

## 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 (optional).**

Academic advising is critical to student success, and without a systematic process in place, academic advising could suffer serious a set-back. The university places strong emphasis on teaching and advising and demonstrates that by assigning a significant weight to teaching and advising during annual faculty evaluation.

We adopt several different means for disseminating information to our students to facilitate advising and the graduation process. Our channels include faculty-student open, informational meetings, four bulletin boards (one at each of two entrances into the communication building on the second floor, another in the middle of the building on the second floor, and one in front of the Communication main office), class announcements, announcement through advisors during advisor-advisee conferences, announcement through faculty advisors during student organizational meetings, announcements during Communication Week (which is a four-day event), and most recently—since fall 2007—a one-page supplement to syllabi devoted to graduation requirements. Each instructor reviews this at the beginning of each semester as s/he

hands out syllabi to students. Starting from fall 2013, we have enhanced the means of imparting this information to students (See #11 below for details).

In the spring of 2013, we conducted a student survey regarding advisement in the department to determine its strengths and weaknesses. A result of that survey (see Section II.6.11 of this self-study) shows that 75.32 percent of the respondents rated the department’s advising as good, very good, or excellent.

Our department provides extra-curricular activities relevant to students’ educational disciplines to supplement classroom experience. Those activities include membership in professional organizations—Society of Professional Journalist, Public Relations Organization—internship, departmental committee assignments, and student media jobs. Efforts to develop our students intellectually include participation in our annual Communication Week, Ayers Lecture series and in *The Anniston Star’s* Community Journalism Conferences.

**Please respond to each of the following instructions:**

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

**Table 9. Student Aid**

**Provide information for each of the two years preceding the accreditation visit.**

**SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIT**

	<b>2011 - 2012</b>	<b>2012 – 2013</b>
A. Total amount of scholarship dollars from funds controlled by institution	\$13,728,737	\$15,081,493
B. Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by institution	2341	2348
C. Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by institution	\$5,864.00	\$6,423.00
D. Total amount of scholarship dollars from funds controlled by unit (Communications Majors)	\$497,163.00	\$465,374.00
E. Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by unit (Communications Majors)	78	73
F. Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by unit	\$6,374.00	\$6375.00

**UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS OR WORK-STUDY APPOINTMENTS**

	<b>2011 - 2012</b>	<b>2012 – 2013</b>
G. Number of students holding appointments	160	149
H. Range of stipends	Range from 1 hour to 450 hours per year at \$7.15 per hour <i>(Courtesy of Jacksonville State University Financial Aid Office, 2013)</i>	

**2. Describe the academic advising process for ensuring that students are aware of unit and institutional requirements for graduation and receive career and academic advising. Attach advising guides, manuals, newsletters or other internal communication with students.**

JSU's student advising begins immediately upon a student's admission to the university, which is several months before that student begins her/his first class at the university. This process is made possible through the university's preview program. On a preview day, prospective students who had either been or hope to be admitted during preview, visit the university with their parents/guardians, browsing through all academic programs (at a central location) to decide or reconfirm their areas of interest. Following that, the students receive a one-on-one advising by instructors in their chosen disciplines. After advisement, they register for their classes before returning home with their parents/guardians pending the beginning of their matriculation semester.

Upon arrival to JSU campus, each new communication student is assigned an advisor within the Department of Communication. Before advisement sessions, students are instructed to bring with them their advisement folders. Those folders contain, among others, student academic transcripts and a degree evaluation document that chronicles a student's academic track record—both at JSU and, if applicable, at the college or university from which the student transferred. At a glance, advisors can determine a student's GPA, number of hours completed, courses completed, grades, and others.

The advisement folders also contain color-coded checklists (please see [Appendix II](#), "Supplementary Information, #4, "Curriculum Advisement Sheet") which correspond to the student's specialty area: pink for public relations, yellow for print journalism, and blue for broadcasting. The sheets provide a quick, easy way for both student and advisor to monitor progress. The color-coded checklists are filled in as a student successfully completes core curriculum, major, and minor requirements.

Before scheduling a session with their advisors, students are asked to check two important documents: Jacksonville State University's current catalog, and the forthcoming semester's scheduling book. Departmental advisors check to determine that all pre-requisites have been met before permitting a student to register. Then, the university's Banner computer system performs a double-check to ensure prerequisites have been met. Banner will not allow a student who has not met course-prerequisites to enroll in that course.

**Career counseling** regularly takes place during advisement sessions. Drawing on updated job files kept in their offices, and their own professional experiences, professors work with students to determine what areas within the field appeal to them, and how their academic performances (for example, in a news writing course) correlate with their goals.

