

## **Board of Regents Comprehensive Program Review**

Fiscal Years 2002 - 2007

B.A. Degree in Mass Communications

Department of Mass Communications & Theatre Arts

University of West Georgia

Submitted by

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### **I. Program Mission/Vision Statement**

The Mass Communications program provides a high-quality undergraduate liberal arts education leading to a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mass Communications. Through sequenced study, students gain knowledge and develop skills within a broad-based program designed to educate and train them across media industries with emphasis on media literacy, writing, and technology competencies within the context of freedom of speech and press. Media literacy courses are designed to help students to critically understand paramount economic, legal, policy, ethical, social, and effects issues facing mass media. Writing and technology courses are designed to develop students' ability to present news and public relations information and images in accordance with legal, ethical, stylistic, aesthetic, and technical considerations.

The program is one of a select number of communication/journalism programs in the nation that offers a broad-based undergraduate mass communications curriculum with a media convergence emphasis. Given the convergence of mass media industries, this broad-based approach gives students a competitive edge in the media workplace. The program is committed to creating and sustaining a rigorous, multi-faceted learning environment consistent with the University's brand of *Academic Excellence in a Personal Environment*. Moreover, the curriculum offers a balance of theoretical, conceptual and professional skills courses to prepare students to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively to meet the demands of a complex, technological media landscape and multicultural, global society.

## II. Program Statement of Goals, Process to Assess These Goals, and Assessment Results

### 2.1 Program Goals

1. To offer a cutting-edge liberal arts journalism and mass communication education that offers a balance of theoretical, conceptual, and experiential scholarship and training.
2. To prepare students for entry-level careers in print journalism, broadcast journalism, and public relations as well as entrance into graduate programs.
3. To maintain a high quality faculty, and enhance teaching and learning through active engagement in professional growth and development activity.
4. To maintain a high quality professional staff, particularly with UTV, the *West Georgian*, and WUWG-90.7, and enhance teaching, learning, and instructional support, especially in the area of experiential learning.

### 2.2 Process to Assess Goals

1. **Review of Syllabi/Course Material.** Each semester, faculty are required to submit their syllabi to be filed in the program office and posted on the program website. Also, during peer evaluations, which are expected as part of third-year, promotion and tenure, and post tenure reviews, faculty submit syllabi and general course material to the department chair and advisory committees. Syllabi and course material are expected to clearly articulate learning objectives and reflect diverse assignments and assessment exercises designed to accomplish specific learning outcomes relative to media literacy, writing, and technology competencies.
2. **Capstone Assignments.** Students are required to complete a minimum of four writing and technology competency skills courses, though the majority exceeds this standard. These courses integrate capstone assignments designed to give students an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of theoretical, conceptual, and practical insight. Central to writing and technology competency skills courses is the development of writing, audio, and video samples as well as other creative works that become a part of students' professional portfolio. These courses also afford students an opportunity to strengthen critical thinking, creative thinking, and collaborative decision-making, which are requisite skills for the industry.

3. **Student & Peer Evaluation of Instruction.** Faculty are required to administer *Student Evaluation of Instruction* (SEI) surveys in each of their courses. Based on a Likert scale, the instrument is designed to assess presentation, organization/clarity, exams/assignments/grading, dynamism/enthusiasm, general-instructor, and general-course criteria. Faculty are also required to undergo peer evaluation as part of their third-year, promotion and tenure, and post tenure reviews.
4. **External/Industry Comparative Evaluation.** Faculty routinely draw on experiential learning experiences to evaluate the curriculum, i.e., the fit between what is being taught in the classroom and what prospective employers expect graduates to know and be able to do. As such, internship supervisors are required to assess students' requisite knowledge and skill sets; and faculty and staff participate in professional development seminars, workshops, and fellowship programs in order to keep abreast of the practices, trends, challenges, opportunities, and entry-level qualifications in their fields (see faculty vita at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty.html>).
5. **Exit Interviews/Surveys.** Graduating seniors are required to complete an exit interview or survey, which is administered by the department chair. The interview/survey is designed to assess students' perceptions of the degree program, appropriateness of courses, satisfaction with advising, and degree of confidence in securing appropriate employment or graduate school admission as a result of the degree program.
6. **Annual Evaluation of Faculty.** Each year, the department chair evaluates faculty teaching, professional growth and development, and service productivity based on mutually agreed upon goals set at the onset of the calendar year and in accordance with standards described in program workload, third-year review, and promotion and tenure documents, which may be accessed at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/policies.html>.
7. **Annual Evaluation of Professional Staff.** Each year, the department chair evaluates professional staff performance in accordance with the *Performance Evaluation* instrument administered by Human Resources. The instrument addresses job knowledge, quality of work, quantity of work, dependability, attitude, initiative, interpersonal relations, appearance, and overall performance factors.

