



PART II, STANDARD 6. STUDENT SERVICES

Part II, Standard 6. Student Services

During the visit, the unit should make the following documents accessible to the team:

- advising records
- other files related to student services

Executive Summary

FIU takes great pride in its ability to serve students not just from its immediate geographical area, but from all continents. As a majority-minority university serving a large population of students who are also the first in their families to attend college, the University makes a special effort to attract, retain and graduate qualified students who show academic promise despite financial, language and cultural challenges.

Upon integration of the then-SJMC into CARTA, a Dean of Students, Lilia Silverio Minaya, oversaw all the student services elements for the units. Dr. Silverio Minaya left her role in 2020, and in her absence, the Dean has overseen student services. Katie Rothfield, Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Interior Architecture, has since been named CARTA Assistant Dean of Students.

The University and all Colleges and Schools have adopted performance indicators that place great emphasis on increasing retention and graduation rates. Because at least half of SCJ students transfer from community colleges, the School pays special attention to creating a seamless transition to FIU and promoting a timely graduation. SCJ participates in bridge programs with Miami-Dade College (MDC), Broward College and other two-year institutions in Florida, where the University gets most of its transfer students. The advising team coordinates with their counterparts at other institutions to help fully inform MDC advisers and students about SCJ programs and requirements. In the past five years, SCJ has taken many steps toward improving its Office of Student Services.

Please respond to each of the following instructions.

1. Complete and attach Table 9, “Student Aid.”

[Link to Table 9, Student Aid.](#)

2. Describe how the unit informs students of the requirements of the degree and the major, advises them on effective and timely ways to meet the requirements, and monitors their compliance with the requirements, including the 72-hour rule. Provide digital files of advising guides, manuals, newsletters or other internal

communication with students. Provide a print copy in the workroom. Describe availability and accessibility of faculty to students.

The SCJ and its Academic Advising Services informs students of degree requirements and advises them on effective and timely ways to meet the requirements. Additionally, the School monitors student compliance with degree requirements, including the 72-hour rule. Currently there are several points of contact for all incoming and active students regarding degree requirements.

- The first point of contact takes place during mandatory freshman and transfer orientation, during which students are informed of program and major requirements.
- Freshmen - Students receive academic advisement and a copy of their enrollment advisor notes for up to two semesters.
- Transfer Students - Students receive academic advisement and a copy of their enrollment adviser notes for up to two semesters after receiving advisement during the Advising Session (group advising).
- Active degree-seeking students may receive a real-time status of their academic career progress via [Panther Degree Audit](#).
- All undergraduate majors in the SCJ are required to complete one of two zero-credit Department Orientation courses during their first semester. In the Department of Communication, students take PUR 1951, PRAAC Orientation, and in the Department of Journalism + Media students take MMC 3003, Journalism + Media Orientation.
- Students are encouraged to schedule advising appointments at least once a semester.

Panther Success Network

The Panther Success Network (PSN) is a platform that lets students remain connected with an FIU Success Team member, which includes their Academic Advisor, Success Coaches, Career Coaches and Tutors. The PSN makes it easier for students to stay on track and alerts students and their advisor if students veer off track through progress reports from professors and predetermined success markers. The Panther Success Network includes a record of advising reports and notes that both the student and the advisor may view at any time.

Faculty also use the PSN to create progress reports for students mid-semester. This is a new feature introduced in Spring 2021 to inform all students about midterm progress,

but is mostly used to flag at-risk students who are then contacted by the advisers. All communication with students takes place on PSN. This includes email communications, Advisor notes, campaigns, and progress reports (formally, early alerts). The progress reports are initiated by faculty who have concerns regarding students' academic performance.

FTIC (First Time in College) - Fall to Fall Enrollment

Advising campaigns are created in the PSN prior to the Fall term to encourage students to enroll, provide resources when necessary, and complete a general check-in for all Freshmen level students.

Preliminary Degree Check (90 or more credits)

Advising campaigns are created in the PSN for students who have earned 90 or more credits. Advisors create campaigns to ensure students are "on-track" and discuss a post graduate plan with students. An advising hold is placed on all students who fall under these criteria.

Other Advising Holds

Once the term GPA falls below a 2.0, students are required to schedule an advising appointment with the Advisor prior to enrolling in the subsequent term. These sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss academic progress and timely graduation, and conversations of redirection to another major when deemed necessary.

