

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond In Writing

Course Number: _____ **or Degree Plan(s): B.S. in Sports Media**

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication is seeking to create a new degree, a B.S. in Sports Media. It will replace the B.S. in Multimedia.

		Dept./School	College	Dean	TEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost
	Campus-Level Academic Review¹						
	Change to a Course Include signatures from all chairs/program directors for cross-listed courses. ¹						
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	I	A
5.	Number of credit hours	A	A	A	A	A	A
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	A	A
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	I	I
9.	Course restriction (e.g., majors only, junior standing)	A	A	A	A	A	A
10.	Level change (U to G or G to U)	A	A	A	A	A	A
11.	Cross list course	A	A	A	A	A	A
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	A	A
13.	Open or close a course	A	A	A	A	A	A
	Change to a Degree Plan						
14.	Educational Program — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A
15.	Educational Program — Adopt/revise admission requirements	A	A	A	A	A	A
16.	GPA — Revise program-required GPA	A	A	A	A	A	A
17.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A

		Dept./School	College	Dean	TEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost	Campus Faculty	Senior VPAA	President
	Full Review									
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)									
18.	General requirements for Bachelor's and Associate Degrees	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
19.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
20.	Requirements for graduating with honors	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan									
21.	Educational Program — Add or Discontinue ²³	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
22.	Educational Program — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I
23.	Minor — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
24.	Minor — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	-	A	I
25.	Degree — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
26.	Degree — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I

		Dept./School	College	Dean	AUAC	Provost	UGEC	University Faculty	Senior VPAA	President
	Change to General Education Requirements for Undergraduates (System)									
27.	Change course outcomes of an included course	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
28.	Add or drop a required course from the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	A	A	I
29.	Add or drop a course from a menu within the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	-	A	I
30.	Comprehensive revision of General Education Requirements	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I

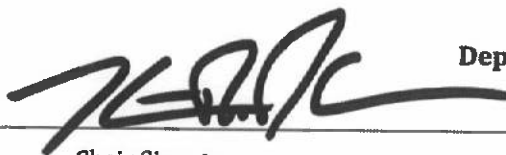
Notes

² Any change to a cross-listed course requires the signature of both department chairs or program directors overseeing the course to ensure that the courses stay in sync. This includes courses taught at other campuses (e.g. BIBL 101 and BIBO 101).

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible. Master's programs must include a minimum of 30 hours, and doctoral programs must include a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master's.

⁴ When a department/school or dean proposes closing a program, approval routing follows the typical process beginning with the department/school. An administrative proposal by the provost or senior vice president for academic affairs would follow the "provost-proposed" routing on the chart.

Updated 8/1/2023

 **Department/School(s)**
4-6-26
Chair Signature Date

Chair/Program Director Signature Date

 **College Academic Council(s)**
4-10-26
Chair Signature Date

Chair Signature Date

 **Dean(s)**
4-10-26
Signature Date

Signature Date

Teacher Education Council
Signature Date

Campus Academic Council:
Abilene Undergraduate or Abilene Graduate
Signature Date

Provost

Signature

Date

University General Education Council

Signature

Date

University Faculty

Abilene Faculty Senate Chair signature

Date

Dallas Faculty Council Chair signature

Date

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Signature

Date

President

Signature

Date

Abilene New Program Application

Step 1: Campus Coordination Information

1. Program Identification

- A. Program title: Bachelor of Science in Sports Media
- B. Degree type: BS
- C. Home department or school: Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
- D. Program developer(s) and credentials
 - i. Kenneth Pybus, J.D., Ph.D. (Mass Communication, Texas Tech University)
 - ii. Hutton Harris, M.A. (Ph.D. in Mass Communication in progress, Texas Tech University)
 - iii. Cade White, M.S. (Digital Media, Abilene Christian University)
- E. Where program will be offered and delivery method: Abilene Campus, Face-to-Face
- F. Proposed date of implementation: Fall 2026

2. Program Overview

A. Outlook

- 1. Market need. What students will be drawn to this program? What types of careers will they pursue after graduation? What is the job market/outlook like in this area?

