seminar, plus a new book club that explores the implications of generative AI in teaching and learning.

(c) The unit requires, supports and rewards faculty research, creative activity and/or professional activity. Expectations for promotion and tenure are clear.

While the university expects faculty to “accomplish superior teaching, scholarship or creative activity and service,” the School has set the bar higher, requiring each faculty member to demonstrate excellent teaching, mentorship and advising, engage in service that contributes to the School’s and field’s well-being, and attain and maintain national or international recognition for research or creative activity.

The faculty’s impressive productivity indicates strong support for research and creative activity, and researchers voiced collective pride for the unit’s growing reputation for excellence in media scholarship. Since the unit’s last reaccreditation, the School’s research, creative and professional activity has received more than \$3,235,000 in internal support, with more than \$832,000 committed by the college and more than \$2,402,000 funded by the School. During the review period, 16 of the 30 research-active faculty earned a total of 39 internal grants. Additionally, the School invested more than \$1,311,000 in special unit-wide research initiatives (such as the Mithun Thought Leadership Forum). And to support new faculty, the School provides an attractive startup package that typically includes dedicated research funding, summer salary and two course releases across four years.

All faculty with 100% assignments in Hubbard receives \$4,000 each year for travel, research, creative and professional development activities. During the review period, faculty have used funds to attend conferences, participate in professional and academic groups and purchase equipment. The unit also presents annual awards for teaching and service, though faculty feed a culture of kudos by regularly recognizing each other through digital channels.

The unit follows university, college and School guidelines for faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure, clearly outlined in School documents and university web pages. Interviews with new faculty members indicate that those expectations are clear, and a track record of success—10 successful tenure cases and more than a dozen rank promotions in the review period—suggest transparent criteria and evidence of a functioning reward system.

(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.

The unit counts “Expand the School’s work as a hub for trailblazing research” and “Accelerate the dissemination of industry insights and engagement” among its strategic goals, but it is already delivering on both, as evidenced by the school’s dizzying research output and creative activity. During the review period, 30 different faculty members were in research-active roles. They collectively published 368 refereed journal articles, 374 refereed conference papers, 18 authored or edited books, and 92 book chapters, complemented by 58 non-refereed articles and 30 non-juried creative works, among other outputs. Their scholarship captured 67 awards and honors.

Hubbard faculty go beyond communicating their own research, serving as editorial leaders to advance research in their fields. Faculty members hold top editor positions at scholarly journals that include the Journal of Advertising, Journalism Studies, New Media & Society, Public Relations Review and Communication Law and Policy.

The School aims to strategically grow and amplify its reputation as a research hub for journalism, media law and ethics, strategic communication and health communication. Faculty enthusiastically advance scholarship within these areas through diverse approaches that illustrate these disciplines’ breadth and richness. For example, scholars have conducted network studies among people with inflammatory bowel disease, analyzed health messages on topics from mammography screening to vaping to harm reduction, and evaluated health misinformation, journalism and policy, propelling a just-launched Health Communication Institute. Faculty participate in large-scale, NSF- and NIH-funded interdisciplinary research projects that both advance new knowledge *and* solve pressing public challenges.

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

Cross-campus colleagues call the School’s faculty innovative, interdisciplinary, engaged and entrepreneurial. They regard the director as an eager collaborator. Faculty outside the unit praise Hubbard scholars for helping to advance a university-wide AI initiative, partnering on cross-disciplinary research projects, delivering high-quality instruction and mentoring students and scholars across the institution. university- and college-level investment signals institutional esteem for the School: Between FY20 and FY24, the unit received more than \$200,000 in college and university awards, including highly competitive university-wide scholarly funding.

Professionals, too, note the faculty’s positive standing on campus and beyond, recognizing their proactive community outreach and resilience among disruption. Local media leaders praise the unit’s ability to see and seize opportunity, rather than freeze in the face of challenge. One area media executive said of the School’s ability to quickly respond to the industry’s sea change, “Hubbard has never *not* been paying attention.”