Limited Access majors

Advisors review students' accounts after grades post once students have completed 72 hours of college credit. Students who meet eligibility requirements for PRAAC and Journalism + Media majors are moved into full admission status and gain access to take major specific courses.

The SCJ also offers program information sessions every semester to keep students abreast of any changes or curriculum updates for each major.

Supplemental Resources for advising: Track Sheets

The major track sheets may be found on the following sites:

- [Journalism + Media Undergraduate Track Sheets](#)
- [Communication Undergraduate PRAAC Track Sheets](#)

Panther Degree Audit

Active degree-seeking students receive a real-time status of their academic career progress through the Panther Degree Audit (PDA). Panther Degree Audit provides a record of the student's academic progress toward completion of their academic degree program. This feature allows students to review the courses they have taken, including in-progress courses, and review and plan for courses needed to complete their degree. Panther Degree Audit assists the advisor and student in planning for current and future courses as the courses pertain to the degree requirement. Advisors recommend that students should run a PDA every semester after registration and at the end of each semester after grades are posted, to ensure that all the classes are being applied to the requirements as they expect.

Department Orientation

Both departments offer zero-credit, required courses for incoming students to outline opportunities in the departments, set expectations and review the resources available to them at FIU and through the departments to help them succeed. In the Department of Journalism + Media, MMC3003 Journalism + Media Orientation, and in the Department of Communication, PUR 1951 PRAAC Orientation, provides students with a comprehensive overview of academic policies, procedures and requirements for matriculation and graduation from the respective department.

Compliance with the 72-hour Rule

Undergraduate students in both the Department of Journalism + Media and the Department of Communication's Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication (PRAAC) program are limited to 48 credit hours within the School of Communication and Journalism. This ensures all students take a minimum of 72 credit hours outside of journalism and mass communications; this includes the required 12-credit hour Area of Concentration in a program outside of the School. As of Fall 2022, the ACEJMC will eliminate this requirement and the SJC will follow suit.

3. Describe the unit's process for evaluating its advising and counseling services. Include measurements of the accuracy of academic advising, student and faculty opinion of the quality of advising, or other indices of the effectiveness of advising. Discuss the results of these assessments.

Academic Advising assessments are conducted through the Office of Academic and Career Success (ACS). Annual [surveys are completed by students](#) that allow for feedback on the quality of advising. The surveys reflect advisors within the College as a

whole, including the SCJ. The most recent round of surveys was completed in June 2021. More than 50 percent of the students agreed with the following statements:

- My academic advisor listens to me (66.26 percent)
- My academic advisor treats me with respect (79.75 percent)
- After talking to my advisor, I feel confident about the issues we discussed (58.28 percent)
- My advisor helps me to achieve my potential (51.23 percent)
- It's easy to get an appointment with my academic advisor (62.66 percent)
- My advisor is knowledgeable about academic and graduation requirements (78.71 percent)
- My advisor is knowledgeable about resources to prepare me for my career. (58.06 percent)
- I have a clear understanding of what I need to do to complete my degree and graduate. (65.24 percent)

Only 23.5 percent said that they made regular appointments with their advisor to discuss academic progress. This may be impacted by the pandemic, as all advising has been over Zoom since March 2020, and 38.8 percent of the students said that they preferred to meet with advisors in person. In the comment area, students who said they did not make regular appointments with their advisor cited reasons like “Not needed yet,” and “COVID.”

Although more than 50 percent of the students said it was easy to make an appointment with their advisors, in the comment section some students said that they found it difficult. Some of the students said that they had not been able to schedule an appointment with an advisor at a time that fit their schedule.

Advisors report to a senior advisor, who reports to the Dean. There is no formal assessment method for faculty to share their opinion of advising. However, the advisors attend each department's regularly scheduled faculty and staff meetings where they provide updates on issues related to advising and hear from faculty on curriculum issues impacted by advising. The Chairs of both departments work closely with the advisors, particularly in the areas of curriculum development and monitoring student progress.

Through the [Panther Success Network](#) (PSN), students and advisors are able to communicate via several avenues. PSN tracks the students' progress academically with regard to their course completion and scheduling, GPA, and resources available and

utilized. This Network also provides insight into the advisor's meetings with each student to track any insecurities the student may be facing. The notes collected via this network are used to track students' progress to graduation along with retention rates.