The program will appeal to students interested in careers in sports broadcasting, sports journalism, video and audio production, live sports event coverage, and sports public relations.

The job outlook for sports media is mixed but evolving. Traditional roles like sports reporters and announcers are experiencing stagnant or even negative growth, with limited job expansion and high competition. However, the broader media and entertainment sector is growing faster than average, fueled by digital platforms, streaming, and increased demand for multimedia content. Opportunities are expanding in areas like social media production, podcasting, analytics, and content creation – particularly around emerging markets such as women's sports and niche fan communities. To succeed, sports media professionals must develop versatile skills across platforms and pursue hands-on experience through internships, freelancing, and campus media.

- 2. Which students will this program serve that the campus is not already serving?

The multimedia degree coupled with ACUTV already is serving students interested in these areas. The new name and minor curriculum changes will drive greater interest and degree growth.

B. Curriculum description

- 1. Describe the focus of this program and why it will be valuable to students.

The proposed Sports Media program at ACU is designed to equip students with the versatile skills and real-world experience needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving sports communication industry. This program blends core elements of journalism, live event production, sports broadcasting, social media strategy, and public relations into an integrated curriculum that reflects the multifaceted nature of modern sports media careers. Students will learn to report, write, film, produce, edit, and distribute content across multiple platforms, developing the technical proficiency and storytelling ability necessary for roles in sports journalism, play-by-play announcing, sideline reporting, media relations, content creation, and beyond.

What sets this program apart is its strong emphasis on experiential learning. Through required participation in ACUTV – a professional-grade campus media outlet that produces live broadcasts of ACU's Division I athletic events – students will gain meaningful, hands-on experience in live sports production, on-camera work, and behind-the-scenes operations. This real-time engagement reinforces classroom instruction and gives students the opportunity to build a portfolio that reflects industry-standard work.

The curriculum draws on existing coursework in journalism and mass communication while incorporating new or adapted courses in sports media writing, digital broadcasting, social content development, and sports public relations. By leveraging ACU's strengths in multimedia instruction and its established infrastructure in live event coverage, the Sports Media program prepares students to enter a competitive job market with a diverse and adaptable skill set – well suited for careers in collegiate and professional sports, sports networks, digital media companies, and athletic organizations.

2. Name the existing ACU programs to which it will be most similar.

Multimedia, drawing on Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations.

3. Estimate how many new courses will be needed to deliver the program.

2-4 potential new electives, such as Live Sports Producing, Sports Reporting Lab

C. Resource estimates

1. Number of new faculty required to deliver program.

No immediate new hires; spearheaded by Hutton Harris with adjunct support. Eventually, a staff or college faculty hire will be necessary to service the program and teach electives or fill in.

2. Describe and estimate cost of equipment needs or facility renovation.

The new program uses existing ACUTV infrastructure and classrooms with minor additional upgrades. One important aspect of this proposal is

that the equipment needs for upgrades and replacements would exist without the new program because of the existing ACUTV annual needs. The program and additional students in the program will create some level of economies of scale that will allow ACUTV and the department to provide additional services to the university and the Department of Athletics.

In addition to income from on-campus and off campus partners, the department has one fund that serves to support ACUTV and the Multimedia degree. The Barrow Center for Sports Media fund honors sports legend and JMC alumnus Lance Barrow. In addition, the department is making efforts to fully fund a new endowment, the Cheryl Mann Bacon Endowment for ACUTV. This endowment, when fully funded, will provide annual funds for staffing, equipment upgrades, studio expansion and maintenance.

3. Will the program require disciplinary accreditation? Which organization?

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication has been accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) since 2000. Much like the Multimedia Degree, the Sports Media Degree will fall under that accreditation.

Stop here and submit to the dean for discussion. The dean may ask for some clarification or revision. If the dean agrees, the dean should send the proposal to the vice provost. Continue with Step 2 after the vice provost approves the proposal to advance. Adjust responses in the Step 1 section as requested by the vice provost.

This proposal

☐ should

☐ should not

advance for further consideration.

Rachael Milligan

04/13/2026

Dean [Rachael Milligan \(Apr 13, 2026 10:31:15 CDT\)](#)

Date

Comments:

This proposal

☒ should

☐ should not

advance for further consideration.