SUMMARY:

The unit’s faculty demonstrate strong academic and professional qualifications; robust engagement in teaching, research and service; and a collegial, supportive culture, earning consistent praise from students, community partners and university colleagues. The School maintains clear and effective

policies for recruiting, hiring, evaluating and promoting faculty, resulting in an outstanding track record of retention and advancement across the professorial ranks. Its highly productive research faculty have achieved national and international distinction, contributing to the School's growing global reputation for excellence in journalism and strategic communication scholarship; its professional faculty maintain strong ties across the Twin Cities' dynamic media market, leveraging these relationships to enrich learning and career opportunities for students. The School's commitment to faculty support and professional development is evident through mentoring, funding and training programs at the School, college and university levels, ensuring faculty success at every career stage. Together, these strengths reflect a faculty whose dedication, productivity and professionalism advance the School's mission and reinforce its reputation for excellence across campus and beyond.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

(The Scholarship Table is below)

Report of evaluation of undergraduate programs for 2025-2026 site visits

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities 2019 - 2025	Total from Unit*	INDIVIDUALS				Total (30)
		Full Professors (8)	Associate Professors (10)	Assistant Professors (2)	Other Faculty** (10)	
Awards and Honors	67	8	36	9	12	22
Grants Received Internal	39	8	28	2	1	16
Grants Received External	46	15	24	0	5	13
Scholarly Books, Sole- or Co-authored	6	2	3	0	1	6
Textbooks, Sole- or Co-authored	4	0	1	1	2	4
Books Edited	8	4	4	0	0	7
Book Chapters	92	31	41	4	14	25
Monographs	2	0	0	0	2	2
Articles in Refereed Journals	368	132	168	26	40	25
Refereed Conference Papers	374	115	183	35	39	24
Invited Academic Papers	47	6	33	0	6	12
Encyclopedia Entries	17	5	8	0	3	9
Book Reviews	8	2	5	0	1	5
Articles in Non-refereed Publications	58	9	20	0	28	13
Juried Creative Works	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-juried Creative Works	30	11	0	0	19	4
Other (please specify)	34	1	31	0	2	16

**Co-authored work should be counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However, if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors.*

***Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. All faculty in this category, with one exception, hold teaching appointments without scholarship, research or creative requirements, but were given the opportunity to report. This category also includes the activities of two former tenured full-time faculty members who left the unit during the accreditation period.*

PART II — Standard 6: Student Services

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The unit's multi-layered student support system—marked by proactive advising checks, ongoing monitoring of student progress and direct academic and career assistance—promotes academic success and timely degree completion. Following the School's student services expansion during the review period, students now benefit from robust academic and career support at both the college and School levels: While the college provides broad guidance on major selection, job connectivity and professional development, the School has strengthened academic advising, introduced specific media career support, launched mentoring and media career events and increased industry partnerships. The School's four-year graduation rate (80%), six-year graduation rate (95%) and employment/continuing education rate (95%) are among the university's highest.

Students report that a devoted faculty and student services team fosters feelings of connectedness and promotes a cohesive Hubbard identity through initiatives large (new communal spaces, thorough advising) and small (donuts and snacks, a prized water bottle just for majors). That cohesion and care translates into attentive guidance that promotes learning and helps students stay on track toward graduation. One student affirmed, "The professors are super helpful and seem to genuinely care about our classes *and* our future careers." A successful recent graduate (who had switched majors several times before landing on strategic communication) said, "I didn't feel a sense of community until I switched to the Hubbard School."

(b) Professional advisers, and faculty where appropriate, provide students with academic and career advice.

A three-tiered advising structure includes college advisers, School staff and faculty mentors, ensuring comprehensive degree guidance and industry-specific career support. The college's advising office helps students select a major and connect it to career paths, then monitors student progress and proactively contacts those facing academic difficulty or who have fallen off track. When a student selects a Hubbard major, they complete a required online course designed to promote belonging, familiarize students with required coursework and career possibilities and introduce faculty mentors with media expertise.

At the School level, the associate director for student services leads major-specific advising and career guidance. Her staff includes an undergraduate adviser who works closely with pre-majors during the application process and regularly reviews academic progress reports to catch anomalies. Working as partners, the college and school advisers proactively support student progress, meeting with most students at least once a year. Additionally, the associate director for student services hosts daily drop-in office hours to support majors seeking help with course selection, registration, study abroad options and graduation planning.