Career counseling becomes most intensive about the time students plan their internships. This happens in their sophomore year and continues as far as it is necessary and up to their senior years. Before an internship is approved, both advisor and student are "on the same page." They sit down together and determine an internship that matches not just a student's career choice, but also fits her/his abilities and temperament, bearing in mind that an internship can often become the gateway to an initial full-time job (as has been demonstrated by many instances when our students had moved directly from internship to permanent full-time jobs).

### **3. Describe availability and accessibility of faculty to students.**

All department faculty members are required to keep regular office hours: at least ten hours per week during fall and spring, and five hours a week during short semesters. They are available to students either on an “open door” basis during those times, or by appointment at other times.

To ensure that students can contact faculty when needed, office numbers, office hours and phone numbers are included in syllabi and posted on faculty office doors. The department secretary has all faculty members’ home telephone numbers should students need to call them at home. Many faculty members provide upper division students with their cell phone numbers, and all faculty members have their business cards displayed in the main office for students’ use.

### **4. Describe student records kept in the unit office and measures taken to assure appropriate security and confidentiality.**

Every student at JSU is now assigned a distinct student number – separate from her/his Social Security Number. This is how students are identified, and it’s the key to securing their files.

Several sets of records are physically kept in the departmental office:

- \* Degree evaluation document which chronicles what courses students have taken, their quality points, their academic status (i.e., clear, or probationary);
- \* Student advisement forms—the color-coded hand-transcribed records prepared by a student’s advisor that separately shows what core, major, and minor courses a student has taken;
- \* Portfolio material—a compilation of a student’s best print, broadcast, or public relations product;
- \* Internship material – the work scripts, press releases, audio and video projects, and other work produced by students during their COM 491 Internship course.
- \* Supervisor’s and internship coordinator’s (instructor) assessment of a student’s internship is also stored with this material;
- \* College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) and English Competency Examination (ECE) scores are also kept in the office – but not the tests themselves.

All this material is kept in locked files. The keys to the files are in the possession of two people: the department head and the department secretary. Faculty have access to this material as needed.

### **5. Describe resources for academic and career counseling that the unit or institution offers to students.**

Our students are counseled on a regular basis by their academic advisors—most of whom are either currently active in the media, or have had extensive professional experience in their subject field. Advisors write recommendations for students, call prospective employers, and act as go-betweens – bridging the academic and professional worlds. Career counseling is assiduously practiced in a student’s senior year, just before her/his internship.

It is earlier in the process, however, that professors work with students to help determine optimal career paths. The old adage, “Do what you love to do,” comes into play here. Students are encouraged to find a niche early, then explore it. If it is print, they are advised to work with the school newspaper, *The Chanticleer* – especially the online edition. They are advised to keep their best clips, and send them out to prospective employers. The same kind of rationale applies to public relations and broadcast students. Recently all our communication students are required to take at least three courses that deal with digital journalism—web design, multimedia production, and social media.

Career counseling is sharpened each April during the department’s communication week, when high-profile professionals from print, public relations, and broadcasting meet with students, exchanging both business cards, and ideas. Media practitioners interact with students in this setting to help them develop their skills – and find that all-important niche.

JSU’s Career Placement Office assists both prospective graduates and alumni in procuring employment in the field. It also opens up valuable co-op experience for students. Once they have earned 24 hours overall, students are helped by career placement to find jobs in their fields. This is not a formal internship, but it aids in developing the skills students need to apply for many highly-competitive internships.

Career placement provides employability skills—teaching students to dress for success, teaching business etiquette, and interviewing skills. The placement office also assists students in writing resumes.

Career placement does not track students in terms of where they are ultimately employed, the alumni office does track employment, and our department, to a limited degree, also tracks its alumni through both its exit interview done every semester and its alumni survey done once every few years to update its alumni record.

## **6. Describe the unit’s methods and procedures to keep students informed about its activities, requirements and policies.**

The department’s requirements and policies are spelled out in the current university catalog. There’s a semester-by-semester breakdown of courses students are required to take. That breakdown is based on the number of semester hours they have accumulated, and is pegged to freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior status.

The department’s requirements and policies are further reinforced by strict adherence to color-coded advisement worksheets, which recapitulate—in unambiguous fashion—the courses students are required to take (see Appendix II. Supplementary Information, #4, “Curriculum Advisement Sheet).

The department utilizes its annual faculty/student meeting to inform and explain to students issues pertaining to changes in curriculum, graduation requirements, and other university/departmental policies and procedures. Instructors regularly communicate important material—such as the imperative that portfolio material be regularly refreshed—in the course of regular classroom lectures, and via handouts.