Wes Crawford

04/13/2026

Vice Provost [Wes Crawford \(Apr 13, 2026 11:01:48 CDT\)](#)

Date

Comments:

This proposal

☒ should

☐ should not

advance for further consideration.



04/13/2026

Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

Please see the attached market analysis to find the following information required in the application: schools to use for benchmarking and enrollment estimates.

Step 2: Full Proposal Information

3. Program Information

- A. Program description. This 50- to 200-word explanation will be included in the catalog with degree plan.

The Bachelor of Science in Sports Media prepares students to excel in the fast-paced world of sports communication by combining classroom learning with real-world production experience. Students gain a strong foundation in journalism, live sports broadcasting, multimedia storytelling, social media strategy, and sports public relations. Through ACUTV – ACU's professional live production studio – students are immersed in the coverage of NCAA Division I athletics, working in roles ranging from on-air talent to technical crew. The program emphasizes both the ethical responsibility and creative power of sports media professionals, equipping graduates to inform, entertain, and engage diverse audiences across digital platforms. Whether pursuing careers in sports journalism, broadcasting, team communications, or digital content creation, students will graduate with the skills, experience, and portfolio to compete in an evolving industry.

- B. Program mission statement. It should define what students will be equipped to do upon completion of the program.

The Sports Media program equips students to become ethical, skilled, and versatile communicators in the world of sports. Through a curriculum that integrates journalism, live production, broadcasting, digital media, and public relations, students develop the technical expertise and storytelling ability to produce compelling sports content across platforms. Graduates will be prepared to inform and inspire audiences through accurate reporting, dynamic live coverage, and strategic media communication – ready to serve in roles with sports teams, media networks, and digital outlets. The program fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and integrity, empowering students for Christian service and leadership in the ever-changing sports media industry.

- C. Student learning outcomes. Define the competencies for graduates of your program. They should be specific and measurable. You should have a minimum of three and no more than seven.

1. Students will be able to write and edit clearly and correctly.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and legal underpinnings of the industries related to mass media and their impact on society.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how mass media are used differently around the globe and of how to communicate effectively across the cultural boundaries found within a single diverse society.
4. Students will be able to apply appropriate technologies to present information and images effectively and creatively.
5. Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to and consider ethical issues specific to the sports media professions..

- D. Admission requirements. Describe prerequisites, which may include items such as application to the major, test scores, GPA, courses, skills, academic standing, etc.

The admissions requirements would mirror those of the overall department:

Before being admitted to a program, a student must satisfy the requirements listed in the ACT/SAT Placement Information section of this catalog. Before enrolling in JMC 224 Media Writing, a student must make a score of 70 or higher on the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Exam or have an ACT English score of 24 or an SAT Reading + Writing score of 590.

- E. Enrollment estimate based on Lightcast market analysis.

Based on the Lightcast market analysis for CIP 09.0906 Sports Communication (attached), projected enrollment for the proposed program is positive.

Nationally, the program remains small but is growing rapidly. In 2024, 59 institutions were offering the degree with 814 total completions, reflecting 55% growth in institutions and 89% growth in completions over the past five years. The average number of completions per institution is 13.8, but the median is 6, indicating that most institutions graduate between five and seven students per year.

Among private nonprofit institutions – the category most comparable to ACU – the average completions are 7 and the median is 5. In Texas specifically, the field is extremely limited, with only one institution (LeTourneau University) currently offering the 09.0906 bachelor's degree and producing two completions in 2024. This suggests low in-state competition and room for measured growth, especially considering ACU's NCAA Division I involvement.

Using the standard projection method of estimating enrollment at approximately five times the national median completions to account for attrition, the Lightcast-based estimate suggests a steady-state enrollment of approximately 10 majors. Gray's program prediction tool similarly forecasts fewer than 10 students, reinforcing a conservative initial projection.

Accordingly, the program anticipates:

- Initial cohort: at least 5-8 students, this would be in addition to students who would enroll at the university if the multimedia major were maintained as is.
- Steady-state enrollment: at least 20-25 majors

This projection aligns with national patterns for private nonprofit institutions offering the degree and reflects both the niche size of the program and the growth trajectory indicated in the Lightcast analysis.