Career counseling also initially begins at the college level, with the College of Liberal Arts Career Services office providing traditional career support, including two-credit courses on career exploration and planning, job and internship fairs, on-campus recruiter visits and access to a Handshake database of employment opportunities. In response to previous site team and student concerns about industry-

specific career guidance, the unit hired an assistant director for external relations and career coach in 2022 to better connect students to journalism and strategic communication industries. The School is now the college's only unit with a dedicated career specialist. The career coach works closely with students on resume reviews, internship and job applications and mock interviews. He also supports School efforts by visiting classes, facilitating media career events and coordinating professional guest speakers.

Staff refer students to faculty mentors for specialized professional support. Students say the faculty are well-connected, accessible and invested in student careers. Faculty often mentor students they have never had in class and work to leverage their professional networks to connect students with opportunities, students reported. While faculty must host at least one office hour per week per class, students report a perpetually available faculty committed to assisting students with networking and portfolio building. A faculty Student Success Committee collaborates with student services staff to advance student outcomes, sparking recent optimizations to the new-major online course, advising events and the Murphy Weekly newsletter.

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

Multiple communication channels systematically inform students about requirements, policies and opportunities. The college informs students about major requirements and admissions standards through online information sessions. Both pre-majors and majors explore the major handbooks and degree journeys. Those admitted to the School's majors complete a required online course that deepens their understanding of requirements and policies, promotes belonging *and* shows students how to help themselves: Students learn how to find information about major requirements and policies, connect with faculty and staff guidance and design an initial plan of study that guides future course registration. A digital degree audit system simplifies requirements and finding classes to fulfill them.

Students rave about the Murphy Weekly newsletter, praising it as an indispensable source of timely updates on scholarships, clubs, professional opportunities and student accomplishments. A hefty events calendar and student organization information lives on easy-to-find web pages.

A 2024 survey of current students affirmed the unit's effective communication, with 100% of respondents reporting that their program requirements were well defined, the department's rules and policies clearly communicated, and the major description in the catalog accurate.

(d) The unit and institution provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities relevant to the curriculum and that help develop the students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.

The unit fosters professional development and intellectual engagement through clubs, conferences, ambassador leadership and hands-on media experiences that directly relate to the curriculum and promote communication careers. Students and alumni alike were quick to call their extracurricular experiences the highlights of their Hubbard careers. Four student organizations (Ad Club, PRSSA, SPJ and Maroon and Gold Sports Network) supported by the School promote networking and professional development. A semesterly Engagement Fair and newsletter updates encourage participation. The School provides each organization a \$300 annual minimum to fund activities and offers each student up to \$1,000 to attend regional and national convenings such as the National Association of Black Journalists, Public Relations Society of America and Investigative Reporters and Editors conferences.

Independent, student-run campus media opportunities include The Minnesota Daily (a digital news outlet), The Wake (a biweekly online and print magazine), KUOM (a public radio station), StudioU (a video production studio) and Backpack (an integrated communications agency). During the review period, the School also introduced noncredit three-week “micro-internships” and summer experiences that expose students to professional environments and bolster their portfolios.

(e) The unit uses retention and graduation data to improve student services, such as advising, and to reduce barriers to student success.

The unit monitors and analyzes retention and graduation data and responds through proactive measures in instruction and advising, demonstrating continuous improvement informed by data. The university makes student success data regularly available, and the director shares it among faculty. The associate director for student services actively manages course enrollment data and drop/failure rates, flagging issues for leadership and faculty when necessary. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility committee regularly examines course- and program-level performance of students to reduce barriers to student success.

SUMMARY:

The School provides multi-layered academic and career support for pre-majors and majors, distinguished by proactive staff and engaged faculty who drive degree completion and professional readiness. Students and alumni praise the School’s student organizations and independent media outlets, which—together with culture-building events, environments and engagement initiatives—give students a sense of belonging within the Hubbard community, fueling strong retention and graduation rates.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

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

The School provided a detailed budget and clear evidence that this budget was linked to strategic plans for the unit, College of Liberal Arts and university.