In an effort to ensure that students and faculty are “on the same page,” any changes in methods, policies, and procedures are communicated to students directly via their e-mail accounts. Posters are also prominently displayed throughout Self Hall, where the department is located, detailing meeting times during which major announcements are made. Such occasions include internship meetings, Public Relations Organization meetings, and Society of Professional Journalists meetings.

To further disseminate material concerning upcoming activities—such as speakers and seminars—the department works closely with the campus radio station (WLJS) and newspaper (*The Chanticleer*) to run relevant public service announcements, notices, and articles. The department also ensures that the University Web site gets, and posts, material in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to regularly check the site.

In fall 2007, the department added an additional method of information dissemination by inserting a one-page matrix in all syllabi in the department. This one page is a synopsis of graduation requirements put in a matrix format which allows a student to check-off all requirements s/he has met. This allows a student to keep track of her/his own progress toward graduation. Each faculty member is asked to discuss this one page, among others, each semester as that faculty member reviews course syllabus with students at the beginning of class. Hopefully, by repeating this action every semester, in all communication courses taken by a student, that student would at some point be forced to look at and complete that form to ascertain her/his status. Not only would this page provide students with a quick and readily available graduation-reference, but it would further facilitate advisor/advisee meetings. When a student keeps track of her/his graduation requirements, advisement meetings become smoother and more efficient.

Additionally, the department has developed a departmental student handbook—similar to the university’s—detailing all requirements and policies pertaining to students in the communication department. This handbook is handed out to all students in classes and in the departmental office as a student visits the office.

**7. 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.**

JSU offers in-house professional-enhancement opportunities for print, broadcast, and public relations students.

\* *The Chanticleer* is the university’s weekly student-run campus newspaper. Co-located in Self Hall with the department, newspaper students—many of them paid—learn the niceties of real-world journalism—replete with deadlines, legal issues, and ethical decisions. They write, edit, and sell advertising space –with the advisement of the manager of student media, Mr. Mike Stedham.

\* *WLJS-FM* is JSU’s radio station. The 6,000-Watt National Public Radio affiliate is a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operation. It is run, and staffed, by students—again with advisement by the manager of student media. Over the years WLJS has played a vital role in the welfare of the Jacksonville community, warning it of devastating tornados, helping residents cope during

paralyzing snowstorms, and providing it with nationally, as well as locally-produced programming. That local programming is student-generated.

\* *WJXS TV-24*. The 11,200-Watt UHF Station reaches a potential audience of 600,000 people in northeast Alabama via antenna, and another 250,000 via cable. While not formally affiliated with the University, WJXS' studios used to be co-located in Self Hall, with the department for well over ten years until 2012 when it moved to a new location in Oxford, Alabama—15 miles from JSU's location. WJXS provided and still provides broadcast students a convenient opportunity to work in a real-world environment. WJXS uses JSU's communication students as paid part-timers. Media professionals work to help students sharpen their skills, readying them for larger market opportunities.

\* JSU's *Television Services* department is a professional organization that does all television work dealing with JSU's athletics—football, basketball, softball, soccer, baseball, hockey, etc., graduation ceremonies. It also produces and airs—via *WJXS TV-24*—a live show, *JSU Today*. This organization co-habits Self Hall with the Department of Communication and uses our students extensively for all its work. Some—upon graduation—now work for the organization on a fulltime basis.

\* JSU's *News Bureau*, the University's public relations organ, often works with PR students, allowing them to research and write press releases covering university activities.

Professional opportunities are supported and enriched by student membership in two key organizations:

\* *The Society of Professional Journalists* enjoys a robust, active presence within the department. Students meet regularly – both in a campus setting, and on a regional basis. During these meetings they interact with print and broadcast journalists, people working in the profession. The SPJ chapter also sponsors visits by JSU communication students to area high schools to discuss journalism topics.

\* JSU's *Public Relations Organization* is the PR cognate of SPJ. The in-house public relations organization acts to bring real-world practitioners to campus, giving students an opportunity to interact with professionals.

\* *Communication Week*. In April of each year, the Department of Communication brings to campus accomplished communication professionals, including our alumni, to speak to our students, faculty, and staff on a topic of interest to journalism and communications. Each day of the week is devoted to one of the three communication disciplines—broadcasting, print journalism (now digital journalism), and public relations—in our department. On the fourth day we hold an awards banquet to publicly recognize and present awards to outstanding communication students. The week's events provide an opportunity for enhancing students' intellectual ability as well as their understanding and appreciation of the profession of journalism and communications.