For each cohort of students, the Student Success Team for the College, including the advisors, compile notes and status of each student. The compilation of notes and information allows leadership to determine how many students are on track to graduate on time, may need some additional intervention, or are off track. Additionally, the cohort tracking exercise allows advisors to list the courses students need each semester to graduate on time. The Student Success Team is able to determine the success rate of the College by Department, Academic Plan, Academic Sub-Plan, and also advisor.

Following this tracking method, the Student Success Team determines what kind of interventions are necessary for individual students to assist in timely graduation. This can include financial assistance, course availability, or inclusion of the Dean of Students for personal matters. All of these are determined by the feedback and notes provided by the advising team. The graduation rate for the College has been increasing for the last three years because of this meticulous and granular collection of information from the advising team.

4. Describe student media, student professional organizations or other extra-curricular activities and opportunities provided by the unit or the institution that are relevant to the curriculum and develop students' professional and intellectual abilities and interests.

Student media and professional organizations are integral parts of the FIU student experience. The SCJ offers a wide variety of clubs and organizations that allow students to put knowledge and skills from the classroom into practice. Through student media and professional organizations, students have increased opportunities to network with professionals, build their portfolios and attend and compete in district, regional and national conferences and competitions. A description of select extra-curricular activities and opportunities for students to develop professional and intellectual abilities and interests is provided below.

Student leaders also have a role in School governance. The School has two senators, elected annually, who serve FIU's Student Government Association (SGA). Through this representation, the School's SGA Senators advocate for the allocation of the Activity & Service Fee, provide an official voice and action on behalf of the student body, ensure that students' concerns are addressed in governance and policy

development of FIU at all levels, evaluate and establish student programs and services, and encourage the betterment of educational standards, facilities and services.

PantherNOW Student Media

PantherNOW is the University-wide student media organization. PantherNOW publishes a weekly newspaper on campus and is continuously updated at panthernow.com, and produces a student radio station, The Roar (WRGP), which operates 24 /7 on 95.3 in Miami, 96.9 in North Miami and 88.1 in the Kendall/Homestead area.

PantherNOW merged some of its operations with the Department of Journalism + Media in 2021, but maintains complete editorial independence from the SCJ. PantherNOW and the Department of Journalism + Media share production equipment and lab facilities at the main and branch campuses. Members of the SCJ faculty serve on the PantherNow advisory board.

SCJ Student Organizations and Publications

SCJ has multiple student chapters of professional organizations, including the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Public Relations Society of America, and others. Students meet regularly to plan programming, leadership opportunities, community engagements, special projects, and foster growth among student professionals while promoting their fields and the SCJ.

On campus, the School supports:

- **BOLD Club.** A supplement to the BOLD Agency, the group welcomes all FIU students who have an interest in strategic communications. BOLD students put classroom work into practice, creating advertising, public relations and social media campaigns for campus organizations, academic units and community partners. Depending on client needs, BOLD student teams begin with research, develop a strategy and then implement the creative using video, print, online and social media.
- **William C. Adams Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (FIU PRSSA).** Active since 1989, FIU PRSSA was established with the help of the Miami Chapter of PRSA and in 2008 launched a branding campaign to reposition its status. The chapter grew over 150 percent that academic year with more than 41 new members.

The FIU PRSSA chapter remains highly active. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the chapter:

- Recruited 41 new members to join 74 returning members.
- Qualified to apply for the national PRSSA Pacesetter Award after meeting each of five requirements including chapter growth, participating in a national initiative, and engaging in a community effort.
- PRSSA FIU offers a variety of programs, workshops and mixers for strategic communications students to build their practical skills and professional network. PRSSA FIU is recognized as a Star Chapter by PRSSA.
- Raised \$340 for the chapter through three events.
- Held networking events, a professional headshot day and an agency tour, and participated in seminars and webinars at the Lillian Lodge Copenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication.

Faculty member Hugo Ottolenghi advises the chapter.

- **Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).** The FIU Chapter was formed in 1991, fell into a brief period of inactivity in early 2012, and then was reinvigorated that Fall with new leadership from Professor Chris Delboni. The group participated in the Excellence in Journalism conference in nearby Fort Lauderdale and received advice from local SPJ chapter presidents on how to structure the organization and attract members. In Fall 2012, the chapter rejoined the national organization, and its leaders attended the annual Excellence in Journalism conference.