The School is supported by a recurring allocation from the college, one-time college funding each year, and both recurring and annually determined endowment funds that fund programs, salaries, scholarships, research and facilities projects. The School's budget from these sources grew from \$10.93 million in FY23 to \$12.11 million in FY 24 to \$13.01 million in FY25. Steady increases over those three fiscal years were seen in administrative salaries, full-time teaching salaries, part-time teaching salaries, graduate assistant budgets, clerical salaries, building improvements and research. The few categories with decreases were in cyclical areas related to events/engagement (expenses for the 100-year anniversary hit in FY23, for example) and equipment (large expenses related to classroom renovations implemented in FY23).

Turnover at all leadership levels above the School (president, provost and dean) have meant modifications to the budget models, as well as to the planning processes by which the budgets are set at the university and college. The university generally operates on a responsibility-centered management (RCM) model with decentralization, but administrative transitions prompted changes in that model—namely, more central review of faculty hires and some increased funding centralization. The college, in contrast, operates on largely an incremental budget model, which School administrators say can be less responsive to needs of a growing unit like Hubbard (see below).

The School's annual budget process involves developing a comprehensive plan of goals and priorities within the college's framework, informed by ongoing discussions with faculty and staff. This plan typically includes staffing requests, curricular reviews, detailed instructional cost projections and one-time funding needs.

(b) Resources provided by the institution are adequate to achieve the unit's mission and are fair in relation to those provided to other units.

The School is generally well-funded, with most full-time faculty salaries covered by the "printed" or recurring budget provided by the college, which also supports equipment and supplies. Funds for equipment and supplies, however, have remained flat for more than two decades, so purchases are increasingly supplemented by student fees and gift funds, from which the School has ample support thanks to a longstanding philanthropic tradition. Faculty and students say they have the resources to support their instructional, research, service and professional development needs. "I have never felt constrained," one faculty member said.

Faculty and staff praise the School's director for ensuring that they are shielded from resource issues that have affected peers at other institutions. "She's a good steward of the resources," said one. Another noted: "She works hard to ensure that we are all supported." All faculty receive up to \$4,000 each year in travel funds for conferences, workshops and equipment, which they acknowledge is very generous in comparison to their peers.

Other units in the college see the School as well-funded and well-run, and the unit's funding is the envy of others—especially an endowment that has grown from philanthropic efforts. The conclusion of a capital campaign in 2020 and recent gifts have left the School with \$67 million in endowed support, placing it in the top 10 of its peers nationally. The college has approved some staffing increases in the recurring state budget and has provided one-time grants for urgent needs during the review period. Additional funding to increase the budget to meet School needs has been supplemented by endowments and gifts. Twice in the review period the School was asked to transfer a greater portion of select faculty salaries to its endowments to cover college budget shortfalls.

The biggest concern expressed in the self-study and to the site team members during the visit was the stability of funding sources for faculty and instructional needs to serve a growing number of students, especially in the Strategic Communication major. The number of tenure-line faculty numbers, which the School planned to grow, has held steady. Where the School has seen growth is in full-time contract faculty, who have rank and fixed terms, and “instructional staff,” who are full-time lecturers and senior lecturers who teach three courses per semester. The funding for some of the lecturers and senior lecturers is provided annually, which sparks fears that these positions could be at risk if university budget cuts occur and are passed down to the School level. This bucket of funding, called Teaching Assistant/Unallocated Instructional budget, is allocated annually by the college. In FY24, the School director was able to move some of the faculty on this budget onto the recurring budget, giving more security to these much-needed faculty lines for the professional undergraduate degree programs. While the cuts have not occurred yet, administrators have been asked to model for potential cuts, leading to fear that these positions may be at risk in the future.