\* *The Ayers Lecture Series*. Each year the department presents, in conjunction with *The Anniston Star*—northeast Alabama's internationally recognized regional newspaper—the *Ayers Lecture Series*. Over the years the series has brought to campus a list of luminaries in the

field of journalism: author Gay Talese, Harrison Salisbury and Johnny Apple of *The New York Times*, Edwin Newman of NBC, Judy Woodruff of PBS, and Alberto Ibarguen of the Knight Foundation, to name only a few.

The *Ayers Lecture Series* provides more than just an opportunity for students to see and hear high-profile journalists: it offers communication students an opportunity to interact with them in an informal setting, over breakfast.

**8. Discuss retention and graduation statistics. Describe the unit’s (and, where applicable, campus-wide) policy on academic good standing and dismissal for poor scholarship, including the grade-point average required to remain in the program.**

According to Jacksonville State’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the university-wide retention rate for first-time, full-time, freshmen for the past three years—2010, 2011, and 2012—were 67.82, 66.76, and 87.94 percents respectively, while those of the department for the same period were 68.29, 77.27, and 87.88 percents respectively. While the retention rates of the two entities have fluctuated in terms of which leads the other, the post-accreditation (2008 and upward) retention rate for the Department of Communication has consistently been on the increase (see retention table below).

**Retention Rate Table**

Fall Cohort	First-Time/Full-time Enrollment		Retention (%)	
	Communication Dept.	JSU	Communication Dept	JSU
2007	40	1252	77.50	70.29
2008	27	1243	55.56	68.06
2009	29	1220	62.07	67.95
2010	41	1246	68.29	67.82
2011	44	1384	77.27	66.76
2012	33	1302	87.88	87.94

*Courtesy of the JSU Office of Institutional Research & Assessment*

Similarly the six-year graduation rate for the university for the 2004 through 2007 cohorts have also fluctuated in terms of which entity leads the other (see Graduation Rate table below).

Our department faculty is continuing to seek ways of improving our retention and graduation rates at least to consistently surpass that of the university. One of the ways we are considering is to send our faculty to retention and graduation workshops to learn more strategies that can be infused into our program. Another strategy is to improve on our advising, and to do so, we conducted an advisement survey in 2012. We are studying the results of that survey so as to draw some insights from survey results (see Standard 6, #11 for results of that survey).



### Graduation Rate Table

Fall cohort	Fourth Year (%)		Fifth Year (%)		Sixth Year (%)	
	Com Dept	JSU	Com Dept	JSU	Com Dept	JSU
<b>2004</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>

*Courtesy of*

*the JSU Office of Institutional Research & Assessment*

#### **Policy on academic good standing.**

The department employs a strict, uniformly applied policy governing student standing. Students must pass all communication courses with a grade of ‘C’ or higher. Earning a grade of ‘D’ or ‘F’ twice in the same course renders a student ineligible to continue either as a major or a minor in the department. Communication students must attain a GPA of 2.0 to graduate from the program.

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, students in the university must meet minimum cumulative grade point averages in accordance with the following:

<b>Hours Attempted</b>	<b>Required Minimum Cumulative GPA</b>
0 – 32	1.5
33 – 64	1.7
65 – 96	1.9
97+	2.0

Please see [Appendix II.6.8. “JSU Catalogue Pages: Policy on Academic Standing & Dismissal.”](#)

Jacksonville State University has a tiered approach, shown below, in dealing with academic good standing and, ultimately, dismissal:

- \* *Academic Warning.* A student is placed on academic warning status at the end of any term in which the cumulative GPA is less than the required minimum cumulative GPA.
- \* *Academic Probation.* A student is placed on academic probation at the end of any term following a semester on academic warning when the cumulative GPA is less than the required minimum cumulative GPA. Students on academic probation must limit their course work during the fall and spring semesters to no more than 12 semester hours attempted, and no more than three semester hours attempted during the short terms. To avoid academic suspension a student must maintain a semester GPA of 2.00 or greater, or achieve the required minimum GPA.
- \* *Academic Suspension.* A student is placed on academic suspension at the end of the term following a semester of academic probation – when the cumulative GPA is less than the minimum cumulative GPA required. A student on academic suspension is suspended from the university for one semester, after which s/he may return to school on academic probation.

\* *Academic Dismissal.* A student is placed on academic dismissal following a semester of academic suspension. This happens when the GPA for the suspension semester is less than 2.00, or when the student has not attained the required minimum cumulative GPA.

**9. Describe the unit's placement operation 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.**

Communication internship program is an integral part of the unit's placement initiative. It is largely through the internship program that prospective local, regional, and national employers are identified. Once a student is placed in an internship at one of these media outlets or public relations concerns, the internship coordinator works with the student's supervisor to assist the soon-to-be graduate. Relationships are built on this basis, and bonds forged. Anecdotally, a number of graduates had been offered—and had accepted—jobs with their internship employers.

