

PART II: Supplementary Information

1. Complete and attach here in the main body of the self-study report the following tables:

[Table 1, "Students"](#)

[Table 2, "Full-time Faculty"](#)

[Table 3, "Part-time Faculty"](#)

2. Describe the history of the unit in no more than 500 words.

FIU opened its doors as South Florida's public university in 1972. The first communication and journalism courses were offered in 1978 with the formal School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) beginning operations in 1988 as part of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Director and the Associate Director determined early on that accreditation was key to establishing and maintaining the reputation of the School and built the curriculum around ACEJMC standards. The Provost at the time agreed to make the unit a free-standing school if it was accredited, which it was in 1991. The on-site accreditation team told FIU's President that it had found the program in compliance with all 12 standards.

The new School grew rapidly. By 2003, the SJMC had more than 2,000 students and 24 faculty. In 2008, the School was given permission to control growth and institute quality indices, so the 2007-2008 enrollment stood at 1,995 with 28 faculty. In Spring 2016, the School integrated with the College of Architecture and the Arts to become the College of Communication, Architecture and the Arts (CARTA) and the SJMC evolved into what is today known as the School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ). The SJMC was integrated into the CARTA to address unsatisfactory academic performance and financial losses. At the time of integration in 2015, there were two departments in the SCJMC: Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations. In the course of integration, the Department of Advertising and Public Relations merged with CARTA's Department of Communication Arts to create the new Department of Communication, and the Department of Journalism became the Department of Journalism + Media. Together the two departments became the School of Communication and Journalism. Post-integration, the School has moved from a singular academic unit with four sequences in journalism, public relations and advertising (the former SJMC) into two departments, Communication and Journalism + Media. Although the School is not a traditional academic unit that functions as one singular entity, taken together, the two departments offer six undergraduate majors: (1) PRAAC (Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication), (2) Communication Arts (not to be reviewed by ACEJMC), (3) Digital Journalism, (4) Digital Broadcasting, (5) Digital TV and Multimedia Production, and (6)

Digital and Interactive Media; and two graduate programs: (1) Global Strategic Communications and (2) Spanish-language Journalism.

3. Describe the environment in which the unit operates, its goals and plans, budgetary considerations, and the nature of the parent university.

The Greater Miami area, the nation's 16th largest television market, the 11th largest radio market, and the gateway to the Americas for public relations and advertising specialists, provides an excellent environment for a professional school to carry out its mission.

With hundreds of public relations, advertising and marketing agencies in the South Florida area, there is a natural synergy that has developed among these agencies and the local, national and international media outlets that are also housed in the area. Of note, there are 16 full-power television stations in the Miami metro area, which is also the national headquarters of the Spanish-language television networks Univision and Telemundo. There are more than 90 AM and FM radio stations in the market. ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC all have Miami news bureaus, along with the Associated Press, Agence France Press, *The New York Times*, and the Voice of America.

The area is served by *The Miami Herald* and its Spanish-language sister publication *El Nuevo Herald*, *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *The Palm Beach Post* and American Lawyer Media's *Daily Business Review*. The area is also served by numerous high-quality weekly news outlets, among them *The Miami Times* (the South's largest Black newspaper according to ABC-audited circulation), separate *New Times* editions for Miami-Dade and Broward/Palm Beach counties, *The South Florida Business Journal*, *Miami Today* and *The New Tropic*. *Ocean Drive*, *Aventura Magazine*, *Latin Trade* and *Haute Living* are also published here.

FIU is the nation's fifth-largest university by enrollment with more than 59,000 students. It is one of 12 public universities in the State University System of Florida. About 41 percent of its students are first-generation college students and *U.S. News and World Report* ranked FIU as one of the top national performers in social mobility. A majority minority institution, FIU graduates more Hispanic students than any other institution of higher education in the United States. The University's student body is 67.8 percent Hispanic, 12.2 percent Black and 10.6 percent White. The diversity of FIU's students reflects the diversity of South Florida itself, which, in turn, makes it possible for the SCJ to attract a diverse student body. South Florida is an ideal site for covering diverse communities, and for sharpening student skills as they learn how cultural and social values affect everything from government to international business. As one of the most

important international trade, transportation and business centers in the U.S., Greater Miami makes the notion of global interdependence a daily reality.