## 2.3 Assessment Results

1. **A review of syllabi/course material, capstone assignments, and peer evaluation of instruction indicates that the curriculum offers a balance of theoretical, conceptual, and experiential scholarship and training. However, external/industry comparative evaluation data suggest a need to place greater emphasis on writing.** Accordingly, the department chair and program director have advocated for greater emphasis on Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course offerings. To date, nearly 70% of faculty offer WAC courses which emphasize

writing to communicate and writing to learn assignments. Also, majors are encouraged to enroll in writing courses to satisfy their elective requirement -- they must complete six elective courses-- and their choices span several options within the program as well as two options in the English program (*Professional Writing & Technical, Creative Writing*).

2. **Based on a review of student evaluations and exit interview/survey data, students are generally satisfied with the curriculum and advising. However, exit interview/survey data as well as external/industry comparative evaluations indicate that a few course additions would better prepare students for industry demands.** Suggested courses include PR writing, journalism and new media (particularly web page design and publication), news producing, and media management. Beyond strengthening the experiential learning component of the curriculum, suggested courses point up the need to give more attention to new media and media management. To address this curricular void, faculty have offered three additional courses as special topics-- *Media Programming, Media & Society*, and *Public Relations Campaigns*. Moreover, faculty plan to add at least three of the suggested courses to the curriculum as regular offerings, and consider teaching remaining ones as special topics on an intermittent basis given the limited faculty to cover the curriculum.
3. **Though cross-media scholarship and training is a strength of the program given the shift toward media convergence, external/industry comparative evaluations indicate that there is a need for curricular to satisfy the demands of both traditional and convergence media.** Consequently, faculty have completed preliminary drafts of medium-specific tracks that include broadcast journalism, media production, print journalism, public relations, and general media studies. Also, the program director has drafted an advising handout that lists suggested elective courses appropriate for each emphasis to allow current students to specialize in specific areas of interest in the absence of tracks.
4. **Faculty and staff are engaged in an on-going agenda of professional growth and development activity to advance their knowledge and skill base as teachers, scholars, and professionals, and their annual evaluations reflect a commitment to teaching excellence and progressive scholarship.** Faculty serve as officers in the Association of Journalism and Mass Communications, the largest association of journalism and mass communication educators; and they regularly publish and present research in refereed academic journals and at major international, national, and regional academic conferences. Faculty and staff also participate in seminars and workshops (some selected on a competitive basis), and faculty have been awarded prestigious fellowships and grants to keep abreast of the latest academic and professional trends in the discipline to enhance teaching and learning curves (see faculty vita at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty1.htm>).

### **III. Program Statement of Curriculum Learning Outcomes, Processes to Assess Outcomes, and Assessment Results**

#### **3.1 Learning Outcomes & Processes to Assess Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the origin, development, and paramount economic, legal/policy, social, and effects issues facing mass media within the context of freedom of speech and press.

Assessment: Performance in media literacy competency courses (four required), student evaluations, and exit interviews/surveys.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of structure and process of mass media industries within economic, legal, and ethical considerations.

Assessment: Performance in media literacy competency courses (four required), student evaluations, and exit interviews/surveys.

3. Students will demonstrate ability to present news and public relations information and images in accordance with legal, ethical, stylistic, aesthetic, and technical considerations.

Assessment: Performance in writing and technology competency courses (four required), performance on capstone assignments (required in writing and technology competency courses), student evaluations, and exit interviews/surveys.