Market Alignment and Demand Indicators

- Growth in entertainment & sports roles. BLS projects a 13% increase in employment for entertainment and sports occupations from 2021 to 2031 – outpacing the national average and signaling solid industry demand
- Regional employer pull. Programs in similar markets emphasize high industry engagement – from ESPN+, pro teams, and live-streaming partnerships – highlighting local demand for graduates with production and social media skills.
- Value of integrated sports media education. Degrees combining journalism, live production, broadcasting, social media, and PR align closely with evolving employer needs – especially as GenAI, streaming, and digital content dominate modern media ecosystems.

- F. CIP code. Identify the 6-digit CIP code for the program. This is the system by which the government classifies all postsecondary educational programs. The program may have only one CIP code.

CIP Code 09.0906: Sports Communication. A program that focuses on the methods and techniques for communicating about sports in a variety of formats, media, and contexts; and that prepares individuals to be sports reporters and writers, photojournalists, radio and television announcers, producers and directors, recreational sports promoters, and public relations specialists. Includes instruction in sports writing, photography, broadcast journalism, sports production, game rules, media and public relations, and sports promotion.

- G. SOC code. Use the crosswalk document provided by IPEDS to take your previously identified CIP code and find the associated occupations in the Standard Occupational Classification system provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The program may have only one SOC code.

The following is the best comparison under the broader 27-0000: Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations SOC category:

- 27-3023 News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists

4. Rationale and Need for Program

- A. Mission fit. How does the program fit with the university's mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world? How does the program fit with the university's current strategic plan or emphases?

The Sports Media program at ACU directly supports the university's mission to "educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world" by preparing graduates to be ethical, purpose-driven communicators in one of the most visible and influential sectors of global culture: sports. Through a curriculum grounded in truth-telling and integrity, students learn to produce media that reflects Christ-centered values – whether reporting fairly, promoting teamwork, or honoring the dignity of every athlete and audience. The program also cultivates leadership through mentoring, collaboration, and public storytelling that shapes communities. Students are challenged to think critically about the influence of sports and media, and to engage it not just as consumers or technicians, but as Christian professionals called to serve with excellence and compassion.

Strategic Alignment with the ACU Strategic Plan (2022–27)

The Sports Media degree supports multiple pillars and goals of the ACU Strategic Plan:

- **Pillar 1: Elevate ACU's academic brand**
This program contributes to ACU's vision of being a faith-based national university by offering a high-demand, market-facing degree that blends journalism, production, and digital media. It expands the university's academic offerings and strengthens its national appeal in a niche but growing discipline.
- **Pillar 2: Provide a vibrant student experience**
Through immersive experiential learning in ACUTV and athletics broadcasting, the program supports student success and engagement while integrating faith and formation across the curriculum. It also promotes participation in mentorship and leadership activities on and off campus.
- **Pillar 4: Christ-centered athletics that propel ACU's brand**
The program directly contributes to the athletics strategic goal of producing 100+ national and regional broadcasts annually, using ACUTV and athletics as experiential learning labs. It elevates the university's brand while giving students a front-row seat in NCAA Division I storytelling.

Strategic Alignment with ACU Athletics Strategic Plan (2023)

In addition, the Sports Media program plays a vital role in implementing several pillars of the ACU Athletics Strategic Plan:

- **Student-Athlete and Staff Experience (Pillar 2)**
Sports Media students support ACU's academic excellence and spiritual growth goals by creating content that reflects the mission and enhances the athletic experience.
- **Brand and Fan Development (Pillar 5)**
By training students to produce high-quality storytelling, highlight reels, interviews, and social content, the program advances the athletics communication strategy and reinforces ACU's brand consistency and external visibility.

Strengths of the Existing Multimedia Program

- **Small class size.** ACU is in the unique position to offer a program that is immediately hands-on with personal attention from faculty and staff members.
- **D1 athletics program.** ACU is among just a handful of small private colleges with a Division I athletic program, giving students access to work in one of the top championship league conferences. Involvement in the new United Athletic Conference opens doors to participation in athletic competitions against even higher-level football programs.
- **ESPN+.** The university already is identified as an exemplar by the national sports media chain. Expanding the major would add to that existing reputation.
- **Rangers relationship.** The university's relationship with the Texas Rangers and the way ACU Dallas has leveraged that position with other professional athletic programs should create increased opportunities for employment and internships for students in the major.

