

**Part II, Standard 6. Student Services**

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**Executive summary:**

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

The school has established a strong system for guiding students toward academic success. This puts SJMC in alignment with its parent university, which made student success a cornerstone of its 2010-2015 strategic plan.

The university and all colleges and schools have adopted performance indicators that place great emphasis on increasing retention and graduation rates. Because at least half of SJMC students transfer from community colleges, the school pays special attention to creating a seamless transition and promoting a timely graduation.

In the past five years, SJMC has taken many steps toward improving its Office of Student Services. They include:

- Professionalizing the student advising process, which is now done by five staff members trained by FIU's College of Undergraduate Education (UE) as student advisers.
- Of those five advisers, four have master's degrees and the fifth is in the process of completing that degree. One adviser is working toward a doctoral degree.
- Reflecting the school's ethnic diversity and cultural sensitivity, two of the five advisers are Hispanic, one is African-American and one is Afro-Caribbean (Jamaican).
- One adviser is a "bridge" adviser. Besides being a full-time adviser, she serves as a liaison between the SJMC and UE.
- The school participates fully in FIU's Graduate Success Initiative (GSI), a long-range program that the university implemented to provide students with a clear path to graduation. (See below.)
- That participation includes taking on the task of advising any student who has declared an SJMC major, even if that individual is a freshman not yet formally admitted to the school.

This change has impacted the way the students see themselves as part of the SJMC, and on their access to the school early on in their FIU careers. The emphasis on professionalizing advising services is also reflected in the fact that the associate director of the SJMC Office of Student Services has a strong background in statistics and data analysis, and can give the administrative team detailed analysis of trends related to student success.

The closeness between the SJMC leadership team and the Office of Student Services enables the school to anticipate problems such as course bottlenecks and respond to them in a timely manner.

SJMC participates fully in FIU's new bridge program with Miami-Dade College (MDC), the community college from which the university gets most of its transfer students. That includes reaching out and fully informing MDC advisers and students about SJMC programs and requirements.

As part of the Graduate Success Initiative program, SJMC has adopted four-year and two-year curriculum maps for each undergraduate major. Those maps are part of the students' advising process early on. They inculcate in the students the need to plan ahead as they progress toward graduation.

Besides these student success initiatives, the Office of Student Services is involved in the school's efforts to foster "esprit de corps." That includes the "Grad Bash" celebration for graduating seniors launched in spring 2013 and the "Fresh Bash" ceremony for freshmen and transfers that debuted in fall 2014. Faculty participate in these events, but academic and career advising are not among their responsibilities.

**1. Complete and attach here Table 10, "Student Aid."**

	2012 - 2013	2013 -2014
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIT		
Total number of scholarships from funds controlled by institution	27	26
Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by institution	174	159
Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by institution	\$1,000	\$1,497
Total of scholarship dollars from funds controlled by unit	\$28,000	\$23,500
Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by unit	20	15
Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by unit	\$1,000	\$1,000
UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS OR WORK-STUDY APPOINTMENTS		
Number of students holding appointments	3/19*	3/25*
Range of stipends	\$500-\$4,400/ \$180-\$5,564*	\$500-\$4,400/ \$260-\$7,306*
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIT		
Total of scholarships from funds controlled by institution	3	3
Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by institution	5	\$0
Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by institution	\$	\$0
Total of scholarships from funds controlled by unit	\$2,000	\$1,000
Number of students receiving scholarships from funds controlled by unit	4	2
Median individual scholarship from funds controlled by unit	\$500	\$500
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS OR WORK-STUDY APPOINTMENTS		
Number of students holding appointments	7	7
Range of stipends	\$3,750/ semester	\$3,750/ semester

\* First set of figures from SJMC; second set from FIU for work-study students only

**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. (These documents can be placed in the appendices binder.)

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication takes pride in offering students the necessary tools to succeed in all programs. SJMC advisers engage in one-on-one advising

sessions with each student. This helps to reinforce the school’s commitment to each student that everyone is an individual with distinctive needs.

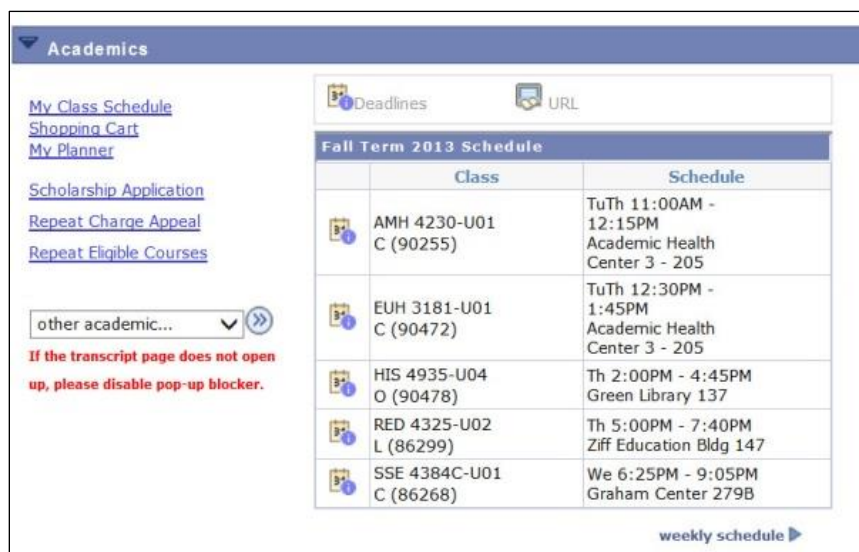
The university-wide Graduate Success Initiative (GSI) enables better tracking of students and their individual progress to help facilitate retention and graduation. GSI is an extensive, university-wide set of innovations dedicated to helping students succeed academically.