#### **3.2 Learning Outcomes Assessment Results**

1. The vast majority of students earn passing grades in required media literacy, writing and technology competency courses, as well as capstone assignments which are an integral part of the latter two. Moreover, approximately 40-45% of students have maintained a 3.0 GPA.
2. Faculty typically earn above average ratings on the *Student Evaluation of Instruction* instrument. Based on a Likert scale, the instrument assesses presentation, organization/clarity, exams/assignments/grading, dynamism/enthusiasm, general-instructor, and general-course criteria.
3. Exit interviews/surveys indicated that a few course additions would better prepare students for industry demands. Suggested courses include PR writing, journalism and new media (particularly web page design and publication), news producing, and media management.

## **IV. General Statement of Program Condition**

### **4.1 Program Strengths**

1. The program is one of a select number of communication/journalism programs in the nation that offers a broad-based undergraduate mass communications curriculum with a media convergence emphasis.
2. Though the curriculum emphasizes cross-media scholarship and training, elective options allow students to focus on specific areas of interest, e.g., broadcast journalism, media production, print journalism, public relations, or general media studies.
3. The curriculum offers students a balance of theoretical, conceptual and professional skills instruction.
4. The curriculum encourages interdisciplinary study by allowing students to earn elective credits from other disciplines, including courses in Business Education, English, Marketing, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.
5. Effective, Fall 2008, Mass Communications and Theatre Arts will have independent operational budgets. In addition to strengthening program autonomy, this move satisfies accreditation criteria for both programs.
6. Faculty and staff are engaged in an on-going agenda of professional growth and development activity to advance their knowledge and skill base as teachers, scholars, and professionals, and their annual evaluations reflect a commitment to teaching excellence and progressive scholarship. Faculty serve as officers in the Association of Journalism and Mass Communications, the largest association of journalism and mass communication educators; and they regularly publish and present research in refereed academic journals and at major international, national, and regional academic conferences. Faculty and staff also participate in seminars and workshops (some selected on a competitive basis), and faculty have been awarded prestigious fellowships and grants to keep abreast of the latest academic and professional trends in the discipline to enhance teaching and learning curves (see faculty vita at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty1.htm>).

7. The UTV staff has significantly improved the technical and physical areas of the university's educational access channel, and has increased the quantity and quality of video productions for internal and external clients. Also, the advanced technical capabilities of UTV increases the marketability of our students and enhances industry partnerships, including internships for our students.

In terms of technical upgrades, the staff converted 95% of the studio and control room equipment from analog to digital; upgraded both non-linear editing suites with Apple Mac Pro non-linear editing systems; purchased various field production equipment for Electronic Field Productions (EFP) to include Canon XL1 field cameras, a portal teleprompter, a boom microphone, wireless lavalier microphones, field light reflectors, digital rack monitors, and program microphone cubes. The staff also purchased a satellite down link receiver to allow for recording of satellite programming from non-commercial, educational media outlets such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and relocated the CNN Satellite Digital Receiver from the Humanities building to the UTV control room for recording capability for the student newscast.

In terms of physical upgrades, the staff redesigned equipment layout of the studio control room, which allowed for an unobstructed view between the studio and the control room. Also, the university carpeting division created a flat desk to support the new digital Mackie TT24 audio board and serve as the primary console for various control room equipment.

8. Strong faculty collegiality
9. Students are encouraged to and regularly participate in student media experiential learning opportunities (UTV-13, the *West Georgian*, WUWG-90.7) that are designed to accommodate varying levels of skill competency.
10. Students are encouraged to and consistently secure internships with professional media and business organizations within the local community, metro Atlanta and throughout the United States. Atlanta is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest media market, and students routinely intern with several metro television and radio stations, including CNN, FOX-5, Georgia Public TV, WAGA-TV, WSB-TV, and V-103 FM. Also, in 2005, faculty expanded the Media Day celebration to include an Internship Fair, which has increased internship opportunities for students.
11. Students routinely network with and glean from alumni and media professionals who serve as guest lecturers as well as panelists and participants in the annual Media Day Internship Fair and Honors Luncheon.
12. The establishment of the Mass Communication Society in 2005 and the Broadcast Club in 2007 provides students additional professional development, experiential learning, and social networking opportunities.