- Orr Studio and Mankin Control Room. While the studio is seven years old and is beginning to show the need for upgrades and more expansive maintenance, it continues to be a showplace on campus.
- Alumni base. The university and the department has an expansive number of alumni working in sports and sports media. That's an indication of demand and also creates opportunities to draw on those relationships. An incomplete list of those in the professions to be served by this degree include:
 - Lance Barrow, CBS Sports (retired)
 - Scott Biggers, Texas Rangers
 - Ryan Cantrell, Texas Rangers social media manager
 - Doug Ferguson, Associated Press golf writer
 - Grant Boone, Golf Channel announcer
 - ShaVonne Herndon, WNBA and ESPN
 - M.K. Rotenberry, CBS Sports sideline producer
 - Brandon Tripp, Varsity Sports digital marketing director
 - Morgan Johnson, PGA
 - Avery Jackson, Worcester Red Sox
 - Brian Sweet, Blackout Dallas FanSided
 - Owen Simpson, high school sports announcer
 - Ethan Sabater, Houston Texans
 - Max Preston, sports anchor/reporter at KAMR in Amarillo
 - Carrie Johnston, assistant director for athletics communications at Army West Point Athletic Association

B. Employment demand and career possibilities.

1. Identify jobs that graduates would be qualified to pursue.

Graduates of a Sports Media program are prepared for a wide range of roles across journalism, broadcasting, digital content creation, public relations, and live event production. Here are several job titles that align with the training and experience provided in a Sports Media degree:

Journalism and Reporting

- Sports Reporter
- Sports Writer (for newspapers, websites, magazines)
- Beat Reporter (e.g., college football, pro team coverage)
- Sports Columnist
- Digital Sports Journalist

Broadcasting & Production

- Play-by-Play Announcer
- Sideline Reporter
- Sports Anchor
- Sports Producer
- Live Broadcast Director
- Camera Operator (Live Events)
- Video Editor (Highlight Reels, Features)
- Replay Technician / Graphics Operator

Digital Media & Content Creation

- Social Media Manager (Athletics or Sports Brand)
- Digital Content Producer

- Multimedia Storyteller
- Podcast Host or Producer
- YouTube/TikTok Sports Channel Editor

Public Relations and Strategic Communication

- Sports Information Director (SID)
- Athletic Communications Coordinator
- Media Relations Specialist
- Press Secretary (for athletic teams or governing bodies)

Team & League Operations

- Content Creator for Professional or College Team
- In-Game Host or Entertainment Producer
- Athlete Branding Consultant
- Fan Engagement Coordinator

Employers Include:

- Professional sports teams (NFL, NBA, MLS, MLB, NHL, etc.)
- College athletics departments (especially NCAA Division I programs)
- Sports networks (e.g., ESPN, Fox Sports, CBS Sports)
- Local and regional news stations
- Digital outlets (e.g., The Athletic, Bleacher Report, Barstool)
- Athletic conferences or sports governing bodies
- Faith-based media organizations and Christian sports ministries

2. Use official databases to establish the job market for graduates of the program. Use the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Texas Workforce Commission; other sources that may be helpful are authorities on regional labor markets (e.g., metropolitan Chambers of Commerce) and current industry reports.

While the job market for traditional journalism positions is contracting, the broader arenas of sports media – digital content, streaming, event production, public relations – show stronger growth and offer increasing opportunities. In Texas, urban centers like Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston provide the bulk of openings and relatively competitive wages.