Key ideas behind GSI:

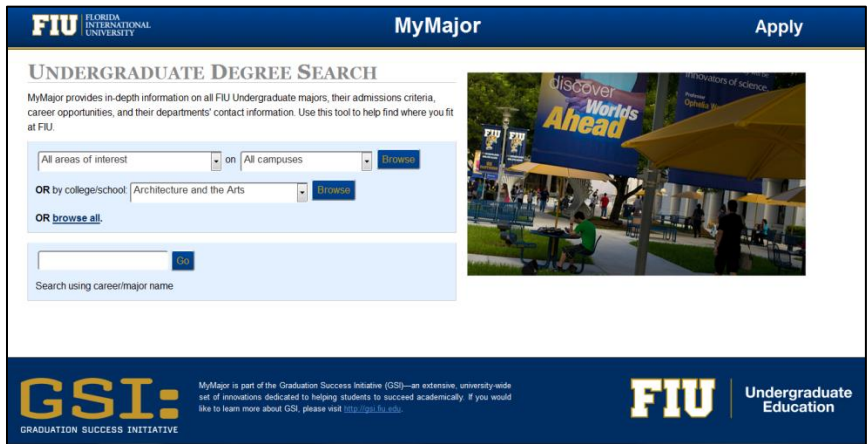
- Help students find their academic home as early as possible -- an appropriate major that matches their interests, abilities, and goals.
- Provide students with a clear path to success: timely graduation in their appropriate major.
- Give students immediate feedback and support if they get off their path to success.
- Remove barriers and add supports for students as they progress on their path to success.
- Reach out to students proactively with guidance and not wait for them to contact their adviser.

GSI includes a suite of technological tools which help the student and the advisers stay connected and know where the student is going, how to get there, and whether or not they are on the right track:

- **MyFIU** — Student’s online center for academic and campus life.



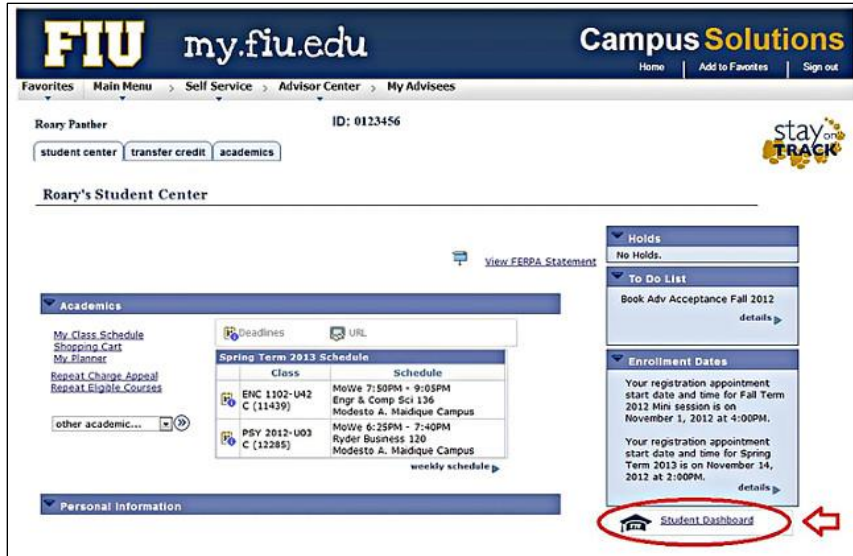
- **MyMajor** — A searchable database of information on all FIU undergraduate majors which includes Major Maps (semester by semester paths to on-time graduation).



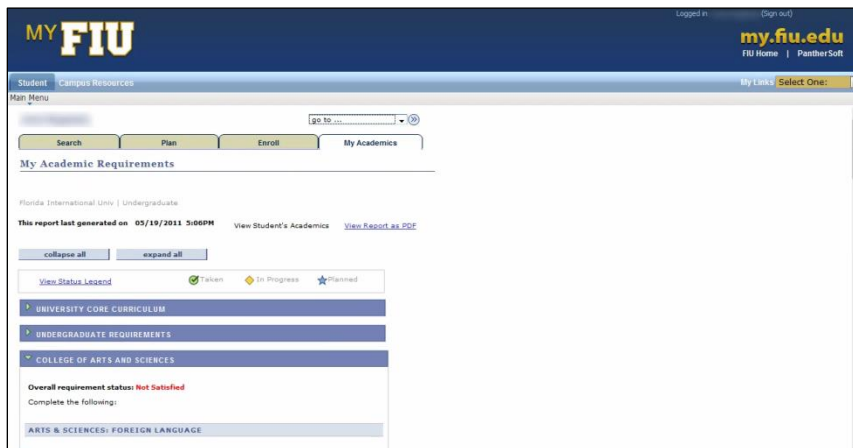
- **MyMajorMatch** — An online occupational interest inventory that links students' occupational interests to FIU majors.

<p>4. Your top five clusters will appear on the result page by default.</p> <p>5. Your results are based on the Federal 16 Clusters. To view all 16 clusters based on your assessment results, click "See All Results."</p> <p>6. If you wish to add a specific cluster to favorites, click .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your favorites are added to "My Portfolio" under "Career Goals."</li> </ul> <p>7. Scrolling down the page allows you to view "Academic and Career Exploration at Florida International University."</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Interest Cluster Ranking</b></p> <p>Click on the title of any cluster to learn more about it and the jobs in it. Click on the star to save this cluster in your portfolio.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources</td> <td>83</td> </tr> <tr style="border: 2px solid red;"> <td></td> <td>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics</td> <td>70</td> </tr> <tr style="border: 2px solid red;"> <td></td> <td>Architecture and Construction</td> <td>63</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Finance</td> <td>63</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Information Technology</td> <td>62</td> </tr> </table> <p><a href="#">See All Results</a></p> <p><b>Academic and Career Exploration at Florida International University</b></p> <p>As you study your results and options, you can learn more about the majors at FIU by clicking on <a href="#">MyMajor</a>. This site provides program descriptions, admission criteria, career opportunities, contact information and a major map showing program course requirements. When you have selected or confirmed your major, click here to return to <a href="#">MyFIU</a>. If you are a new FIU student you will be asked to change or confirm your major. If you wish to change your major after you have paid your tuition deposit, you can do this by seeing an <a href="#">academic advisor</a>.</p> <p> Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources</p> </div>		Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	83		Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics	70		Architecture and Construction	63		Finance	63		Information Technology	62
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- **My e-adviser** — an automated tracking tool that provides student and your adviser with immediate semester-by-semester feedback regarding their progression on their Major Maps.