FIU's [*Beyond Possible 2020*](#) strategic plan (2015-2020) focused on unprecedented student success, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It established critical performance indicators that aligned with state performance metrics to guide FIU's continuous improvement. This strategic plan developed the process and criteria for establishing and supporting preeminent programs to achieve the University's goal of obtaining Carnegie Highest Research designation - a goal since achieved.

FIU represents the future of public universities committed to access and opportunity for learners in the rapidly changing world of higher education and work. Advancements in technology are changing the way people live, learn, and work. FIU is widely regarded as being on the forefront of this change, and with its [*Next Horizon 2025*](#) strategic plan (2020-2025), it is charting the course to achieve greater success for its students, faculty, and its local and global communities. The FIU *Next Horizon 2025* strategic plan aligns with the State University System (SUS) of Florida Board of Governors 2025 System Strategic Plan (amended March 2016). The SUS 2025 strategic plan includes three areas of emphasis: (1) excellence, (2) productivity, and (3) strategic priorities for a knowledge economy.

As a public, state university, FIU receives allocated funds from the State of Florida each fiscal year. The Florida SUS utilizes a Performance-Based Funding Model that was approved by the Board of Governors in January 2014. The development of the model included university presidents, provosts, boards of trustees, and other stakeholders and includes 10 metrics that evaluate Florida institutions on a range of issues. The model has four guiding principles: (1) use metrics that align with SUS Strategic Plan goals, (2) reward Excellence or Improvement, (3) have a few clear, simple metrics, and (4) acknowledge the unique mission of the different institutions. Additionally, student tuition and fees are set by the Florida Legislature and additional revenue comes in through philanthropy, grants, etc. [*In 2021, FIU ranked first among public universities in the Florida Board of Governors performance-based funding scores*](#) that evaluated key metrics, including four-year graduation rate, retention rate, cost of attendance to students and employment of recent graduates.

In March 2020, as part of the CARES: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (CARES), FIU received \$41.1 million to support student aid, University expenses and lost revenues in housing as a result of the pandemic. A second tranche approved by Congress in December 2020 provided an additional \$70.9 million, which further provided assistance to students' cost of attendance and emergency costs that arose

due to the coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, healthcare, or childcare. Priority was placed on students with exceptional need. In planning for fiscal year 2021-2022, FIU will look to self-supporting auxiliaries to prepare for extended COVID-19 impacts; consider building balances where allowed; diversifying revenue streams and, the availability of additional CARES funding.

4. Describe any recent major changes in the mission, goals, or programs and activities of the unit.

The mission of the School has evolved since the last accreditation review cycle in 2015. At that point, the mission was:

To be a high-quality, professionally oriented program; to attract minority students to the School and launch them into successful communication careers, and to distinguish the program through hands-on international involvement, especially in Latin America.

Today, the mission statement is:

To be the nation's top program for training 21st Century media and communication professionals in English and Spanish, committed to inclusivity, experiential learning, and signature media and industry partnerships.

The new mission has guided virtually all SCJ decisions, including faculty hiring; recent curriculum revisions; award-winning student-produced media; and high-profile partnerships with Univision, NBCU Academy, the Public Relations Society of America, Sony Music and *The Miami Herald*.

During the past six years, the SCJ has dramatically increased its range and scope of learning opportunities, including:

Full Immersion Programs: The College prioritizes the infusion of emerging technologies into its curriculum. Through industry partnerships and faculty well-versed in technological advancements, the SCJ experience is a competitive one that incorporates multimedia experiences, mentorship and hands-on internship opportunities to give graduates an edge in their fields upon graduation.