## 4.2 Program Weaknesses

1. Unsuccessful searches for tenure-track faculty compromise program quality and stability, as well as professional growth and development of tenured faculty who are in turn responsible for significant advising and service loads. Three of five tenure-track faculty lines are filled with limited term instructors. Two tenure-track faculty lines have undergone unsuccessful searches since 2000 and 2003 respectively, and candidates have primarily cited salary and research resources as concerns, though in 2003, candidates also expressed concern about the department chair being out of discipline (Philosophy). The third available tenure-track faculty line was awarded this academic year (2007-08), and is more competitively funded relative to peer programs. The program is currently conducting a search for two out of three of these lines, and has petitioned the Dean of Arts & Sciences as well as the VP of Academic Affairs to allocate competitive salaries for the two under-funded lines.
2. High turnover of the department chair position has compromised program stability and faculty searches. Since 2003, there have been three appointments, including two interim appointments from the Philosophy and Theatre Arts programs.
3. Though the departmental operational budget has not increased in over a decade, operational expenses have increased due to increasing costs of products and services and faculty and staff growth. Also, the department's static operational budget supports five speech communication faculty lines that Academic Affairs houses within the Mass Communications program without operational support.
4. Salary compression continues to be on-going issue. Salaries budgeted for available faculty lines are not competitive with peer programs; and salary increases have been modest relative to cost of living and insurance premium increases.
5. Class sizes in a few upper-level courses remain too large to accommodate desired, in-depth learning experiences. In such cases, faculty enroll 25-30 plus in upper-level theory/seminar courses with enrollment caps of 20-25; and enroll up to 20 students in skill courses with enrollment caps of 15. The allocation of four full-time faculty lines to serve approximately 275 pre-majors and majors is certainly a contributing factor to large enrollments. This academic year (2007-08), the program was allocated a fifth tenure-track line, which will help achieve more adequate enrollments. Also, enrollments will be more manageable during years in which the department chair is in discipline given his/her part-time teaching load.

6. Given that Mass Communications is a technology intensive program, dependence on student activity fees and end-of-year surplus funds rather than an operational budget to fund technology purchases, maintenance, and repairs compromises day-to-day operational decision-making as well as strategic planning for UTV, the radio lab, and the *West Georgian*. In the absence of an operational budget, for example, UTV staff has redirected human and physical resources from instructional support to internal and external contract work to secure funding for equipment purchases, maintenance, and repairs. Also, the staff lacks funds to hire an “on-call” engineer to manage on-going equipment maintenance and repairs.

### **4.3 Program Future Opportunities**

1. Pursue accreditation with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). Mass Communications faculty have deferred pursuit of accreditation since 2002 due primarily to high department chair turnover and unsuccessful searches for tenure-track faculty. As an ACEJMC accredited program, Mass Communications would join a distinguished list of two such programs within the state (Savannah State University and the University of Georgia), and 19 such programs within the contiguous states of Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Moreover, given that Mass Communications is the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular major in the College of Arts & Sciences, accreditation would strengthen recruitment and RPG initiatives, and advance efforts to position the university as the institution of choice within the robust tier of comprehensive universities, a USG and UWG strategic goal.
2. Strengthen curriculum with course additions that center on PR writing, journalism and new media (particularly web-based technologies), news producing, and media management.
3. Advocate for the program to remain a priority candidate for instructional space in the proposed Advanced Classroom Building. Positioning Mass Communications within the Advanced Classroom Building would allow for a more integrated learning experience and enhance faculty-student relations by housing offices, classrooms and experiential learning laboratories (UTV-13, the *West Georgian*, WUWG-90.7, radio lab, speech labs) in one location. Moreover, the Advanced Classroom Building would afford state-of-the-art digital television and radio production, digital audio and video instructional media, and web-based and wireless technologies to support instruction and experiential learning.