- **PDA (Panther Degree Audit)** includes many useful tools for students and their advisers, such as assessing what is left to graduate, planning how to get there, and registering for specific courses.



FIU was an inaugural winner of the Most Visible Progress (MVP) award in 2013 by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). This award recognizes the efforts of the university for successfully retaining and graduating students while promoting the school as a model for other institutions to follow. The award serves to further enhance APLU’s “Project Degree Completion,” which is a joint effort with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to achieve a national goal of having 60 percent of U.S. adults possess a bachelor’s degree by 2025.

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

Faculty are required to keep regular office hours – four hours per week per three-credit course -- and be available by appointment. Many faculty members meet with their students before and after classes.

Faculty schedules are included in course syllabi, which are posted on the SJMC website. Office hours are also posted with comprehensive contact information (office phone number, email address, office room number, class hours and office hours) in the school's main office. Some faculty also post their hours on their office doors.

Students can communicate with faculty via email. Faculty also hold office hours via Adobe Connect, a videoconferencing application available independently or directly through Blackboard. Synchronous chats are also available in Adobe Connect. Faculty and students communicate through Blackboard mail and faculty can also send group e-mails via myFIU.

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

The office keeps a detailed database and physical files of all SJMC students. Academic advisers ensure that all students have paper files, organized with documents pertaining to each student, e.g., applications, transcripts, advising sheets, certificates, e-mail communications, signed-forms, and petitions. These files are also updated during individual advising meetings. At completion of degree, a student's file is placed in inactive status within a secure location.

The Student Services office is in the Academic 2 Building, Room 230, at FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus on the same floor as classrooms and the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication. The office has only one entrance. The office devotes two full storage rooms to student files. The rooms are kept locked at all times and only supervisors and advisers have full access to the area. SJMC strictly adheres to FERPA laws and no person is allowed to enter and gain access to this room without proper permission and close supervision.

The office record-keeping system is equipped to handle both paper-based filing and electronic-format filing. My E-adviser includes a record of advising notes that both students and advisers may view at any time.

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

Within SJMC, students have access to a large number of support services. They include the following:

**Academic Advising**

Advising is and will be a one-on-one platform at the school due to the specifics of its tracks and the diversity of students. More than 70 percent of students require regular advising in order to fulfill degree requirements. The most common challenges are:

- Passing the language skills test required for Writing Strategies
- Reaching the necessary 3.0 cumulative GPA to be fully admitted into a major

The advising process begins at the time students arrive at FIU as freshmen or transfer students and ends in the semester in which they graduate.

The advising process includes these components:

### **Freshman Orientation**

All freshmen entering FIU are obliged to participate in a freshman orientation session that is offered on both campuses, before the registration period begins. The student orientation handbook is attached as APPENDIX K. SJMC advisers are part of these informative sessions, at which they provide details about the majors. They explain requirements such as minimum GPA and core curriculum courses. Advisers also talk about courses and grades needed to be fully admitted into an SJMC program in a timely fashion.

### **Transfer Orientation**

All transfer students are encouraged to participate in an orientation session and to take advantage of an early registration period offered exclusively for them. The sessions are provided before normal registration for a given semester.

SJMC advisers meet with students in breakout sessions by majors that last 45 minutes to an hour. They make students aware of program requirements and offer schedule options based on the courses that will be offered in that semester so that they can register that day.

Advisers also discuss prerequisites and the importance of observing them at the time they are planning their coursework for the next several semesters. The staff briefly explains FIU's transfer credits policy and university procedures. Finally, advisers can remove advising holds that students might have on their FIU accounts.

### **SJMC Mass Communication Orientation (MMC 3003)**

This mandatory course typically occurs at the beginning of the student's junior year. It is also required for full admission into the upper division program. Transfer students use this opportunity to meet their advisers. Student Services is responsible for the course and the entire advising team interacts with students during the sessions.

The school schedules three MMC 3003 Mass Communication Orientation sessions during the fall and spring semesters and two sessions in the summer semester. Every session is capped at 120 students, and is offered in an in-class format, with a three-and-one-half-hour timeframe. Each session covers the following topics:

- SJMC addresses and numbers
- MMC 3003 advising syllabus
- SJMC policies and rules
- FIU policies and rules
- Global learning requirements
- University grading system
- MMC 3104C entrance exam policies and procedures
- SJMC advisement procedures
- What track interests you?
- Advising track sheets
- Advertising
- Broadcast tracks
- Digital Media Studies
- Journalism
- Public Relations
- Area of concentration
- Area of concentration form
- SJMC internship policies and procedures
- SJMC@FIU: a history
- Academic learning compact



- Accessing PDA (Panther Degree Audit)
- Important websites
- Notes
- Student clubs

The objective is to provide students with a comprehensive overview of academic policies, rules, academic procedures and requirements for program admission and graduation. Chairs and faculty members join advisers in discussing the school's programs. Students learn how to:

- Interpret their degree audits
- Plan their paths toward graduation
- Calculate GPA
- Observe the responsibilities associated with obtaining a college degree

### **Advising Sessions**

The majority of students who attended orientation classes come to the Student Services office to seek personal advising. The causes for this can be very different, but the process will be more or less the same for the majority of them. A folder created for each student that contains personal information and graduation status is updated following these sessions, which provide information on the following:

- Requirements for full admission into the program
- MMC 3003 Orientation
- Core curriculum courses
- Foreign language requirement
- Language skills test
- Writing Strategies (MMC 3104C)
- GPA
- Panther Degree Audit

Advisers pay special attention to:

- Transfer work and GPA
- Current cumulative GPA results
- Results to be achieved and a timeframe definition in order to be fully admitted into the program
- FIU standings that measure retention rate, percentage of graduates without excess hours and other measures set forth by the State University System of Florida Board of Governors.

FIU had a 78 percent retention rate for second-year students with a GPA above 2.0, according to the board. The school had a slightly higher 79.65 percent rate. FIU's six-year graduation rate was 52 percent versus SJMC's 58 percent. And the percentage of graduates without excess hours was 70 percent at FIU and 79 percent within SJMC.

In each session, the adviser explains the steps needed to gain admission, such as raising one's GPA, and to earn a degree in a timely fashion. The outcome of that discussion may be that the student pursues a different path, such as an SJMC minor because it has fewer requirements, or a certificate course.

For a transfer student, the adviser explains FIU and SJMC policy on credit transfers. For example, only six credits from another accredited institution can be applied toward SJMC core curriculum requirements. The adviser assists the new student in completing the application form for transfer course credit. Before sending the application to a department chair for approval, the adviser provides the chair with a Student Services evaluation of the student.

## **E-mail Advising**

Students can communicate with advisers via e-mails from their FIU e-mail accounts and ask questions regarding their academic standing with the school. Advisers can remove academic or advising holds via e-mail requests. Advisers can use email to reach students immediately or to resolve issues without the student having to travel to campus for an in-person session.

E-mail advising is very useful to:

- Get assistance during peak advising period when few in-person appointment timeslots are available
- Reach students who have applied for graduation and need to be aware of any missing requirements to earn their degrees
- Help distribute information regarding programs to prospective students.
- Send notifications on grammar entrance exam dates, program changes, requirements and scholarships

Student Services keeps a printed copy of all correspondence in a student's file for future reference.

## **Semester Holds**

Student Services places holds on student records before grades are posted every semester, which prevents them from registering for courses if they do not come for advising. The most common types of holds are:

### **RVS** (advising hold)

For students who have earned 60 or more credits and

1. Did not pass MMC 3003
  2. Cumulative (FIU & Transfer) GPA equal to or less than 2.75.
  3. Do not have a major
- Transfer students admitted for any semester
  - Readmitted students for any semester

### **RWP** (warning/probation hold)

- For active students who have a cumulative GPA below 2.0.

Holds are used for students with low GPAs so that an adviser can assess the situation. In some cases, a signed document officially informs a student of his her standing and the consequences of not reaching required standards within a specific timeframe.

## **Academic Warning And Probation**

Student Services queries its student-tracking system once grades are posted at the end of every semester for students with low semester cumulative GPAs. The system can place a hold, but advisers prefer to ask students to come and see them for specific advice.

## **Pre-graduation Review**

Near the middle of every semester, Student Services queries its system for students with 100 credits or more. Advisers review their files and prepare an audit for each student that defines:

- Missing SJMC courses
- Missing courses outside SJMC
- Missing graduation requirements

Through this process, Student Services:

- Can contact the student regarding any deficiencies toward graduation
- Update files for use at the time the student's graduation application is being processed.

### **Graduation Certification**

The Registrar's Office provides every unit with the graduation applicants for every semester and the deadlines to comply with this process. Graduation certifications are placed in PantherSoft. The fall 2014 semester deadlines are the following:

#### **Undergraduate Fall 2014 Certifications Due Dates:**

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Certifications available for advisers | Oct. 1, 2014                |
| • Advisers and Chairs approval due date | Nov. 7, 2014                |
| • Dean's approval due date              | Dec. 13, 2014               |
| • Grades due                            | Dec. 17, 2014 by 11:59 p.m. |

Applicant files are distributed by majors and assigned to specific advisers, so fulfillment of graduation requirements can be verified. An electronic file in PantherSoft must be updated. Considering that students have not received final grades for the specific semester in which they are applying for graduation, grades for specific semester enrollment must be defined (grade restrictions if any), as well as any other requirements.

Once the adviser reviews the file and notifies PantherSoft whether the student will graduate at the end of the semester, he or she will email the student with the results. Staff members electronically advance the graduation certifications to the dean or dean-designated person, who checks the accuracy of the information and any restrictions in the file and approves the adviser proposal for the student to graduate or not graduate.

### **Scholarships**

Advisers actively promote scholarships. Student Services takes great pride in encouraging all eligible students to apply, especially those under a financial strain. Students are also regularly referred to the Financial Aid Office, which offers aid packages.

### **FIU Services**

Due to the large number of students, FIU provides the following services at both campuses; SJMC students can easily access them. The offices include:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Campus Life                           | • International Student and Scholar Services |
| • Career Services                       | • Libraries                                  |
| • Center for Academic Success           | • Multicultural Programs and Services        |
| • Center for Leadership and Services    | • Student Health Service                     |
| • Counseling and Psychological Services | • University Police Department               |
| • Disability Resource Center            | • University Technology Services             |
| • Division of Student Affairs           | • Victim Advocacy Center                     |
|   | • Women's Center                             |

Referrals are easy and helpful to students in need.