- **iSTAR:** The College partnered with Lee Caplin's iSTAR Enterprises to create the Immersive Studio for Altered Reality (iSTAR) at FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus. As a public-private partnership, FIU iSTAR combines the expertise of research and

teaching faculty; the energy and ambition of students; and the knowledge, application and entrepreneurship of private industry professionals in an incubator instruction-service model. With the development of iSTAR, FIU students are poised to become future leaders and innovators in the world of extended reality. The program provides students with mentorship and hands-on internship opportunities, training and instruction in the creation of multimedia experiences to further prepare them for employment using the latest innovations in technology surrounding all industries.

- **South Florida Media Network (SFMN)**: The SFMN is the Department's flagship student-produced media publication of the Department of Journalism + Media. [The SFMN was awarded the 2020 EPPY for Best College Produced Community website](#), and has won more than 40 national and regional awards during the 2020-2021 school year. Students from several classes contribute content to the SFMN each semester, and the SFMN trains students in both formal (for-credit) and informal internships. The SFMN has "news bureaus" in New York City and Washington, D.C., where students may engage in a study away experience. In Fall of 2021 a Miami Bureau will open in Wynwood, near the city's downtown core. The SFMN has a "Noticias" section for news and multimedia content published in Spanish. In the Spring of 2021, students began producing a weekday, live morning broadcast, "Newsbreak," that is published on the SFMN.

Strategic Partnerships: The SCJ has also instituted strategic partnerships with national organizations, including:

- **NBCU Academy:** The NBCU Academy partnership provides \$500,000 in funding for student training and stipends, equipment and curriculum development for the Department of Journalism + Media. In partnership with NBCU Academy, SCJ students receive real-world insight and mentorship from NBCU News Group journalists, executives and management from editorial and production teams across NBC News, MSNBC, CNBC and Telemundo to work to champion the cause of a more equitable and inclusive journalistic practice.
- **Sony Music:** Launched in 2019, the Department of Communication and Sony Music partnership was designed to empower future industry leaders through an immersive internship experience. The internship program enabled students to interface with music industry experts and sharpen their professional toolkits in an environment that celebrated creativity, diversity, and experiential learning and continuing with digital media, and integrated communications.

- **Univision STEP:** The Univision STEP (Student Training to Employment Program) has provided paid internship experiences and training to more than 50 bilingual students since Spring of 2020.

New Degree Programs

- **Department of Communication:** During the most recent accreditation cycle, with an eye toward the evolving landscape of the public relations and advertising disciplines and recognizing the intersection of digital and traditional skill sets coupled with the industries becoming more reliant on market research and performance metrics, the Department collectively took steps to redefine its majors. Until 2016, the B.S. in Mass Communication degree was offered in two specialization tracks: Public Relations and Advertising. In 2017, the Department of Communication discontinued its Public Relations and Advertising tracks and shifted to a new degree - a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communications (PRAAC). The new PRAAC degree gives students a more flexible degree program, allowing them to take courses from both Public Relations and Advertising as well as other types of communication (e.g., public speaking, communication studies, digital media). It is different from the preceding tracks in Advertising and Public Relations in that it focuses more clearly and specifically on the skills and topics related to Public Relations, Advertising and related communication fields. Students are given more freedom to build their own skill set while still ensuring that the core skills and knowledge are still a part of the program.

During this time, the SCJ strengthened its first fully online degree program – Master of Science in Mass Communication in Global Strategic Communications (GSC) and added additional fully online degree options at the undergraduate level – in partnership with FIU Online. In less than five years after development of the fully online track, the Program earned recognitions on four different ranking lists as one of the nation’s top programs, including: sixth in BestColleges.com’s list of [Best Online Master’s in Public Relations](#) and seventh on the list of [Top 15 online Media Communication programs](#) by OnlineMasters.com — naming it the “Most Accelerated,” noting the entire program can be completed in 12 months. The fully online GSC degree has been a significant asset to the professional programs by providing new revenues to the School as well as differentiated teaching options for faculty members.