Broader Industry Demand: Entertainment and Sports Sector

- Entertainment & sports occupations (e.g., event producers, digital media teams) are expected to grow faster than average between 2023 and 2033
- This category sees around 108,900 annual openings, with a median wage of \$54,870/year
- Media and communication fields are projected to grow at an average rate, with a median wage of \$70,300/year

Core Occupations: Bound Press and Broadcasting Roles

- News analysts, reporters and journalists:
 - National projection: –3% decline from 2023 to 2033
 - In 2023, there were ~49,800 jobs with 4,500 annual openings from replacements
 - Median wage: \$60,280/year (~\$28.98/hour)

- Texas: projected –4.1% decline, with a median annual wage (~\$71,381/year)
- Broadcast announcers & radio disc jockeys (includes play-by-play, sideline):
 - Projected 0% growth, with around 4,800 openings annually – mostly replacement roles
 - Median wage: \$21.96/hour (~\$45,600/year)
- Broadcast, sound, & video technicians (crew roles):
 - Projected +3% growth – roughly on par with average
 - ~12,900 openings/year nationally; median wage \$56,600/year

3. Using the SOC code chosen in 3.G., find entry-level and mean wages in that field in Texas from the Texas Workforce Commission ([Texas Wages – Wages by Workforce Development Area](#)).

Entry level and mean wages for 27-3023 News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists from Texas Wages indicates statewide mean wage is \$71,381 (\$34.32 per hours, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports mean wages for similar roles as \$65,950 (\$31.71 per hour).

- C. Prospective student interest. Share any data from your discipline that shows student demand for the program. Is the program likely to draw students who are already at ACU, or will it draw new students to the university? Whom should we recruit, and with whom will we compete for students?

Many universities that have added sports media or sports communication programs in recent years have reported significant demand. For example, the University of South Carolina describes its sports media majors as “one of the fastest growing areas of mass communications,” indicating momentum and expansion in that field. Indiana University has reported a similar response in student demand.

Within the university, students interested in sport media have generally been served by the multimedia degree, which this degree will supersede, in addition to the Film and Media Creation degree. So to some extent, this degree will attract many of the same students who were interested in the multimedia degree – and, to a lesser extent, the journalism degree – but the changed name and additional coursework will draw increased interest. In addition, it will serve to retain those who are interested in sports media but who might not fully engage with ACUTV during their first semesters in the program.

- D. Disciplinary benchmarking. Use the benchmark schools that the vice provost named in Step 1. The Lightcast market analysis will tell you about their enrollment, and you should review their curriculum and co-curricular offerings online. You may add any other programs you find relevant. How does this program curriculum compare to other programs in your discipline? What market opportunities do you see based on the market analysis?

Based on the Lightcast market analysis for CIP 09.0906 Sports Communication, we benchmarked the proposed ACU program against four institutions identified

as relevant comparators: Arizona State University (Campus Immersion), Oklahoma State University, Bradley University, and Lipscomb University.

How ACU compares to benchmark programs

- **Arizona State University (Cronkite) – Sports Journalism (BA).**
ASU's sports journalism curriculum is heavily skills-based and newsroom-oriented, emphasizing sports writing, sports photography, broadcast sports reporting, live sports production, play-by-play, and sports strategic communications and marketing/campaigns. (degrees.apps.asu.edu) ACU's proposed curriculum aligns with this model through a production-forward, multimedia approach housed in Journalism and Mass Communication, while also creating a clearer pathway for students interested in sports communications roles beyond traditional reporting.
- **Oklahoma State University – Sports Media (BS).**
OSU's program combines sports reporting and announcing with sports public relations and broader "sports and the media" coursework. It explicitly highlights co-curricular learning through student organizations and live sports telecasts and play-by-play opportunities. ([Oklahoma State University](https://oklahoma-state-university.edu)) ACU's program can compete well with this model by leveraging ACUTV and existing student media operations to provide consistent experiential learning (game-day production, studio shows, social content, and portfolio-driven work).
- **Bradley University – Sports Communication.**
Bradley's curriculum emphasizes a communication core that includes sports, media, and society; journalistic writing; and ethics in sports communication. (catalog.bradley.edu) ACU's program can match this foundation while differentiating through track options (Sports Journalism and Sports Public Relations) and a stronger integration of digital production and platform-specific storytelling.
- **Lipscomb University – Sports Media (Sister school competitor).**
Lipscomb emphasizes four "program foundations" – writing, production, design, and promotion – and positions sports media as a comprehensive communications field rather than a narrow broadcasting major. (lipscomb.edu) This framing closely aligns with ACU's intended positioning and supports the case that a Christian university sports media major can be viable. The Lightcast market analysis also notes Lipscomb's completions are historically very small, suggesting limited scale even within a peer context.