### **FIU First-Year Experience Course**

All freshmen and transfer students with fewer than 30 credits must take a university course, First Year Experience (SLS 1501), typically during their first semester. It consists of a review of basic skills and competencies necessary to college success, including time management, study skills and academic policies/procedures.

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

SJMC uses its website, email and in-person sessions to inform students. The school produces and distributes an email newsletter, "The Wire," every other week during the fall and spring semesters, and periodically during the summer. "The Wire" contains news about the school, including its courses and programs, produced and sponsored events and seminars, faculty, administrators and staff. A bi-weekly e-newsletter, "The 'Ship," informs students of scholarship and internship opportunities on campus and nationwide.

They are supplemented periodically by email blasts announcing courses, certificate programs, events, seminars, and other items of educational and cultural interest to students.

The school promotes interaction with its leadership through the annual Meet the Dean Day, an open session in which the dean meets and converses with students on an informal basis. Student Services conducts recruitment sessions on campus at which student advisers talk face to face with prospective students and provide them with printed information about the school.

SJMC posts its requirements and policies on its website ([journalism.fiu.edu](http://journalism.fiu.edu)). Students can read and download information on requirements for each major on the home page and in the Academics tab. The latter has information on:

- Degree and admission requirements
- Undergraduate majors and minors
- Graduate studies
- School policies, such as admissions waiver
- Advice on how to graduate on time
- Interactive elements such as a GPA calculator
- Forms for changing and adding majors
- Contact information for Student Services

A separate section of the Academics tab provides detailed information on SJMC scholarships, including the application process and a link to the initial application page. A third subsection of the same page describes the language skills requirements and information on the entrance exam, including a registration form.

A fourth subsection describes the graduate programs in Spanish-Language Journalism and Global Strategic Communications, with forms, important dates and course schedules. A fifth subsection lists lab hours, and a sixth describes study abroad programs in detail. A final subsection has course syllabi aggregated for easy access.

**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.**

SJMC has student organizations for three of its five majors and encourages students to join and become active in national organizations such as the National Association of Black Journalists.

The school's leadership and faculty think that these and similar organizations offer connections to real-world experiences, networking with professionals, job resources and the opportunity for life-long social and professional relationships.

Students pay membership dues and meet regularly to plan programming, leadership opportunities, community engagements, special projects, and foster growth among student professionals while promoting their fields and the SJMC.

On campus, the school supports:

- 1) **The Florida International University - William C. Adams Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (FIU PRSSA).** It has been active since 1989. FIU PRSSA was established with the help of the Miami Chapter of PRSA and in 2008 launched a branding campaign to reposition its status. The chapter grew over 150 percent that academic year with more than 30 new members.

The PRSSA remains highly active. In the 2013-2014 academic year, the chapter:

- Recruited 41 new members to join 74 returning members.
- Qualified to apply for the national PRSSA Pacesetter Award after meeting each of five requirements including chapter growth, participating in a national initiative, and engaging in a community effort
- Raised \$340 for the chapter through three events.
- Held networking events, a professional headshot day and an agency tour, and participated in seminars and webinars at the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication.

A full list of activities between 2009 and 2014 appears in APPENDIX L. They include internship and job workshops, scholarship fundraisers, joint events with the Miami area PRSA chapter, agency tours, and attending regional and national conferences.

Faculty member Lynne Farber advises the chapter.

- 2) **FIU Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists:**

The chapter, which formed in 1991, fell into a brief period of inactivity in early 2012. That fall, the chapter was reinvigorated with new leadership when a new adviser, instructor Chris Delboni, recruited six students from journalism classes. They participated in the Excellence in Journalism conference in nearby Fort Lauderdale and received advice from local SPJ chapter presidents on how to structure the organization and attract members. In fall 2012, the chapter rejoined the national organization and its leaders attended the annual Excellence in Journalism conference.

On Sep. 26, 2012, SPJ-FIU, along with the FIU Student Programming Council, hosted its first event, "Hispanics in the Media Roundtable." The speakers were Jorge Ottati of TeleFutura Network's Contacto Deportivo; then-Associate Professor Alejandro Alvarado, Telemundo director of the Hispanic Media Futures program; and Sun-Sentinel reporter Maria Muriel, an FIU alumna.

The chapter became closely tied to the school's South Florida News Service and grew in size and stature. It received the Outstanding Chapter Award for its region in August 2013. SPJ recognized the chapter for its membership growth and creative programming. The chapter's leadership received the award at the SPJ's annual Excellence in Journalism conference.

In spring 2014, the chapter created the “Listen, Learn and Connect: SPJ-FIU Media Conference,” which attracted journalism students, professionals and faculty to SJMC’s facilities. The Florida Atlantic University chapter of SPJ was a special guest.

More than 85 people attended the free, one-day event, which offered sessions on journalism ethics, social media, how to brand oneself, war reporting and photojournalism. Speakers included social media experts, photojournalists from the Miami Herald, SPJ’s regional director and two FIU journalism professors.

The chapter also:

- Participated in “Freedom Writers” student news coverage expedition to Washington (spring 2013)
- Participated in SJMC’s first Media Arts Festival (spring 2013).
- Co-sponsored “Through the Lens” talk at FIU by Miami Herald photographer Tim Chapman, the “First Amendment and Free Food Festival” at Biscayne Bay campus (fall 2013), a talk on internships and Sun-Sentinel and El Sentinel at FIU with the newspaper’s director of recruitment (fall 2013).
- Participated in the Halloween Club Fair at FIU (fall 2012 and 2013) and “Will Write for Food” project on Labor Day weekend (2013).
- Co-sponsored a talk at FIU on racial politics and college football by The New York Times columnist Sam Freedman.
- Held “Ethical Poker Night” at FIU with the SPJ Region 3 Director (spring 2014).
- Conducted “Women in Media” roundtable at FIU (spring 2014).
- Held the “Jobs You Didn’t Know About” workshop (spring 2014).
- Supported student entries in Sunshine State and photojournalism awards
- Conducted workshops on background and fact checking, radio storytelling, photojournalism, and internship application and resume writing.