Dan Evans became the adviser to the group in 2016. Under his leadership, the FIU Chapter received regional “Chapter of the Year” honors in 2017, 2018 and 2020. In 2018 the unit won a national programming award for “Stirring UP the Media,” a public conversation about how different racial, political and other groups are portrayed in the media. Under Dan’s leadership, SPJ held numerous panels, discussions and networking opportunities for both journalism and non-journalism students, including resume and interviewing workshops, panels with recent graduates, radio reporters and hiring directors as well as visits to Univision, Telemundo, *The Miami Herald* and the Miami-Dade Courthouse.

- **National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ).** The FIU Student Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists meets regularly at the

School. Every semester undergraduate and graduate Hispanic students organize special events for journalism students at the Biscayne Bay Campus. The chapter adviser is Mercedes Vigon.

- **National Association of Black Journalists.** SCJ sponsored its first unofficial student NABJ chapter in Fall 2013-14 semester with the cooperation of the South Florida Association of Black Journalists, the professional chapter of NABJ. The Department is working with the NABJ South Florida Chapter President to create a formal NABJ Student Chapter and will be directly involved in recruiting students to establish a student chapter of NABJ in the coming months.
- **Kappa Tau Alpha National Honor Society Chapter.** Kappa Tau Alpha (KTA) is the national honor society of journalism and mass communication. Established in 1910 at the University of Missouri, KTA has 95 chapters and is one of 64 members of the Association of College Honor Societies. KTA membership is restricted to the top ranking undergraduate and graduate students in journalism and mass communication programs. Florida International University's KTA chapter was established in 1993 and has remained active, awarding deserving students induction into the chapter every spring. Membership must be earned by excellence in academic work at one of the colleges and universities that have chapters. Selection for membership is a mark of highest distinction and honor. The chapter adviser was faculty member Michael Sheerin through 2021.
- **South Florida Media Network (SFMN).** The South Florida Media Network (SFMN) is the 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 Academic Year 2020-2021. 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 a "Noticias" section for news and multimedia content published in Spanish. Beginning Summer 2021 students began producing a weekday live morning broadcast, "Newsbreak," that is published on the SFMN. The SFMN has bureaus in New York City and Washington, D.C., where students may engage in a study away experience. The bureau programs are designed to offer students the opportunity to study in one of the most newsworthy locations and media centers in the world while networking with professional journalists, community leaders, and FIU alumni.

- **SCJ Study Abroad.** In addition to student media and organizations, the SCJ also has study abroad opportunities available to students each year (with the exception of 2020 due to the pandemic) led by several faculty members. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the world's leading nonprofit association for international education, awarded FIU the 2021 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization, recognizing its efforts in making international education part of the University experience. The award distinguishes overall excellence in integrating international education throughout all facets of university and college campuses.

Students have traveled to Spain, Thailand, France, Dubai, Amsterdam, among other international gateways. In Summer 2019, in collaboration with the FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, faculty from the Global Strategic Communications master's program led a study abroad cruise. The "Communication at Sea" experience took students across the Atlantic Ocean from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Barcelona, Spain. Undergraduate and graduate students were immersed in new ways to think and learn about multicultural communication and branding strategies in the age of social media and digital technologies. For each study abroad experience, students enroll in three SCJ elective credit hours. Outside of the mass communication study abroad opportunities, many students study abroad in other programs offered through the University Office of Study Abroad.

5. Describe the unit's career counseling and placement strategy for assistance in students' searches for employment. List placement statistics for the three most recent years before the self-study year for which accurate information is available.

The CARTA has a partnership with FIU's [Career and Talent Development \(CTD\)](#) Department that serves the University and assists students' searches for employment. This year, the CARTA established a liaison model with CTD where two CTD specialists joined CARTA, each with an area of focus: SCJ and Visual and Performing Arts. The Director of this team oversees all experiential learning and career services initiatives for CARTA. The team utilizes a platform called Handshake that helps connect students and alumni with employers, and also developed a new career website that has various career resources, including electronic job feeds from Handshake for each discipline. The Career and Talent Development Department publishes an email newsletter that features Handshake jobs and career events.

With the cooperation of FIU's CTD Department, the SCJ recently hired a career counselor to bring together SCJ's career counseling efforts under a unified strategy. Career counseling is currently done by academic advisors--in addition to their normal duties—and by faculty in the classroom who review students' resumes and direct them to CTD-sponsored career development sessions, such as resume, interviewing, and networking training. Specific faculty who have valuable connections to the journalism/public relations/advertising/media industries assist students in acquiring both internships and initial job placements.