Summary of curricular alignment

Across these benchmark programs, the disciplinary norm is a blend of:

- **Reporting and storytelling** (sports writing, interviewing, multimedia journalism)
- **Production and live event coverage** (studio, remote, play-by-play, live sport, strategic communication (sports PR, branding, promotion, campaigns))

- **Ethics and industry norms** (law/ethics, professional standards, portfolio expectations)
-

ACU's program compares favorably with these elements and can differentiate by intentionally preparing students for both content creation and strategic communication roles in sports.

Market opportunities indicated by the Lightcast analysis

The Lightcast analysis suggests several clear opportunities for ACU:

- **Low Texas competition in the specific CIP.**
In Texas, the Lightcast analysis identifies only one institution offering a bachelor's degree coded specifically as 09.0906 Sports Communication (LeTourneau). This suggests an opportunity for ACU to claim early-mover advantage in the state within this exact classification, particularly among private Christian institutions.
- **Strong alignment with growth areas in job postings and skills.**
Lightcast's skills analysis indicates rapid competencies that map directly onto sports media work in digital environments, including marketing, project management, newsletters, editing, and presentations, as well as software skills like PowerPoint, Excel, and Adobe Creative tools. This supports a curriculum that emphasizes digital publishing workflows, audience development, marketing communication, and portfolio-ready multimedia production.
- **Job market signal: growth in communications roles vs. decline in legacy broadcast roles.** Growth for roles such as public relations specialists, while some traditional journalism and broadcast categories trend downward nationally. This creates a market opportunity for ACU to position the degree as sports media and sports communication (not "broadcast-only"), with clear pathways into sports PR, content strategy, and digital communications, alongside sports journalism and production.
- **Feasible enrollment launch.**
Nationally, completions remain relatively small (median six per institution), and the market analysis recommends an initial enrollment estimate of around 10 majors for ACU. This supports a launch strategy built on sustainable cohorts, high experiential quality, and growth through recruitment rather than assuming large immediate volume.

5. Curriculum

- A. Degree plan. List the major requirements **as they would appear in the catalog**. For undergraduate degree plans, include 74 credit hours of major requirements and electives, and mark which courses are the capstone and writing-intensive courses. A master's degree must have a minimum of 30 credit hours. A doctoral degree must have a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master's degree.

Sports Media, BS (JSM)

(Each course is three hours unless otherwise noted)

Media Studies

JMC 100 Media Issues *

JMC 302 Introduction to Race and Media (Credit Hours: 1)
JMC 303 Colloquium in Race and Media (Credit Hours: 1) (twice)
JMC 488 Communication Law (writing-intensive & capstone course)
Total: 6 Credit Hours

Digital Media

JMC 165 Media Maker I
JMC 166 Media Maker II
JMC 342 Communication Design
JMC 351 Web Publishing

Total: 12 Credit Hours

Professional Practice

JMC 224 Media Writing
JMC 211 Sports Announcing
JMC 233 Photography
JMC 261 Television Production
JMC 324 Advanced Reporting
JMC 321 Student Media Lab (Credit Hours: 0) (two semesters required)
JMC 339 Sports Journalism
JMC 338 Broadcast News and Sports
JMC 361 Advanced Media Production
JMC 495 JMC Internship (Credit Hours: 1) (capstone course)

Choose 9 hours from the following:

JMC 352 Advanced Web Publishing
JMC 355 Media Technology
JMC 364 Media and Religion
JMC 367 Social Media
JMC 441 Topics in Journalism
JMC 449 Opinion Writing
JMC 450 Feature Writing
JMC 465 Documentary Practicum

Total: 34 Credit Hours

Supplement for Major

MKTG 320 Principles of Marketing or MGMT 330 Management and
Organizational Behavior
MKTG 333 Sports Administration (with a waiver of BUSA 120)

Total: 6 Credit Hours

Electives

Minimum 16 Credit Hours

Total Major Hours: 74

- B. Course coordination. Attach a memo or email of support from the department chair of each department outside the home department that will provide a course for the program.