The chapter is advised by faculty members Chris Delboni and Neil Reisner.

### 3) AdFed FIU

Revitalized in 2010, AdFed FIU is the student affiliate of the American Advertising Federation. AdFed is committed to providing support and education by and for our Advertising majors who are interested in advertising. In the time from 2010 until now the students have held numerous workshops, gone on agency tours, and hosted portfolio reviews. Members have been active in the school, designing flyers, logos and other collateral. The chapter has developed a close relationship with the local young professional AAF affiliate “A2Miami.”

AdFed has created a strong social media presence through Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/213878495325279/>. There, members “practice what they preach” by creating flyers, discussing ad campaigns, and sharing artistic ideas.

The chronology below describes the chapter’s re-establishment and growth:

- Fall 2010 – Ad Fed is reactivated with SJMC Marketing Coordinator Heather Radi-Bermudez as adviser.
- Fall 2011 activities
  - “A Brand Called You” – Workshop/Presentation
  - CRAWL to remember with Ad2Miami
  - Autism Votes Walk and Campaign
- Spring 2011 activities
  - Agency Net – agency tour
- Fall 2012

- Political Advertising: The Truth is Irrelevant – Panel discussion
- Photoshop Workshop
- Illustrator Workshop
- Final Cut Pro Workshop
- Free showing to the University Community of the movie “Art and Copy”
- Fall 2013 activities
  - Photoshop Workshop
  - Agency Night with Sapient Nitro – agency talk, portfolio review

The chapter is advised by faculty member Elizabeth Marsh.

#### 4) Hispanic Journalists

The FIU Student Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists meets regularly at the school. Every semester undergraduate and graduate Hispanic students organize special events for journalism students at the Biscayne Bay Campus; they have participated in a number of events including:

- Volunteering at NAHJ national conferences.
- Producing social media for and volunteering at Hispanicize 2014, the largest annual event for Hispanics in advertising, film, journalism, music, public relations and social media. The event, held in Miami, attracted hundreds of professionals for four days at several venues.
- Organizing in 2014 a panel discussion for students to discuss issues of conflict resolution in the play *Tierra Del Fuego* by Associate Professor Mario Diament. He and the main actress of the Miami production of this play participated in the discussion.
- Volunteering in March 2013 at the 30th Annual Journalists & Editors Workshop on Latin America and the Caribbean on Covering Domestic and Sexual Violence, which was held in Miami.
- Participating in the conference "The Media and the Arab Awakening" in May 2011.
- Volunteering at most of the Annual Journalists & Editors Workshop on Latin America and the Caribbean. They invite the FIU community, and local, national and international media and Latin American communication schools. At one conference, they organized webcasts, and two members led online discussions.
- Participating in the conference "The New Latin American Landscape and the Media" during SJMC Communication Week in March 2011.
- Participating in "Today and Yesterday in Latin American Journalism: Challenges and New Technologies," a debate featuring Latin American investigative journalists.
- Organizing social and training events in conjunction with other local journalism organizations such as SPJ and NABJ.
- Coordinating workshops for journalism students in the areas of radio storytelling, voice and talent coaching and investigative reporting.

The chapter adviser is Mercedes Vigon.

#### 5) Association for Women in Communications

The chapter ceased operations in December 2013 when it was succeeded by THE CREATivators group, which is described below. Until then, AWC offered computer-training workshops every semester. Membership fees helped homeless and abused children, and fund AWC scholarships every semester. Awards totaled more than \$2,500.

The following sampling of chapter activities occurred every academic year:

- Presented three fundraising workshops: Photoshop, InDesign and Dreamweaver.

- Updated the South Florida Media Guide, a recognized media resource, for AWC Florida-Atlantic Professional Chapter.
- Attended AWC Florida-Atlantic Professional Chapter events.
- Awarded AWC Recognition Awards and Scholarships.
- Presented resume workshop.
- Participated in a gift-wrapping at Barnes and Noble as a fundraiser.

The chapter adviser was faculty member Margo Berman, who founded The CREATivators.

## 6) The CREATivators

In the spring semester of 2014, faculty member Margo Berman developed a new student group, The CREATivators. Its slogan "For Innovative U, " is a play on the university's acronym, FIU.

This new group enables students to work with clients and showcase their work. It also allows them to interact with one another in an ongoing forum both on-site through projects and online through Dropbox, Instagram and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/creativators](http://www.facebook.com/creativators).

The group's first client was Jody Rafkind, an FIU alumna and former adjunct faculty member who is now the regional marketing manager for 25 McDonald's restaurants. The students developed campaign ideas for two separate promotions: 1) free coffee with breakfast and 2) a 20 percent FIU student/faculty discount.

They experienced client meetings, creative direction and honest critiques as they would in an on-the-job setting. This was an eye-opening, invaluable experience for them.

In the fall 2014 semester, the group has two new clients:

- South Florida Contenders, a 501(c)3 baseball academy
- Monster Buddy Pillows, created by SJMC alumna and entrepreneur, Natalia Cova Ortiz

Students are creating logos, slogans, websites, twitter accounts, photographic files, collateral materials and public relations campaigns. They are building pieces for their portfolios, making them more marketable.

Faculty adviser Berman is seeking more client relationships for spring 2015 and future semesters to help prepare creative SJMC students for careers in their disciplines.

## 7) National Association of Black Journalists

SJMC sponsored its first student NABJ chapter in fall 2013-14 semester with the cooperation of the South Florida Association of Black Journalists, the professional chapter of NABJ. During the 2013-14 academic year, a core group of students committed to helping the chapter grow and thrive.