The School has asked to be able to hire additional faculty in the fixed-term contract positions, rather than the “instructional staff” category (lecturers/senior lecturers). These requests have recently been deferred, so additional new lines have come in as lecturers or senior lecturers. Further, the School has requested (but has not yet been approved) to add additional tenure-eligible positions to help meet its research and graduate education needs while providing access to doctorally prepared research faculty to undergraduates. Additional tenure-track lines, School administrators argue, would increase student access to working with research faculty who can guide independent research projects and honors theses, and advise them on graduate education. While the contract faculty and the “instructional staff” (lecturers or senior lecturers) deliver the bulk of the skills courses and many conceptual courses for the programs under review, having faculty who are steeped in theory and scholarly research would make the undergraduate degree programs under review more well-rounded and lead to more curricular innovation, School administrators and faculty argue. School leaders also fear that, because lecturers and senior lecturers are classified as “instructional staff,” a strict interpenetration by upper administration of that employment category might limit the significant involvement these full-time instructors have in vital curricular and service processes.

The dean called Hubbard “one of the strongest units in the college,” noting that it was on solid financial footing thanks to student fee increases tied to enrollment growth, successful fundraising, solid management and entrepreneurial leadership. “They punch above their weight. They are a model for how to be a successful unit in the 21st Century.” He did note that the School was currently “a little lean” in faculty but not underserved in that area. The dean told the site team that the college had been asked to return 11 lines in the current fiscal year (outside of the scope of this review but added for context) to central administration due to budget constraints and a university strategic approach to limit growth. In FY 2026, the college only has authorization for five faculty searches in a college with 31 units. In past years, the college might have been conducting more than 40 faculty searches. The dean acknowledges Hubbard's faculty needs, especially in the growing Strategic Communication program; he said he

remains committed to authorizing one faculty search next year if there is not further university budget rescission. “They merit support,” he said. “We just need to figure out how to get there.”

While some clouds hang over the School’s future resource picture—common in many programs nationally at this time—faculty and administrators had a more positive outlook on the financial stability during the site visit than the self-study suggested and are encouraged by the new dean’s leadership and ability to support the School. Additionally, those interviewed said the concerns expressed in the self-study had no impact on students’ ability to get into classes, graduate on time and be supported by the program. Because of the School director’s entrepreneurial approach and the variety of revenue sources available to Hubbard, the resources have remained adequate to meet the programs’ needs during the review period. Additionally, the School is developing new degree programs and has proposed revenue-sharing incentives at the graduate level that promise to further solidify the School’s resources. One faculty member summed up the feeling of support many expressed about the approach of the director: “She is open to hearing opportunities to create solutions.”

(c) The unit’s facilities and information resources enable and promote effective scholarship, teaching and learning.

The School has significantly upgraded its facilities since the last site visit. Guided by feedback from external bodies and internal work groups, the School has strategically aligned facilities investments with long-term planning goals. Enhancements have been funded primarily through the School’s discretionary resources with some assistance from the college. Renovations in Murphy Hall over the past five years included modernized classrooms, studios and collaborative workspaces; improved security and accessibility; and advanced digital and Zoom-room technologies. During the site visit, the team toured the ongoing renovation of the fourth floor for the Minnesota Journalism Center and Silha Center, which should be completed by the end of 2025. The School has plans for further renovations, including a second audio booth, supported by endowed funds and collaboration with the university’s facilities team. Murphy Hall now has more than 27,000 assignable square feet on five floors, all of which have seen significant renovation.

Another notable renovation praised by students and faculty is the ground-floor Digital Media Hub, which features graphics, news writing and broadcast labs. Teaching areas that were previously in a common open area were broken into three independent 20-seat classrooms. Two of the classrooms are separated by a sound-treated wall and can be opened to create a 40-seat space for special purposes. Each classroom has multiple displays for easy viewing from all seats. Smartphones, tablets or laptops can be directed to monitors via wireless connections, allowing students to share their screens with the entire class. Each year, the computers in one of the workstation areas in the Hub are upgraded.

Students and faculty agree that the improvements have transformed the School in ways they could not have imagined. Throughout the site visit, the team observed students collaborating and working individually in formal and informal spaces throughout Murphy Hall. When the site team members probed students on what made the Hubbard experience strong, students cited the building and the identity that comes along with it as key factors. They highlighted Murphy Hall’s collaboration spaces and the redesigned Hub as places where they feel most at home and grounded in the Hubbard community.