In addition to the new online degree modality, the SCJ began offering an accelerated 4+1 pathway. The Accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s Pathways

provide opportunities for highly qualified FIU students to complete both their undergraduate degree and a corresponding master's degree in as fast as 5 years. Participants in these pathways can enroll in up to 4 graduate level courses during their senior year that will then count towards both the bachelor's and the master's degree requirements. Students who successfully complete this pathway can graduate from the master's program up to a year early, saving time and money on graduate tuition.

- **Department of Journalism + Media:** During the most recent accreditation cycle, the Department of Journalism + Media transitioned from offering a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication to a Bachelor of Science in Digital Communication and Media for all its majors. The new degree is considered a strategic STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degree by the State of Florida. In transitioning to the new degree, the Department created four distinct majors: (1) Digital Journalism, (2) Digital Broadcasting, (3) Digital TV and Multimedia Production, and (4) Digital and Interactive Media.

Beginning in Fall of 2021, the Journalism major, which was previously structured as a traditional “print” curriculum, has become the Digital Journalism major, with a curriculum that combines reporting, writing, video and data visualization for digital publications. The Broadcasting major has become the Digital Broadcasting major as of Fall of 2021, with an emphasis on producing bilingual TV news programming and live streaming. The Broadcast Media major is now the Digital TV and Multimedia Production major, with an emphasis on multiplatform media production, including video, social media and podcasting. The Digital and Interactive Media major combines training in digital and emerging media with theoretical courses designed to create thoughtful media producers. Students receive a foundation in video production, web publishing and data visualization.

Centers and Institutes: During the most recent accreditation cycle, the SCJ became home to new centers and institutes supporting the University's goals to establish a knowledge ecosystem marked by research innovation to find innovative solutions to the complexities of modern society.

- **[The Lillian Lodge Kopenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication](#):** Inaugurated in 2013, the Lillian Lodge Kopenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication, which was designed as a pioneering site for the advancement of women in the field of communication, significantly expanded its reach nationwide over the past six years since the previous accreditation visit. In November 2020, the Kopenhagen Center

announced its first satellite center at Rowan University's Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts in New Jersey. Three months later, the Kopenhagen Center launched its second affiliate satellite center at Stephens College in Missouri.

- **The Steven Cruz Institute for Media, Science + Technology (SCI)**: Debuted in 2020, the SCI aims to improve public understanding of science and technology. Since its inception the Institute has undertaken numerous research projects to help develop innovative ways to communicate the often complicated and politicized issues that face society today. Such projects include the use and impact of social media on drug use among Hispanic club-goers in Miami, navigating health misinformation online, vaccine hesitancy in Latin America, and raising awareness of the very real effects of sea level rise.

5. If the unit was previously accredited, summarize each deficiency noted in the most recent accreditation report that the site team said should be addressed (Part 3 of site team report), followed by a response to each, explaining actions taken to address the problems and the results. If the unit was in noncompliance in the same standard(s) on the previous two visits, identify the standard(s), the reasons cited, and how these problems have been addressed.

The School was found to be in compliance with all standards in the previous accreditation; however, the accrediting team noted two weaknesses and stated: "We encourage attention to the weaknesses identified, even though they do not rise to the level of non-compliance."

***Weakness 1:** The lack of a three- or five-year plan that defines the distinctive opportunities, priorities and resources for achieving the School's strategic objectives.*

During the last accrediting cycle, through the integration with CARTA, the School and its respective two departments have been guided by student success dashboards created by Dean Brian Schriener. While not a formal strategic plan, these data-driven dashboards provide each unit with a comprehensive roadmap inclusive of strategic priorities, key performance indicators (KPIs), financial data, human resources, demographics, and student success metrics and goals. In the coming year, the SCJ will build on these dashboards to create formalized strategic plans for each of its respective departments. These dashboards align with the College and the University strategic plan. Additionally, each unit has defined performance goals (academic and financial) as well as plans for achieving those goals.