The chapter sponsored five programs over a period of six months:

- A tour of Local 10 (WPLG-TV), the ABC affiliate in Miami
- A session with Gregory Lee, the executive sports editor of the Sun-Sentinel, who is also national NABJ president
- A session Jason Jenkins, the vice president of communications for the Miami Dolphins
- A session with Yvette Harris, founder and CEO of Harris Communications



- A session that the chapter adviser, associate professor Neil Reisner, led on how to develop a personal journalism brand

The chapter is working toward registration as an official FIU organization and expanding its membership.

The chapter adviser is faculty member Neil Reisner.

### 8) Kappa Tau Alpha National Honor Society Chapter

The SJMC has had an active chapter in KTA since 1993, and awards deserving students induction into the chapter every spring. Kappa Tau Alpha is a college honor society that recognizes academic excellence and promotes scholarship in journalism and mass communication.

Membership must be earned by excellence in academic work at one of the colleges and universities that have chapters. Selection for membership is a mark of highest distinction and honor.

The chapter adviser is faculty member Michael Sheerin.

### 9) Additional opportunities at SJMC and FIU

Through courses for credit, and on their own initiative and time with the approval of faculty members, students can participate in media opportunities at SJMC. These activities are separate from internships. The activities include South Florida News Service, South Florida Times, and Sea Level Rise Project. They are detailed in Standard 2, section 2.

Outside of SJMC, students can work at FIU Student Media, which produces an independent student newspaper and website, and at the student radio station Radiate FM, also known as WRGP.

**8. Provide the web link where the unit shares its most recent retention and graduation data with the public.** Discuss retention and graduation statistics at the accredited unit level and the processes in place to collect, maintain and analyze such data.

The information is shared with the public on a web page linked to the SJMC website home page: [http://journalism.fiu.edu/#!/Public\\_Accountability](http://journalism.fiu.edu/#!/Public_Accountability). Retention and graduation data are published there and select data appear in Standard 9, section 3.

SJMC participates in the State University of Florida Board of Governors Performance Funding Metrics. They were created and customized to each school or department. SJMC has a set of indicators that are used to measure results required to obtain additional program funding from the state.

As part of same effort, the FIU Office of Planning and Institutional Research created an intranet (<http://opir.fiu.edu/index.html>) so that FIU schools could track their results. The SJMC leadership team meets regularly to discuss these results. Team members examine performance indicators development and discuss ways to improve results.

For students, FIU developed the Graduate Success Initiative, which is described in detail in section 2 of this standard. In fall 2012, FIU launched My eAdvisor, an automated tracking tool that provides a student and his or her adviser with feedback on progress toward graduation and alerts them when the student is off track.

In reference to the Board of Governors performance indicators, although the SJMC's averages are consistently higher than the overall university's, Dean Reis has proposed to the provost a plan to increase our annual indicators for 2014-2015, especially those linked to retention and graduation. That plan includes:

**1) Second-year retention rate for students with GPA above 2.0**

Our latest rate is 79.65 percent vs. an FIU overall rate of 78 percent. The school wants to increase to 81 percent in 2014-2015 by: reaching out to freshmen and involving them in events such as career and professional fairs, guest lectures and speakers, and events such as Fresh Bash, a celebration for all new freshmen and transfer students to take place in August; sending personalized letters from the dean to freshmen, incentivizing them to stay in the program and giving them advice on how to participate in the life of the school; contacting freshmen directly through emails, phone calls and letters; offering advice, including peer mentoring, that may lead to student success and re-enrollment; and starting very early to talk to freshmen about the major maps and block scheduling.

**2) Six-year graduation rate**

Our last available rate is 74.3 percent vs. an FIU overall rate of 52 percent. The school wants to increase this to 76 percent by: changing the curriculum where appropriate to make sure it is not creating any unintended bottlenecks and graduation obstacles (e.g., eliminating one pre-requisite in our capstone campaigns course will solve the problem of having some students in public relations and advertising taking only one required class in their last semester at FIU); creating better communication channels among students, administrators, the faculty, and advisers (e.g., open houses, dean's student advisory council, better newsletter and more frequent direct communication with majors); assessing students periodically to learn of any problems or obstacles (e.g., annual surveys of the whole graduating class, annual focus groups); adopting block scheduling to facilitate planning for students (planned for fall 2015); and better tracking how majors are moving through their programs, to anticipate needs such as number of sections for required courses each semester.

**3) Percentage of graduates without excess hours**

The latest available rate is 79 percent vs. an FIU overall rate of 70 percent. The leadership team is confident that can be increased to 81 percent by: working with freshmen and transfer students, as well as current students, to implement more effective enrollment planning; major mapping; block scheduling; proactive advising; and strategies described above.

**4) Median average wage of graduates**

The latest available median annual wage of graduates is \$33,298 vs. an FIU median of \$40,000. The SJMC will strive to make better connections to the industry and to professional organizations such as the Public Relations Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists, so that students have better access to networking and better-paid professional opportunities. This relates to the lack of a full-time careers and professional counseling staff person dedicated to working with the industry and offering career advice to students. However, it's worth noting that median wages have been sliding slightly for the communications industry, especially for traditional journalists. The school will work to keep its programs on the cutting-edge and ahead of the trends, so that its majors graduate with the best and most employable skills.

It is worth noting that the media annual wage for SJMC graduates has been historically higher than for graduates from other communication schools in Florida, including the University of Florida and Florida State University.

**9. 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.**

Students within the school must maintain the required grade point average (GPA) necessary to continue as degree-seeking candidates at the university. Therefore, they must maintain an academic standing consistent with the university's Academic Retention Policy as outlined in the University Catalog.