Beyond strengthening the curriculum and RPG initiatives, positioning Mass Communications in the Advanced Classroom Building would significantly strengthen the program's application for ACEJMC accreditation, particularly on the *Curriculum & Instruction* and *Resources, Facilities & Equipment* standards. Additionally, the technological benefits of the building would enhance internal and external public relations, which would strengthen town-gown and alumni relations that yield professional, social, and economic dividends for our students as well as the citizens of West Georgia, metro Atlanta, the state and beyond.

4. Enhance recruitment and RPG initiatives by capitalizing on the unique position of the unit as one of a select number of communication/journalism programs in the nation that offers a broad-based undergraduate mass communications program with a media convergence emphasis.
5. Given the close proximity to Atlanta, the 9<sup>th</sup> largest media market, strengthen partnerships with media/business affiliates and alumni to enhance internship opportunities and improve teaching and learning curves.
6. Given the digital resources and potential audience reach of UTV-13 and WUWG-90.7 via webcasts and podcasts, advocate for enhanced funding to tap these media outlets more to support internal and external public relations to enhance town-gown and alumni relations that yield professional, social, and economic dividends for our students as well as the citizens of West Georgia, metro Atlanta, the state and beyond.

#### **4.4 Program Threats/Potential Threats**

1. Continued turnover of the department chair position compromises program stability and faculty searches.
2. Continued unsuccessful searches for tenure-track faculty compromises program quality and stability, faculty governance, and faculty professional growth and development productivity.
3. Static operating budget, salary compression, and under-funded faculty lines relative to peer programs compromise program quality and stability.
4. Lack of operational budget to fund technology purchases, maintenance, and repairs for UTV, the radio lab, and the *West Georgian* lab compromises quality of instructional support and experiential learning.
5. Potential pursuit of ACEJMC accreditation by peer programs within Georgia and contiguous states juxtaposed against our stifled pursuit may result in diminishing recruitment and RPG statistics.

#### 4.5 Program Utility

1. As of Spring 2007, Mass Communications account for the fifth highest number of majors in the College of Arts & Sciences (including 127 majors and 146 pre-majors). Moreover, over the past seven years (2000 - 2006), the Mass Communications program has conferred the second highest number of Bachelor of Arts degrees (236), and the fourth highest number of overall bachelor degrees among programs in the College.
2. Mass Communications faculty also support two of the most high-demand university core courses, *Public Speaking* (Area B.2) and *Introduction to Mass Communications* (Area C.1).
3. UTV-13, the *West Georgian*, and WUWG-90.7 news and entertainment programming enhance the academic and cultural life of the campus and community. These media also support internal and external public relations, which enhance town-gown and alumni relations that yield professional, social, and economic dividends for our students as well as the citizens of West Georgia, metro Atlanta, the state and beyond.
4. Faculty and staff support numerous campus and community committees and initiatives.

#### 4.6 Program Vitality

1. The Mass Communications program parallels media convergence.
2. Faculty and staff are engaged in an on-going agenda of professional growth and development activity to advance their knowledge and skill base as teachers, scholars, and professionals, and their annual evaluations reflect a commitment to teaching excellence and progressive scholarship. Faculty serve as officers in the Association of Journalism and Mass Communications, the largest association of journalism and mass communication educators; and they regularly publish and present research in refereed academic journals and at major international, national, and regional academic conferences. Faculty and staff also participate in seminars and workshops (some selected on a competitive basis), and faculty have been awarded prestigious fellowships and grants to keep abreast of the latest academic and professional trends in the discipline to enhance teaching and learning curves (see faculty vita at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty1.htm>).
3. All faculty utilize WebCT in some capacity in their courses.
4. All faculty utilize basic multimedia for classroom instruction.