Communication faculty members works closely with students in achieving job placement. Each faculty member is an expert in his or her own field. Until the end of 2012-13 academic year (May, 2013), we had nine faculty members (6.5 full-time and 2.5 part-time) in the department, and all have some professional experience, most of them extensive. Some, such as Mr. Chandler and Mr. Stedham, continue to be active as practitioners in their fields—print and broadcast respectively. Students counsel one-on-one with faculty regarding prospective jobs. Faculty can then use their own contacts and resources—built over years of professional activity in the media—to help point graduates toward promising potential employers.

The department frequently receives announcements from employers in search of young, entry-level graduates, and they are posted as well as distributed to classes through our instructors who announce the openings at the start of appropriate classes. For example, if a television producer's job opens at WBRC-TV 6 in Birmingham, the announcement of that job is made to students in COM 320, video production and editing; as well as in COM 470, advanced electronic news. Following that, faculty members actively seek out qualified soon-to-be graduates and encourage them to consider applying for these openings. On several occasions, such follow-ups had led to gainful employment for our graduates.

***Placement statistics—2009-2010; 2010-2011; 2011-2012***

It is often not very easy to access these graduates' job places. We rely mostly on the Alumni Office for this. Thus, our rate of success at this reflects that of that office.

There were 32 graduates in 2009-2010, but we were able to obtain job information from only 16 of them. For the 2010-2011 graduates, we obtained 24 job placement information for 24 out of 33 graduates; and for the 45 graduates of 2011-2012, we were able to obtain job placement information from 32 of them. For more detailed information on this, please see [Appendix II.6.9. "Three-year Job Placement: 2009-2012."](#)

**10. Describe the unit's operation, if any, for assistance to alumni in later employment searches.**

Each year, during the department's regular alumni reunion, past graduates are brought together with current students and working media professionals to network – exchange business cards, talk about job prospects, and keep in touch with current market needs within their niche. The system is informal and personalized. So far, the department has no active job registry for alumni. However, on its exit interview questionnaire, the department asks graduating seniors to include their permanent addresses to enable the department inform them of any job inquiries the department may receive in case any alumnus/alumna might be in the job market for either a first job or a new one. Response to that question is always 100 percent, although we have had only a few cases of alumni asking for that assistance.

**11. 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.**

As discussed earlier, teaching effectiveness and advisement weighs heaviest among three evaluation criteria at JSU—teaching effectiveness and advisement, scholarly activity and/or research, and professional, institutional, and community service. This speaks to the importance of not only teaching, but also advising at JSU, since good teaching cannot be dissociated from good advising.

Faculty members are required to post their office as well as class hours on their office doors and in their syllabi so that students will know when to meet with them for advising. Faculty members have open-door policy and can see students either during office hours or outside their office hours by appointments. Faculty must schedule office hours within times that are practical in terms of student utilization. For instance, office hours before 7:00 a.m. are impractical since students may not likely be around at such times. On their own part, students are encouraged to meet with their advisors as often as the need arose during a semester, but they are required to meet with them before registering for, adding and/or dropping a course. The department has a faculty advising worksheet which is regularly updated following curricular revisions. Faculty advisors are required to keep their advisees' advisement sheets accurate, current, and tidy.

The department employs two measures in evaluating its advisement: (a) evaluation of the Student Advisement Sheet, and (b) analysis of both faculty and student surveys conducted by the department.

#### EVALUATION OF STUDENT ADVISEMENT SHEET

Each advisement sheet has designated sections for general studies curriculum, Communication courses, minor-discipline courses, institutional credit courses, general electives, outside area courses (at least 72 hours from outside Communication), arts and sciences area (at least 53 hours in Arts and Sciences), and comments section. (Please see Appendix II. "Supplementary Information #4, Curriculum Advisement Sheets.") All areas are to be carefully completed by each advisor (for her/his advisee), providing comments regarding the highlights of each meeting with an advisee. The advisor and advisee will sign their names after each meeting. At the end of each semester, the head of department goes through the worksheets, documents the

status of each, and sends his feedback to any faculty member(s) whose advisement sheet is found wanting in any area. This provides a basis for the department head to evaluate the instructor's performance on advisement at the end of the academic year.

Since 2007, the department periodically conducts a survey of both students and faculty to determine the effectiveness of its advisement mechanism. For the survey instruments used for this data collection, see Appendix II.6.11. "Student and Faculty Academic Advising Survey Instruments". Reported below are results of such surveys conducted in 2012-2013.