This policy states for undergraduate students:

- **Warning.** An undergraduate student whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty.
- **Probation.** An undergraduate student on warning whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty.
- **Dismissal.** An undergraduate student on probation whose cumulative and semester GPAs fall below a 2.0 will automatically be dismissed from the school and the university. An undergraduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 20 semester hours of coursework. The dismissal is for a minimum of one year. After one year, the student may apply for re-admission in the same or different program, or register as a non-degree seeking student.

Academic standing is reviewed at the end of each semester. If a student is dismissed from the university, a variety of services are suspended.

In order to qualify for full admission to the school, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Those who meet that criterion must maintain a GPA of 2.75 within all of the school's courses (including liberal arts courses outside of the school) to meet degree completion standards. All SJMC majors must pass the school's courses with a C grade or higher.

**10. 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.

The school does not provide direct assistance in job placement. FIU has Career Services offices on both campuses which provide similar services. They sponsor career and job fairs in which companies come on campus to recruit students. The school participates in the job fairs at the Biscayne Bay Campus. In addition, the offices have a private "Jobs Line" for FIU students and alumni to which employers regularly send information.

During SJMC's Communications Week each spring, Career Services works with the SJMC Communications Week Committee to provide career panels, résumé-writing workshops and portfolio evaluation experiences with professionals. The office at the Biscayne Bay Campus has been particularly helpful in providing a broad range of services to SJMC students.

While the school does not have a formal placement operation, SJMC students are frequently successful in making the transition from student to professional through the school's extensive contacts in the communications industries and its unique relationship with Spanish-language media. Apart from its historic relationship with local newspapers like The Miami Herald, the SJMC has been able to develop internships and fellowships with newspapers outside of the Miami area

that have increasingly sought to diversify their newsrooms. The Treasure Coast group of newspapers in Stuart, Florida, is a good example of a newsroom that each year has accepted a student as one or more interns and then offered them full-time positions. The school currently has three young reporters working there — all of them of Hispanic background. Other media outlets including CNN Español and National Public Radio. Newspapers such as The Fort Myers News-Press, The Bradenton Herald, The Palm Beach Post and The South Florida Sun-Sentinel have also regularly provided our minority students with similar opportunities.

Additionally, each year the SJMC sends a steady supply of Spanish-speaking journalism, public relations, advertising and digital students to Miami-based Telemundo and Univision. Univision hires more SJMC students than any other media outlet, and has increasingly hired Web- and social media-savvy students — even while they are still attending classes — because of the explosion of Spanish-language broadcast programming.

The SJMC has not had the resources for tracking student employment after graduation, hence it does not have statistics on job placement.

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

The school receives notifications of job openings from employers and posts them in "The 'Ship," a biweekly e-newsletter that is distributed by e-mail to alumni and students. SJMC also posts jobs in a complementary e-mail newsletter, "The Wire," which contains news about alumni, faculty and administrators, programs of interest to all persons and organizations connected to the school. A section

**12. 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.**

The Office of Student Services wholeheartedly endorses the philosophy on advising put forth by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). It defines advising as "an educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students' understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education and fosters their intellectual and personal development towards academic success and lifelong learning."

Advisers in SJMC's Office of Student Services are measured through FIU's Performance Excellence Process (PEP), which the university's human resources division administers ([http://hr.fiu.edu/index.php?name=performance\\_management](http://hr.fiu.edu/index.php?name=performance_management)). FIU is committed to helping employees understand what is expected of them, perform to those expectations, and develop professionally.

PEP is a cornerstone in FIU's efforts to build a performance-oriented culture that promotes annual planning and assessment. It reinforces the university's institutional value of "Strategic, Operational and Service Excellence," and is intended to foster a productive and collaborative work environment, effective communication between employees and supervisors, and timely, regular and meaningful feedback that ensures mutual understanding of performance expectations.

To that end, each adviser in the Office of Student Services is required to write an Assessment and Planning Performance document that includes sections on past year's goals and achievements; past year's professional development goals; and competencies that includes accountability, supervision, efficiency and service excellence.

In addition to the written review, an in-person performance review meeting follows with the adviser's supervisor, with a candid discussion about what was accomplished in the past year and quality and professionalism with which the results were accomplished. The review meeting includes setting clear and sufficiently challenging goals for the next fiscal year. Advisers have to explain how the unit and employee help the university achieve its performance goals, especially the new performance metrics of student retention and graduation rates.

Some competencies that are measured and rated (on a scale of 1-5) include working with students, faculty and staff, to assess needs, provide information or assistance, resolve concerns, and satisfy expectations. Behavioral Indicators included in the assessment range from warmly greeting students, visitors, faculty, and staff and projecting a positive, courteous, can-do attitude to taking personal responsibility and working collaboratively in providing excellent service. Examples of these indicators are: Does the adviser listen carefully? Does she ask appropriate questions to understand students' needs? Is she providing knowledgeable guidance that meets the students concerns and needs?

The office supervisor is responsible for observing all advisers and evaluating the quality of results and the manner in which their work is accomplished. He is supervised by the SJMC's associate dean. Professionalism and interpersonal relationships are expected to reflect the school's values and are rated (scale of 1-5) in the Competencies Section of the Assessment and Planning document.

Professional and academic development is an important part of each adviser's growth. One adviser is in the process of attaining her master's, another is seeking her Ph.D.

The SJMC yearly assessments indicate that its advisers are performing at a level of good to excellent. Their effectiveness is measured in large part by high student retention and graduation rates, which are detailed in section 8 of this standard and in standard 9. Because of FIU employee privacy rules, reports of advisers' performance cannot be included in a public document.

**Professional master's program:**

**13. Discuss retention and graduation rates in the master's program, including the grade-point average required to remain in the program.**

Not applicable.