Faculty, likewise, praised the instructional, research and working spaces they inhabit. Although space is at a premium, as it is on any campus, they praise their offices, classrooms, labs and conference facilities. Many faculty said their favorite part of working at the School is being around colleagues in a welcoming and inviting space. Others cited the interactive design and improved technology in renovated

classrooms. The self-study noted, and the site team observed, excellent connectivity in all areas of the building, making Murphy Hall a destination for students working throughout the day.

(d) The institution and the unit provide faculty and students with equipment, or access to equipment, and technical assistance needed to support student learning, curriculum and the research, creative and professional activities of the faculty.

The School has invested heavily in equipment over the past five years, providing both students and faculty with ample technology to meet their needs for instruction, research/creative and outreach activities. In the past three years, investment in equipment and software for student, staff and faculty needs has ranged from about \$225,000 to \$400,000 annually, with a cumulative investment of nearly \$1 million, including equipment maintenance. The investment has allowed for new media production equipment to support student learning, particularly in skills courses. One example is ample investment in the production spaces, designed to give students hands-on experiences in video and multimedia production. The renovated ground-floor studio and control room are equipped with professional-grade video and audio systems, remote reporting capabilities and upgraded lighting. The studio supports 4K production and network-based signal routing, offering students a modern, fully integrated environment for learning and practicing media production skills.

The equipment checkout room is well stocked with technology for instructional needs. The inventory includes a wide range of video, audio and photography tools, along with advanced production and multimedia gear and additional gear for emerging media applications. Students can reserve cameras, microphones, lighting equipment, accessories and other equipment for both studio and field use through an online system and pick it up in the new digital resource center. Some classes, such as photojournalism, that require equipment throughout the semester allow for students to check out kits for an extended period.

The School has a strong technology team with 3.5 employees to manage equipment, labs, studios, faculty research and instructional support, and administrative needs. The group is responsive to student, faculty and staff needs and is backed by central university support. Faculty and staff computers, as well as classroom technology, are replaced every three to five years.

The equipment and studio managers work with faculty to assess needs for their classes, proposing upgrades and replacements as needed. The School's technology work group, which includes faculty and staff, identifies needs and seeks to match them with existing recurring resources such as named endowments and student fees. The work group meets with the director quarterly to go over plans to expand the unit's technology and ensure all studios are up to date. It also identifies longer-term needs and multiyear solutions for computer and audio-visual equipment purchasing needs.

Like any program that is heavily reliant on evolving technology, faculty and students said they would like to have more equipment, but they acknowledge that what they have is more than sufficient to meet their current needs.

SUMMARY:

The School has demonstrated financial growth and strategic alignment in its budgeting, with diverse funding sources (including a strong and growing endowment) to rely on in times of state budget retrenchment. Despite leadership changes at the university and college levels and shifts in budget models, the School maintains a collaborative and goal-oriented budgeting process. While the School is

generally well funded and praised for its resource stewardship, concerns remain about the stability of funding for non-tenure-eligible instructional staff and the limited growth in tenure-track positions, which could impact long-term academic depth and innovation. Facilities and equipment have seen major upgrades, particularly in Murphy Hall, which now features modern classrooms, studios and collaborative spaces that foster a strong sense of community. Investments in technology and media production equipment—nearly \$1 million over three years—support hands-on learning and faculty research. A dedicated IT team and a technology work group ensure that resources remain current and responsive to instructional needs. The School’s entrepreneurial leadership and diversified funding have enabled it to maintain compliance and continue advancing its mission effectively.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

PART II — Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

Unit performance with regard to indicators:

(a) The unit consults and communicates regularly with its alumni, and actively engages with them, other professionals and professional associations to keep curriculum and teaching current and to promote the exchange of ideas.

The School engages with alumni and other members of the public through email, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and X. Nearly 15,000 alumni and friends of the School receive its biannual magazine, the Murphy Reporter, which features information about alumni accomplishments, School news and events, curriculum updates and faculty research. As one example, an alumna who graduated in 2021, said she still receives frequent invitations to attend events and recently participated in a career roundtable with students. She receives and reads newsletters and frequently hires interns from the program at the news organization where she works.

Since the last site visit, the School has established several advisory boards and strengthened professionals' involvement in programming and curriculum.