## V. Program Achievements

A.	Percent of students passing licensing, certification, or other accreditation examinations related to their chosen field	<u>N/A</u>
B.	Proportion of graduating students going on to graduate or professional schools	<u>5%-10%</u>
C.	Types of licensure	<u>N/A</u>
D.	How does the department prepare students for licensure?	<u>N/A</u>
E.	Other notable achievements	<u>2</u>

## VI. Student Achievements

A.	Total Published Research Papers	<u>0</u>
B.	Total Presentations	<u>5</u>
C.	Total Internships	<u>75</u>
D.	Total Co-ops	<u>5</u>
E.	Total Scholarships	<u>25 &amp; several HOPE</u>
F.	Total Fellowships	<u>N/A</u>
G.	Total Recipients of Notable Awards	<u>22</u>
H.	Other Notable Student Achievements	<u>2</u>

## VII. Faculty/Staff Productivity

### 7.1. Teaching

A.	Total New Course Developments	<u>3</u>
B.	Total Faculty Teaching Honors Courses	<u>0</u>
C.	Percent of Faculty Involved in Academic Advisement	<u>100%</u>

### 7.2. Research/Productivity

A.	Total Books and Monographs	<u>1</u>
B.	Total Book Chapters	<u>1</u>
C.	Total Peer Reviewed Articles	<u>8</u>
D.	Total Other Shorter Works	<u>10</u>
E.	Total Paper Presentations	<u>6</u>
F.	Total Other Presentations	<u>12</u>
G.	Total In-House Publications	<u>N/A</u>
H.	Total Juried Exhibits/Performances	<u>N/A</u>
I.	Total Other Exhibits/ Performances	<u>N/A</u>
J.	Total Positions Held in Journal Editing/Review	<u>2</u>
K.	Total Faculty Involved in Notable Continuing Education Efforts	<u>2</u>

### 7.3 Public Service

A.	Total Participants in Honors Organizations	<u>1</u>
B.	Total Offices Held in Professional Organizations	<u>10</u>
C.	Total Advisors of Student Organizations	<u>3</u>
D.	Total Participants in Cooperative Consulting Efforts	<u>2</u>
E.	Total System-Wide/UWG Committee Appointments	<u>15</u>
F.	Total Participants in Public Service Activities	<u>8</u>
G.	Other Notable Faculty Achievements	<u>5</u>

### VIII. Grants/Awards

A.	Total Proposals Submitted	<u>1</u>
B.	Total Proposals Funded	<u>1</u>
C.	Total Amount Funded	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
D.	Total Gifts Generated By Program	<u>7</u> Approx. \$15K
E.	Total Contracts Awarded	<u>N/A</u>
F.	Total Fellowships Awarded	<u>2</u>

IX. New Degree Programs or Deletions N/A

X. New Departments or Other New Unit; Also any restructuring of these N/A

XI. Accreditation or Similar Distinction or Renewal N/A

XII. Other Awards, Distinctions, and Achievements 2

\* Data reported in sections V – XII are primarily based on information from departmental annual reports. Some figures, however, are estimates given that annual reports for 2002-2003 through 2005-2006 academic years combined data for Mass Communications and Theatre programs.

### XIII. Cost Efficiency

This section will be completed by the Office of Institutional Research.

## XIV. Action Plan

### Proposed Agenda for 2007-2012

1. **Collaborate with Arts & Sciences and Academic Affairs administrators to explore strategic approaches to address department chair turnover, which will in turn enhance program stability and strengthen the program's application for accreditation.** To this end, the Mass Communications and Theatre Arts tenured faculty have proposed that faculty within each program serve as department chair based on a 5-year rotating term, i.e., a Theatre Arts faculty member would serve one term and a Mass Communications faculty would serve the subsequent term. This proposal would enhance program stability. However, it raises a few concerns.
  - a. It is unclear how an out-of-discipline department chair will impact faculty recruitment and retention.
  - b. The Vice President of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications has advised that a rotating department chair is perceived to be an indicator of inconsistent leadership. Also, she noted that she cannot recall a program with an out-of-discipline department chair being awarded accreditation in recent history, though she allows that it is possible if the person is well versed on the accrediting standards and is a strong advocate for the Mass Communications program.
  - c. A review of program leadership for the 21 accredited programs in Georgia and the contiguous states of Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee reveal no out-of-discipline department chairs. However, to give context to this finding, it is also important to note that none of the programs are housed in departments with out-of-discipline programs, as is the case at UWG, e.g., the Department of Mass Communications & Theatre Arts.
2. **Collaborate with Arts & Sciences and Academic Affairs administrators to explore strategic approaches to address history of unsuccessful searches for tenure-track faculty.** A fully-staffed faculty would strengthen program quality, faculty professional growth and development, and the program's application for accreditation. As noted earlier, candidates in previous searches expressed concerns about salary and research resources. Given, the unique professional orientation of the public relations and journalism lines, it is important that salaries budgeted for these lines are competitive with those of peer faculty rather than humanities faculty within the College of Arts & Sciences. Also, given the proximity of competitive programs, it is critical that the university offers candidates library databases and software that are considered standard resources in the discipline.