Tracking:

The CTD team conducts a "Destination Survey" for each student cohort that graduates. In addition, the team tracks FIU graduates through one year and one semester past graduation.

Percent of Bachelor's Graduates Employed Full Time:

(Reporting Year references the year during which the data was collected, and Academic Year references the year of graduation.)

Reporting Year 19-20

Academic Year 17-18

Journalism + Media: 55 percent

Communication: 59 percent

Reporting Year 18-19

Academic Year 16-17

Journalism + Media: 52 percent

Communication: 49 percent

Reporting Year 17-18

Academic Year 15-16

Journalism + Media: 55 percent

Communication: 57 percent

Percent of Graduates in Continuing Education

Reporting Year 19-20

Academic Year 17-18

Journalism + Media: 10 percent

Communication: 14 percent

Reporting Year 18-19
Academic Year 16-17
Journalism + Media: 7 percent
Communication: 9 percent

Reporting Year 17-18
Academic Year 15-16
Journalism + Media: 7 percent
Communication: 12 percent

6. Discuss the processes in place to collect, maintain and analyze enrollment, retention and graduation rates within the major and in comparison with university rates. Discuss the findings of the analysis. Provide the URL where the unit shares its most recent retention and graduation data with the public.

FIU participates in the State University of Florida Board of Governors Performance Funding Metrics, which includes metrics for retention and graduation rates. In 2021, FIU received the top score in the state's performance-based funding metrics. The SCJ has a set of performance indicators that are used to measure results required to obtain additional program funding from the State.

The FIU Office of Analysis and Information Management created an internal database of metrics measuring enrollment, retention and graduation rates accessible at [FIU Analysis and Information Management](#) so that FIU schools could track performance. The SCJ leadership team meets regularly with the Dean's Office to review these data. Team members examine performance indicators development and discuss ways to improve results.

In the Department of Communication, retention and graduation data are shared with the public at: <https://carta.fiu.edu/communication/about/accreditation/>. In the Department of Journalism + Media, the data are shared at: <https://carta.fiu.edu/journalism/about/accreditation/>.

Full-time enrollment in the University fell 4.5 percent in Fall 2021, when compared to Fall 2020. Full-time enrollment in the SCJ fell 11.2 percent in Fall 2021, when compared to Fall 2020. The two-year retention rate of first-time in college students who entered the University in Fall 2020 was 91 percent in Fall 2021 for the University as a whole, and 90.9 percent for the SCJ.

As of Fall 2021, the 2016-2017 first-time-in-college cohort in the University as a whole had a four-year graduation rate of 48 percent, and a six--year graduation rate of 66 percent compared to the SCJ 4-year graduation rate of 63 percent and six-year graduation rate of 77 percent.

PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S PROGRAMS

7. Describe the process for academic and career advising of professional master's students.

The SCJ prides itself on providing concierge level, one-on-one attention for its students, particularly, graduate students in its professional master's program. Once students are admitted into the Master of Science in Mass Communication, they meet with their Program Director, who develops with the student their academic plan for the year, taking into consideration their professional interests.

In the Spanish-language Journalism Program, each student receives an individualized report every semester, indicating what classes they've completed and what courses remain and whether or not there is a concern to address in their academic journey. At the same time, the Program Director advises the student on taking internships for the duration of the program. The Program Director and other members of the faculty refer students to the Career and Talent Development team for assistance with job searches and networking opportunities.

The Global Strategic Communications master's program has an Academic Student Services Coordinator who assists students with advising, resolving academic challenges and roadblocks and other mentoring and guidance as needed to support students. Each semester, students have the ability to attend and participate in professional development opportunities, lecture series, workshops, and more to broaden their horizons in such a way that they can experience different aspects of the industry.

8. Discuss retention and graduation rates in the master's program, including the grade-point average required to remain in the program and the expected time to degree. Provide the URL where the unit shares the retention and graduation data of its professional master's students with the public.

[Link to the most-recent retention and graduation data of the professional master's programs.](#)

The retention rate for both master's programs in the last three years has been about 95

percent. Both Spanish-language Journalism and Global Strategic Communications (GSC) can be completed in 12-16 months, on average, and students must maintain a 3.0 GPA at time of graduation. Both programs have a two-year graduation rate of 76.4 percent.