- The Hubbard School Director's Advisory Council supports fundraising, strategic planning and student activities. The Council includes alumni, friends and donors who are connected to top employers of Hubbard School graduates.
- Alumni and area professionals populate an advisory board that provides mentoring and guidance on strategic activities to students who run the Backpack creative agency, anchored at the School. One former board member noted the high caliber of the group's members, which have included senior executives at UnitedHealth Group and U.S. Bank, calling it a highly engaged group. "People want to be part of it," he said.
- Another advisory board is connected to the School's Professional Master's in Strategic Communication. It includes CEOs from area agencies, the chief communications officer at Land O'Lakes and other local leaders.

Most faculty members maintain strong connections to industry by serving as board directors and members of professional, scholarly and community organizations. Those connections have led to hundreds of professional leaders, many of them alumni, visiting Murphy Hall each year as guest lecturers and in other capacities.

Area professionals, several of whom are alumni, told the site team they have been consulted on curriculum and that the School's faculty have worked hard to build relationships with employers and experts. "The School has done a nice job of taking advice from industry," one said.

The Hubbard School supports student chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists, Advertising Club, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the American Advertising Federation's National Student Advertising Competition.

The School also engages with local professionals through the Minnesota Newspaper Association, Minnesota Broadcaster's Association, Society for Professional Journalists, the Minnesota Public Relations Society of America, Page Society and the Minnesota Ad Federation.

(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.

Three of the School's four overarching strategic goals emphasize the unit's ambition to be a leader in journalism and mass communication education, be a hub for trailblazing research, and accelerate the dissemination of industry insights and engagement. The School embodies those objectives in many ways.

The endowment-funded Minnesota Journalism Center occupies the School's Murphy Hall and makes the Hubbard School a center "for conversation, engagement, innovation and outreach in the state to address local news challenges, training and interaction with our students," according to the self-study. The center's three areas of focus are research, student initiatives and providing support to local journalists and newsrooms across the state. Recent conferences and symposia brought together scholars, practitioners and students to focus on disinformation, public interest communication and polling.

An endowment fuels The Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law, which the self-study notes "exists for the study and promotion of the ethical responsibilities and legal rights of mass media in a democratic society." Under the supervision of the center's director, research assistants produce the Silha Bulletin. The Bulletin—distributed three times a year—provides news and analysis of recent media law and media ethics issues and cases to journalists, journalism faculty and media law attorneys.

The head of the School's Master's in Strategic Communication Strategic Communication program noted that consultations with alumni and professional leaders helped drive the development of a new Strategic Communication Hub, which he will direct. The Hub was launching the week of the site team's visit on campus and will focus on three key pillars of activity to elevate the experience of advertising and public relations undergraduate students:

- Industry engagement and outreach
- Enhancing educational opportunities through student groups
- Involvement of undergraduate students in faculty research

The Hub will further accelerate connections between students and industry professionals while spotlighting strategic communications issues. "We're eager to learn from industry, and they're eager to learn from us," he said.

The School provides \$4,000 each year to all faculty for professional development, and faculty members told the site team they felt fully supported to pursue learning opportunities, travel to conferences and share their work. One faculty member mentioned she was heading the following week to the Public Relations Society of America's ICON conference in Washington, D.C. As another example, during fall semester two faculty members joined a College of Liberal Arts GenAI Fellows Cohort, a year-long program that enabled them to develop projects that explored how artificial intelligence could be applied or enhance teaching in their disciplines. The site team met with the director of the university's School of Statistics, who called the School "interdisciplinary, collaborative and entrepreneurial." The School is consistently looking for the cutting edge, he said.

(c) The unit contributes to its communities through unit-based service projects and events, service learning of its students and civic engagement of its faculty.

The School's director said that within the college, only the School of Music hosts more events than the

Hubbard School. The School's Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law and the Minnesota Journalism Center both offer an abundance of opportunities for the community and profession to engage in ideas around journalism and communication.