To this end, the department chair and program director are in the process of exploring the feasibility of a lecturer appointment, which would allow the program to target candidates who have significant professional experience, but do not hold the terminal degree. Also, the program director will re-open discussions with appropriate library personnel regarding acquisition of a premiere database for the discipline, Communication & Mass Media Complete. Moreover, the program director will conduct a salary audit of peer programs to inform future salary decisions.

3. **Expand curriculum to offer medium-specific tracks to satisfy the demands of traditional and convergence media.** Faculty have completed preliminary drafts of medium-specific tracks that include broadcast journalism, media production, print journalism, public relations, and general media studies. Also, the program director has drafted an advising handout that lists suggested elective courses appropriate for each emphasis to allow current students to specialize in specific areas of interest in the absence of tracks.
4. **Advocate for competitive salaries relative to peer programs to address under-funding of faculty lines and salary compression issues.** Competitive salaries would enhance faculty recruitment and retention. Again, the program director will conduct a salary audit of peer programs to inform future salary decisions.
5. **Advocate for an operational budget increase** to support cost increases of products and services; faculty and staff growth (including Academic Affairs speech communication lines housed within the program); and technology purchases, maintenance, and repairs for UTV, the radio lab, and the *West Georgian* lab. An adequate operational budget would enhance the quality of instructional support and experiential learning. The department chair and program director proposed a zero-based budget which under review.
6. **Contract a consultant to assess the feasibility of pursuing accreditation with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, ideally fall 2010.** Accreditation would enhance program quality, faculty and student recruitment, as well as RPG statistics. Also, as noted earlier, only two programs within the state and 19 programs within the contiguous states of Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee have this distinction.

7. **Streamline Scholarship Application Process.** The program has experienced an increase in scholarship commitments, and is developing a PR plan and a single-form application to promote the scholarships and ease the application process for students. There are seven program-specific scholarships, and four of them were established this academic year.

Dora Byron Memorial Scholarship (\$6100)  
Frances Parkman Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000)  
David S. Parkman III Scholarship (\$700)  
George Fields Whatley Scholarship (\$700)  
Harold Newell Scholarship (\$975)  
Rhubarb Jones Scholarship (\$1,000)  
Times-Georgian (\$1000/one-time commitment)

8. **Enhance recruitment efforts** by launching a new website and program brochure that publicize the strengths of the program.
9. **Advocate for the program to remain a priority candidate for instructional space in the proposed Advanced Classroom Building** (see section 4.3.3 for benefits discussions).

**XV. Critique by Dean of the College**

**XVI. Critique by Dean of the Graduate School (if appropriate)**

**XVII. Critique by Program Review Advisory Committee**

**XVIII. Critique by VPAA**

**Addendum to Follow-up Report to the Program Review for Mass Communications  
(1997 - 2002)**

**The follow-up report to the previous Mass Communications program review (1997 – 2002) submitted by Dr. Jane McCandless, then interim department chair, was incomplete and involved factual errors.\* Therefore, this addendum is submitted to supplement that report.**