## ACADEMIC ADVISING SURVEY REPORT

**Student Survey Report:** Prepared by:  
Institutional Research & Assessment,  
Office of Planning & Research  
March 2013

The Department of Communication (COM) invited 259 students who majored in Communication to participate in an online Student Advisement Survey in spring semester 2013. The purpose of the survey was to learn how well the student advisement provided by COM was conducted and received. The results will be used to guide the improvements needed for its programs and services. The survey, consisting of eight questions, was developed by the department. Institutional Research and Assessment in the Office of Planning and Research provided the population data. Following the initial invitation, 3 subsequent reminders were sent. The survey was open from February 5 through February 28, 2013. Of the participants, 90 or 34.75 percent responded to the survey. The results are tabulated below.

Students provided answers to demographic as well as basic questions such as classification, concentration, frequency of meeting with advisor, and meeting arrangements with advisors, among others (see tables below).

When asked to rate the overall quality of student advising in the Department of Communication, 75.32 percent rated it from good to excellent, 15.58 percent rated it as fair, while 9.09 percent rated it as poor (see tables below). We are pleased that a large majority of our students seem to give our advising system a strong endorsement, but we are still concerned about those who do not share that view, especially the 9.09 percent who consider our advisement to be poor. To seek ways of improving, we asked respondents to provide suggestions for improving student advisement in the department, and eight percent of respondents provided suggestions. Those suggestions are bullet-listed after the tables below.

### A. Classification:

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Freshman	15	17.24
Sophomore	21	24.14
Junior	25	28.74
Senior	26	29.89
Total	87	100.00

Missing values excluded

**B. Concentration:**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Broadcasting	31	35.63
Print Journalism	15	17.24
Public Relations	37	42.53
Undecided	4	4.60
Total	87	100.00

Missing values excluded

**C. How often, on the average, do you meet with your advisor in a semester?**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
None	5	5.75
Once	40	45.98
Twice	28	32.18
Thrice	7	8.05
More than thrice	6	6.90
I have no advisor	1	1.15
Total	87	100.00

Missing values excluded

**D. Please state below why you have not met with your advisor.**

- I declared my major at the end of the semester. He/She was busy with exams.
- I have met with my advisor one time since I changed my major to PR in Fall 2011. When it is time for me to register for classes, he asks me to email my trial schedule to him and he sends me my pin number.
- I have only met with my advisor to approve my schedule.
- I met with my advisor last semester, but I haven't met with him this semester yet.
- I only meet with my advisor in order to receive my pin number to register for classes for the following semester.

**E. How long does each advisement session between you and your advisor last?**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than 1 hour	71	88.75
1-2 hours	8	10.00
Longer than 2 hours	1	1.25
Total	80	100.00

Missing values excluded

**F. What's the process of arranging an advisement meeting with your advisor?**

**a. A meeting is initiated by:**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
my adviser	2	2.47
me (student)	60	74.07
either party	19	23.46
Total	81	100.00

Missing values excluded

**b.**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
I call to make an appointment	55	70.51
I walk in without appointment	23	29.49
Total	78	100.00

Missing values excluded

**c.** Walk-ins are not time-efficient: an instructor might be with another student or students; hence

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
I don't like walk-ins	47	61.84
I like them despite that	29	38.16
Total	76	100.00

Missing values excluded

**G.** Please rate, based on your experience, the quality of student academic advisement in the Department of Communication.

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Poor	7	9.09
Fair	12	15.58
Good	27	35.06
Very good	13	16.88
Excellent	18	23.38
Total	77	100.00

Missing values excluded

**H.** Do you have any suggestions for improving student advisement in the department?

Eight percent (22 students) of the respondents offered suggestions for improving student advisement. They are as follows:

- Advisors should be able the help students and point them in the right direction. I have attended JSU for 3 years, advisement would be helpful if advisors would care, not just handout registration codes.
- Advisors should be more flexible. They should also be more helpful when students have important questions concerning particular courses and minor fields. Advisors are not always friendly, which is a huge turn-off to students.
- At times my advisor judges me and my grades. All students are not going to make straight As. Sometimes I feel like I am going to therapy and not advisement. I do not feel like it is his job to say some of the things that he does when he does not know my personal situations.
- Be. More organized and communicate when advisement is.
- For advisors to sit down and really go over the classes you need in order to graduate. I know it is a student's responsibility but it is very helpful to hear from and advisor if you are on the right track
- Help the student plan more efficiently for the classes he or she needs to take in order to graduate in a timely manner. Do not just sign off on the classes he or she presents. Help to lay

out the best course of action as to what to take and when.