At the university level, FIU recently completed its newest strategic plan, [Next Horizon 2025](#). It has three main pillars: 1. Amplify student success and institutional affinity; 2. Accelerate research and preeminence and innovation impact; and 3. Assure responsible stewardship. [The CARTA Strategic Plan](#) translates those pillars into actionable metrics. Among the goals that are especially meaningful for the direction that the SCJ plans to take in the next five years are the goals that, in part, highlight the need to build corporate/business and philanthropic partnerships, as well as align curriculum with career needs to ensure employment readiness, post-graduation success, and workforce and industry advancement (e.g., internal student employment, internships, and post-graduate employment opportunities).

Recently, the chairs of both departments have broached the issue of developing a strategic plan with their faculty. These plans are in early stages and are not ready to be shared but we will provide an update to the site team when they visit in January 2022.

The SCJ has found that strategic partnerships with national media and communication organizations have spurred an update to the curriculum; motivated faculty to seek professional development opportunities; and provided essential workforce training and internships for students that has helped prepare them for professional life.

Weakness 2: Underdeveloped vision and aspiration for the public relations and advertising majors that capitalizes on a time of stability after years of disruption and uncertainty.

Until 2016, the B.S. in Mass Communication degree offered two specialization tracks: Public Relations and Advertising. During this accreditation cycle, a strong leadership took shape within the Department of Communication, starting with Dr. Maria Elena Villar. The department regained stability and positioned itself as a competitive leader in producing culturally competent communicators and professionals committed to producing significant societal impact on a local, state, and global scale. With an eye toward the evolving landscape of the public relations and advertising disciplines and recognizing the intersection of digital and traditional skill sets coupled with the industries becoming more reliant on market research and performance metrics, the department took steps to redefine its majors. In 2017, the Department of Communication discontinued its Public Relations and Advertising tracks and shifted to a new Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communications (PRAAC). This change was made for two reasons: Strategic degree designation by the Florida State University System Board of Governors and industry feedback on marketability of graduates. The new PRAAC degree allows students to take courses

from both Public Relations and Advertising as well as other types of communication (public speaking, communication studies, and digital media). It is different from the preceding tracks in Advertising and Public Relations in that it focuses more clearly and specifically on the skills and topics related to Public Relations, Advertising and related communication fields. Students are given more freedom to build their own skill set while ensuring that the core skills and knowledge are part of the program.

6. Describe the process used to conduct the self-study, including the roles of faculty members, students and others. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the program discovered during the process, and describe any changes undertaken or planned as a result.

As with previous ACEJMC self-studies, the SCJ involved a broad range of faculty, staff and students throughout the School to conduct the self-study, including the identification of strengths and weaknesses to inform changes for improvement as noted in this report.

The School's Associate Dean, Marilyns Nepomechie, had overall leadership responsibility for the self-study process. She appointed one faculty member from each department to lead the collection of data and writing the initial draft of the document: Dr. Susan Jacobson, Associate Professor and Interim Chair in the Department of Journalism + Media, and Heather Radi-Bermudez, Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Communication. The writing team collected information from all levels of the University, including the faculty and staff of each department, administrators in the CARTA Dean's office and at the University as a whole. FIU's university-wide accountability analytics system provided a lot of the statistical information within this report.

A draft of the self-study was submitted for review to the Associate Dean in June of 2021. After her review, a copy of the document was made available to all faculty, with a request for comments; at the same time, copies were made available to student leaders in all of the student groups affiliated with the SCJ, with the same request for comments. All recommendations and suggestions were taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document, which was also reviewed by the Dean and the University's Office of Academic Planning and Accountability.

During the self-study process, the following program strengths and weaknesses were discovered:

Strengths

Progressive Curriculum Changes. Each department has recently implemented curriculum changes designed to better prepare students for contemporary professional demands, including the Department of Journalism + Media's four majors in its new B.S. in Digital Communication and Media STEM degree and the Department of Communication's shift from separate public relations and advertising tracks to a new degree in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communications (PRAAC). This change was made for two reasons: Strategic degree designation by the Florida State University System Board of Governors and industry feedback on the marketability of graduates.