1. **Pursuit of Accreditation with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).** Mass Communications faculty deferred pursuit of accreditation due primarily to high department chair turnover and unsuccessful searches for tenure-track faculty. Faculty plan to resume pursuit in Fall 2010, pending making hires for department chair line and three tenure-track, faculty lines.
2. **Unsuccessful Searches for Tenure-Track Faculty.** Three of five tenure-track faculty lines are filled with limited term instructors. Two tenure-track faculty lines have undergone unsuccessful searches since 2000 and 2003 respectively in which candidates have primarily cited salary and research resources as concerns, though in 2003, candidates also expressed concern about the department chair being out of discipline (Philosophy). The third available tenure-track faculty line was awarded this academic year (2007-08), and is more competitively funded relative to peer programs. The program is currently conducting a search for two of three of these lines, and has petitioned the Dean of Arts & Sciences as well as the VP of Academic Affairs to allocate competitive salaries for the two under-funded lines.
3. **Large Enrollments in Upper-Level Courses.** Class sizes in a few upper-level courses remain too large to accommodate desired, in-depth learning experiences. In such cases, faculty enroll 25-30 plus in upper-level theory/seminar courses with enrollment caps of 20-25; and enroll up to 20 students in skill courses with enrollment caps of 15. The allocation of four full-time faculty lines to serve approximately 275 pre-majors and majors is certainly a contributing factor to large enrollments. This academic year (2007-08), the program was allocated a fifth tenure-track line, which will help achieve more adequate enrollments. Also enrollments will be more manageable during years in which the department chair is in discipline given his/her part-time teaching load.
4. **Practicum Curriculum.** Faculty have devised syllabi for practicum courses. Particular attention was given to ensure that workloads are equitable across practica, e.g., newspaper, radio, and TV. Moreover, particular attention was given to ensure that workloads are consistent with the variable credit-hour nature of the courses, i.e., syllabi detail expectations for one, two, and three credit hours. Syllabi may be viewed at <http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty.html>).

5. **Upgrading UTV Equipment.** The UTV staff has significantly improved the technical and physical areas of the university's educational access channel, and has increased the quantity and quality of video productions for internal and external clients. Also, the advanced technical capabilities of UTV increases the marketability of our students and enhances industry partnerships, including internships for our students.

In terms of technical upgrades, the staff converted 95% of the studio and control room equipment from analog to digital; upgraded both non-linear editing suites with Apple Mac Pro non-linear editing systems; purchased various field production equipment for Electronic Field Productions (EFP) to include Canon XL1 field cameras, a portal teleprompter, a boom microphone, wireless lavalier microphones, field light reflectors, digital rack monitors, and program microphone cubes. The staff also purchased a satellite down link receiver to allow for recording of satellite programming from non-commercial, educational media outlets such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and relocated the CNN Satellite Digital Receiver from the Humanities building to the UTV control room for recording capability for the student newscast.

In terms of physical upgrades, the staff redesigned equipment layout of the studio control room, which allowed for an unobstructed view between the studio and the control room. Also, the university carpeting division created a flat desk to support the new digital Mackie TT24 audio board and serve as the primary console for various control room equipment.

6. **Tracking Student Achievements & Building a Sense of Community Among Students.** Two student organizations were established, Mass Communication Society in 2005 and the Broadcast Club in 2007. Both organizations provide students with professional development, experiential learning, and social networking opportunities. Also, the Media Day luncheon has been renamed the Media Day Honors Luncheon with a focus on recognizing the academic and professional development achievements of students.

Historically, only three students were honored for excellence in broadcast journalism, print journalism, and public relations. Since 2004, faculty have expanded award categories to honor 60-70 plus students each year. Award categories include the Academic Excellence Award (highest GPA), Broadcast Journalism Excellence Award, Media Production Excellence Award, Print Journalism Excellence Award, Academic Achievement Award (3.0 GPA or higher), and Professional Development Award (internship, practicum participants). Also the Gordon Watson Award and scholarship recipients are recognized during the luncheon, e.g., Dora Byron Scholarship, George Fields Whatley Scholarship.

- \* **The follow-up response inaccurately reported information regarding the availability of Media Day planning documents as well as the family/maternity leave term for Dr. Camilla Gant, former chair of the Media Day Steering Committee. Media Day planning documents are available upon request from the program office manager as well as the committee chair, and no requests were made to either. Also, the term of family/maternity leave for Dr. Gant was one semester (Spring 2004) rather than ten months, and the length of the term was driven by the interim department chair's preference to not subject students to a change of instructors during the semester.**