Event calendars from the review period reveal scores of sessions available to both students and the public. Topics included "How COVID has changed health communication: A new path forward;" "The First Amendment and Diversity: A Marketplace Failure;" lectures on book banning; presentation of research on trust in news; a public panel on balanced reporting in divisive times; and a workshop on the impact of local news. The School co-hosts an annual, multi-day photojournalism workshop called Northern Exposure with the Minnesota Journalism Center, joining students with professionals to discuss industry trends and network. The 2025 workshop drew 150 people. Career panels each semester bring in industry professionals—often Hubbard alumni—to advise students on career preparation and relevant topics.

Backpack, a student-led strategic communications agency, describes itself as "the next generation of storytellers, creatives, and strategists innovating the future of brand communication." It recently handled creative work for local organizations ServeMinnesota and Woodcrest Design & Roofing, as well as several programs on campus.

An extensive list of faculty professional and public service includes public presentations on journalism and civil rights; membership on the Twin City Communications Council; work with the Minnesota Department of Public Health on use of JUUL settlement funds to support research and anti-vaping campaigns that target youth; service as judges for journalism and strategic communications competitions; and fundraising for the American Cancer Society.

(d) The unit supports scholastic journalism.

The School has a decades-long connection to the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA), which oversees the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) and the Minnesota High School Press Association (MHSPA). The School's director and a faculty member currently serve on the NSPA board, and the School has hosted ACP summer workshops for students and advisors on campus since 2008.

The School supports the MHSPA's annual state conference for high school students with sponsorship, exhibits and workshops led by faculty and graduate students.

In addition, the School works with BrandLab, a local organization promoting diversity in the marketing and advertising industries. In 2023 and 2024, the School provided classroom spaces, digital lab spaces and faculty presenters for BrandLab's eight-week summer internship program for high school students. The School also supports the ThreeSixty Journalism high school workshop training hosted by The University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, Minn.) to advance urban scholastic journalism.

SUMMARY:

The Hubbard School makes the most of its urban campus in the heart of the nation's 15th largest media and advertising market and generates—and broadly shares—relevant insights with the nation and world. Conversations with faculty, peers, students, alumni and industry professionals consistently underscored the breadth and strength of the School's service, outreach and relationships.

Overall evaluation, compliance/non-compliance:

COMPLIANCE

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

1) Summarize the strengths and areas for improvement.

Strengths

- Strong finances and facilities that allow the School to advance its goals, even in uncertain times
- High—and growing—student enrollment demand for the Strategic Communication major
- A strong assessment process that involves all faculty invested in continuous course and program improvement
- A faculty praised for its student-centered care, and research productivity that has markedly strengthened the School's research reputation
- A highly respected director applauded for her support, advocacy and tenacity
- A creative, entrepreneurial culture that generates fresh ideas, solves problems and keeps student work current and relevant
- Collegial and collaborative faculty and leadership eager to work with partners on and off campus

Areas for improvement

- Alignment of faculty resource planning and allocation with college and institutional goals and priorities
- Ongoing need and desire to bring a wider range of perspectives to faculty and staff
- Strategic Communication curriculum provides an uneven offering favoring Advertising over Public Relations
- Student desire for more for-credit professional opportunities and course choices, in both Journalism and Strategic Communication, to enable experience and content for portfolios
- A 1-credit capstone course not perceived as a capstone experience by the enrolled students
- Unevenness in the enforcement of the fourth-semester language equivalent

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

None.

3) In the case of a recommendation for accreditation or reaccreditation, with standard(s) not in compliance, list the deficiencies that need to be addressed.

None.

4) In the case of a recommendation for provisional accreditation, list the deficient standard(s) that should be addressed before the provisional status can be removed.

None.

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 noncompliances and significant deficiencies noted in the previous report and subsequent actions.

There were no noncompliances in the previous reaccreditation. The previous report reflected concerns about the faculty profile; the profile has improved to reflect the metropolitan area in which the School operates.

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

The self-study was comprehensive, honest and organized, with lots of links to supplemental details. It could have been more clear and concise, however. The site team felt that the self-study included non-essential information, that it was overly repetitive and that the volume of information made it difficult to find what was needed. For example, supplemental information linked from the document was often distributed among several cloud locations, and sometimes links weren't active at all. The team probably spent more time than was necessary tracking down details and verifying information. The "workroom documents" were all digital, which is laudable but contributed to the difficulty of quickly paging through or referencing data.