- I feel like my advisor could show more interest and concern in making sure I am on the right track instead of making me feel rushed to get out of there.
- I just felt it was a little bit scattered and unorganized rather than relaxed and efficient. I felt like it was only to get my registration code rather than discussing my scheduling plan over my time here. But overall it was good.
- I was not aware of making a portfolio until this year. I'm sure I was told this in my Mass COM class, but it would have been helpful if my advisor had given me reminders or suggestions, so I can be prepared for internship interviews with my portfolio.
- I wasn't made aware of the need for a portfolio by my advisor. Thankfully one of professor made me aware of this in class. Also there was no check list of things that needed to accomplish outside of course. It would be helpful if the advisor would do this with each meeting to keep students aware of progress towards graduation. Also advisors should mention participation in concentration specific groups and organizations.
- I've heard of a Capstone project, but I don't know what it is, so I think that needs to be explained during advisement. I also know students that didn't know that they were supposed to have a portfolio. A lot of us also don't know when advisement is supposed to start. When I was a psychology major, my adviser would email us saying that advisement would be starting soon and to go by her office and sign the sheet on her door for a meeting time. That might be efficient for the Communication department also.
- Make sure all the advisors know what it takes for students to graduate. I'm a junior, and though I love being part of our communication department I do need to graduate eventually and I want to know I'm on the right track.
- More advisors for broadcast students, this year even though I had a scheduled time to meet with my advisor, I had to wait forever because of walk-ins and because of the surplus of broadcast students
- My adviser is very cold and uninviting so much so that I avoid seeing him.
- My advisor was playing video games when I was trying to talk to him. I had just changed majors and I was very confused so he was very unhelpful. I had tried to use the online catalog to make my schedule but it is listed wrong in the glossary so I went online to the COM website to make it, apparently I did it wrong and he made me feel like an idiot for putting some of the things I did. I want a new advisor.
- New channels of communication like cell phone text messaging, etc.
- Some advisor's really need to be more concerned and take students seriously when they are very concerned about their last year for graduation. Some advisors may be busy with other things going on in the department but it is very essential for advisors to answer emails and all phone calls. Advisors should care more and even contact students to make sure they are on the right track and not missing anything.
- The advisers should check on their students more than just once a semester because the only time most students go to see their adviser is when the student actually has to go see his or her adviser when they need the code to login and register.
- To be more patient and suggestive on the specific classes needed to graduate on time, instead of leaving it up to the student to figure what he or she wants to take. A list of the classes needed then a selection per semester would be great instead of having to figure it all out each semester!
- Well I would personally like to see better equipment.

### ***Faculty Advisement Survey Report***

The department head put a one-page questionnaire in all faculty members' mail boxes in spring of 2013. Faculty members completed and submitted the questionnaires into the department head's mail box. Our full-time and one part-time faculty members participated in the survey in order to express their opinion of our advising program in the department. We included our part-time faculty member, Mr. Mike Stedham, because he functions almost like a full-time faculty—he volunteers to advise students, and participates in all faculty meetings and activities. As a 12-month-contract staff, he works eight hours a day, and, consequently, is in the department for longer hours than other faculty members. He very much enjoys working with students. The department head, who conducted and analyzed the survey, recused himself from participating (completing) in the survey. Five faculty members—from broadcasting, public relations, print journalism, and a generalist—responded to the survey.

When asked how often they met with students per semester, one faculty member reported meeting once, one answered thrice, and the remaining three answered twice per semester. Four of the five instructors reported that every advisee of theirs meets with them at least once a semester, while one indicated that, "Sometimes advisees [sic] fail semesters, or take time off."

On the length of advisor-advisee meetings, all faculty members indicated that their meetings with each advisee lasted less than an hour.

When asked to rate the quality of the department's advising system, one faculty rated it as excellent; two rated it as good; and another two rated it very good. Thus, 60 percent of our faculty rated it as very good or excellent (please see tables below).

Question: How often, on the average, do your advisees meet with you in a semester?

#### **Table of Frequency of Advisement Meeting with Advisor**

	<u>Once</u>	<u>Twice</u>	<u>Thrice</u>	<u>None</u>
Number of faculty:	1	3	1	0

---

Question: Please rate, based on your experience and perception, the quality of student advisement in the Department of Communication.

#### **Table of Quality of Advisement in the Department**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
Number of faculty:	0	0	2	2	1

---

The last question was phrased in a way that will ensure a response (with suggestions), particularly from students. We asked both faculty and students to provide suggestions as to how to improve the department's advising.



### ***Student Suggestions***

Although majority of students (75.32%, see table 7 above) rated the department's advising as good, very good, or excellent, this question elicited some specific comments. Eight (8) percent of the respondents provided some suggestions for improvement. They included, among others, "New channels of communication like cell phone text messaging, etc."; "Be. More organized and communicate when advisement is."; "Make sure all the advisors know what it takes for students to graduate. I'm a junior, and though I love being part of our communication department I do need to graduate eventually and I want to know I'm on the right track."; and "Well I would personally like to see better equipment."