- **Investment in Forward-Looking Resources and Facilities.** The SCJ has gained several new facilities thanks to investment from philanthropy and from the Office of the Provost. These efforts have been led by Dean Brian Schriener, who has made it possible for the SCJ to renovate and brand its existing facilities while reimagining and creating new spaces.
- **High-Profile Experiential Learning Opportunities.** Students benefit from the School's strong ties to newspapers, digital outlets, television and radio stations, and strategic communication agencies, locally, nationally and even abroad. In recent years, students have completed internships at: Sony Music, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, The Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars, FIU in D.C., Young Professionals in Foreign Policy and global brand and customer experience agency VMLY&R, ranked in the Top 10 of *Ad Age's* A-List. Also, dedicated professional Career and Talent Development staff for the School work to connect/engage with industry leaders to help students gain valuable internship opportunities. Recently, the SCJ has greatly increased the scope and prestige of student internships with the addition of the Univision STEP (Student Training Employment Program), a one-of-a-kind program in the nation that trains bilingual students for jobs in Hispanic media. More than 100 students have participated in this program since 2019. In 2020, FIU became an academic partner with NBCU Academy, creating opportunities for paid student internships at a national level. In 2021, FIU created a partnership with *The Miami Herald* that will place up to 15 students in paid internships. The School's experiential learning labs are a key component to its students' educational experience.

Weaknesses

- **Enrollment.** The SCJ has seen a cumulative decline in enrollment over the past two years due, in part, to the pandemic. The Department of Journalism + Media has seen a steep decline in enrollment since 2016. Prior to the pandemic, from 2016-2020, the Department of Communication had seen a steady increase in enrollment. In an effort to address the need to manage enrollments, both departments are working on the recruitment of new students through dual-enrollment programs, summer workshops for high school students, new Memoranda of Understanding with local state colleges, and active outreach to new students who are admitted to FIU but have not yet matriculated. Both chairs are engaged in communication with their students, and advisers have increased their outreach to those students who are at risk of transferring, dropping out or failing. The goal of the School is to return enrollment numbers to pre-pandemic levels by 2023-2024.
- **Department-Specific Policies.** The self-study process revealed a lack of some formalized policies. Following the transition from the SJMC to the SCJ in 2016, some of the previous School-level policies and procedures were not formally implemented as policies of the new School, or as policies of the individual departments. As a result, some of the SCJ's policies are guided by policies set by the University. Recently, the Chairs of both departments have broached the issue of developing a strategic plan with their faculty. These plans are in early stages and are not ready to be shared but we will provide the site team with an update when they visit in January 2022.
- **Marketing for Recruitment.** CARTA has had more marketing staff than any college at FIU and arguably the strongest social media presence of any College. It maintains an annual Marketing Strategic Plan with quantifiable goals and tactics. That plan has served to boost the visibility and raise the profile of the SCJ departments. During the past two years, however, in part due to the pandemic, the plan has met with less success than we had hoped in attracting students to our programs. In Summer 2021, the Dean's office restructured the College's communication team to work directly with each department chair to update the websites, create promotional materials, manage social media accounts, etc. The goal is to develop a more functional marketing communication workflow during the 2021-2022 academic year and beyond.

7. Provide the web links to catalogs and other publications that describe the mission and scope of the unit, its curriculum, administrative and graduation requirements.

Majors and Track Sheets

[Link to Department of Journalism + Media Majors and Track Sheets](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Majors and Track Sheets](#)

University Catalog

[Link to Department of Journalism + Media Undergraduate Catalog 2021-2022](#)

[Link to Department of Journalism + Media Graduate Catalog 2021-2022](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Undergraduate Catalog 2021-2022](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Graduate Catalog 2021-2022](#)