When the different student suggestions were collated, it became clear that the suggestion with the highest frequency had something to do with graduation.

### ***Suggestions by faculty***

- A. "Continue to follow uniform style of advising so that any faculty available can advise student without regard to sequence."
- B. ". . . More of the process needs to be automated. At the same time, the Banners system software makes interpretation very difficult."
- C. "In a department-wide student/faculty/staff gathering, we should emphasize the importance of close advising."
- D. The list of current advisees on MyJSU should be purged and updated more frequently."
- E. (1) ". . . make simpler the registration process for students doing media workshops . . . bypass for com majors who have junior standing (to enroll)."  
(2) "Provide someplace on the website where a student can download a PDF file—academic advising check sheet, specific to each concentration."

On the whole, three things seem to stand out in the two surveys conducted.

- A. Students and faculty appear to agree on the quality of our advisement program. Our advisement quality is rated as good, very good or excellent by 75.32 percent of those students who were surveyed and by 60 percent of our faculty.
- B. Student suggestions with the highest frequency appear to be graduation-related.
- C. Many of the things that students are asking for already exist without students taking advantage of them. For instance, requirements such as portfolio, exit exam, exit interview, CBASE exam, ECE exam, to name a few, are all covered in the Graduation Requirement form which the department developed several years ago and is attached to every syllabus in the department and given out at the beginning of each semester. Thus, the challenge for our faculty is to innovate and come up with a strategy that will make it a requirement that students read and assimilate those policies that already exist.

### ***Response to survey results***

In fall 2007, we developed and included a one page form—Graduation Requirements—in all syllabi in the department (see a sample of this form below). At the beginning of each semester, a course instructor, as s/he introduces the course syllabus, devotes some time to discuss that page of graduation requirements. While students may not read their syllabi frequently, we expect that by calling attention to the content of this page in every communication class and over several semesters, there should be a noticeable difference in their level of knowledge of graduation requirements. We said at that time that we will rely on future study to confirm or disconfirm this expectation, and would respond in accordance with results of such a study.

As this self-study results show, there is still some concern among our students concerning graduation requirement. Although, this concern is expressed by only eight percent of the respondents, yet we consider it necessary that we take action to improve their knowledge of information in the department.

Consequently, we came up with a means of ensuring that every student knows and understands the contents of the Graduation Requirements form attached to all syllabi in the department. Below is a list of actions we have adopted to address this issue.

- (a) Have students bring the Graduation Requirements form to each advisement session.
- (b) Discuss with them what they think about the form. "Is it clear? How could we improve it so that you know more about graduation requirements?"
- (c) On the column for "Expected Completion," have the student put the semester during which he or she plans to fulfill that requirement. That will give the student a realistic estimate of when he or she will be able to graduate.
- (d) Place a copy of the Graduation Requirements form on department's website so that students will have another way to access the form.
- (e) Record this meeting in the regular advisement form which you & the student normally sign at the end of each advisement meeting.
- (f) Include Graduation Requirements form in the department's Student Handbook.

## Department of Communication Graduation Requirements

*Dear Communication student, this form is for your own record. We want you to use this form to evaluate yourself to assist you in knowing how far or how close you are to graduation. Note that this form is not a substitute for the university catalog, the student handbook or for consultation with your advisor regarding your graduation status. Keeping your own record here facilitates that process.*

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sequence** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

		YES	NO	-----COMMENTS-----
1.	Completed 32 residency hours (i.e., at JSU)?			
2.	Has no more than 12 hours of correspondence work?			
3.	Completed General Studies?			
4.	Completed Remedial courses (if applicable)?			
5.	Has a minor area of study?			
6.	Completed 128 hours with 2.0 avg on all work?			
7.	Has "C" or better on <u>each</u> minor & major course?			
8.	Has 52 hours of courses in 300 or above level?			
9.	Has 12 hrs. advanced work <u>in major</u> at JSU?			
10.	Has 6 hrs. advanced work <u>in minor</u> at JSU?			
11.	Has 39 hours in communication?			
12.	Has passed the ECE?			
13.	Has taken the CBASE?			
14.	Has taken the Exit Exam?			
15.	Has met the 80/65 requirement? (Consult with your advisor on this)			
16.	Has completed & submitted a capstone project?			
17.	Has had Exit Interview?			
18.	Has completed & submitted a portfolio?			
19.	Has satisfied all departmental requirements? (Consult with advisor)			

### Notes Section