Dr. Phil Vardiman, chair of the Department of Management Sciences in the College of Business Administration, and Dr. Jennifer Golden, incoming chair, are in support of the inclusion of COBA courses in this degree plan.

C. Courses. Create a table with one row for every course, existing and new, included in the program/major requirements. Create five columns that provide the following information:

1. Rotation and frequency (e.g., fall odd years)
2. Whether the course is required or on a menu
3. Which track(s) the course serves, if applicable
4. Current faculty credentialed to teach (everyone who is eligible to teach the course, not just who *will* teach the course)

Course	Rotation/ Frequency	Required?	Tracks Served	Names of Credentialed Faculty
JMC 100 Media Issues	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 165 Media Maker I	Fall, Spring, Summer	Yes	N/A	Harris, White, Emily Rose*
JMC 166 Media Maker II	Spring	Yes	N/A	Harris, White
JMC 211 Sports Announcing	Spring	Yes	N/A	Harris, Aaron Burtch*
JMC 224 Media Writing	Fall, Spring, Summer	Yes	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 233 Photography	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	White, Matt Maxwell*
JMC 261 Television Production	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Harris
JMC 302 Introduction to Race and Media	Fall	Yes	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 303 Colloquium in Race and Media	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 321 Student Media Lab	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Harris
JMC 324 Advanced Reporting	Spring	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Mendenhall
JMC 338 Broadcast News and Sports	Odd Fall	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Harris
JMC 342 Communication	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Adrion, Pybus, Jason Craddock*

Design				
JMC 351 Web Publishing	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Adrion, Marlow Rogers*
JMC 352 Advanced Web Publishing	On Demand	No	N/A	Adrion, Pybus
JMC 355 Media Technology	On Demand	No	N/A	Harris, White
JMC 361 Advanced Media Production	Spring	Yes	N/S	Harris
JMC 364 Media and Religion	Odd Spring	No	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 367 Social Media	Fall, Spring	No	N/A	Adrion, Davis*
JMC 441 Topics in Journalism	Odd Fall	No	N/A	Pybus, Harris
JMC 449 Opinion Writing	Even Fall	No	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus
JMC 450 Feature Writing	Even Fall	No	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus
JMC 465 Documentary Practicum	Odd Fall	No	N/A	White, Dom Garza Anderson*, Matt Maxwell*
JMC 488 Communication Law (writing-intensive & capstone course)	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Mendenhall, Adrion
JMC 495 JMC Internship	Fall, Spring	Yes	N/A	Mendenhall, Pybus, Adrion, Harris, White
JMC 339 Sports Journalism	Even Spring	Yes	N/A	Pybus, Mendenhall, Harris, Jonathan Smith*
MKTG 333 Sports Administration	Fall	Yes	N/A	(COBA faculty)

*Standing adjunct faculty

D. New courses. For each new course included in the program requirements, list the following information. The vice provost will insert a curriculum approval schedule to set deadlines for introducing each new course.

1. JMC 339 Sports Journalism. This course introduces students to the expanding world of sports media, providing a foundation in the theory and practice of sports journalism. Students report, write and produce compelling sports content across multiple platforms – print, broadcast, digital, and multimedia – for diverse audiences.

2. This course will also be within a menu for students in the Journalism major.

Effectively, this course is not new. Over the years it has been taught by Dr. Charlie Marler, Dr. Kenneth Pybus, Grant Abston and Jonathan Smith – as a special topics course and as an version of the existing JMC 441 Topics in Journalism course.

6. Assessment Plan

- A. Curriculum map. Prepare a table that lists all required courses in the degree plan and program outcomes from Section 3.C. Identify the program outcomes that each course supports and mark whether the course addresses the program outcome at an introductory, reinforcing, or advanced level (see example).

Outcome	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5	Course 6	Course 7	Course 8
Students will be able to write and edit clearly and correctly.	JMC 224 I	JMC 324 Advanced Reporting R	JMC 339 Sports Journalism A	JMC 321 Student Media Lab A	JMC 338 Broadcast News and Sports A			
Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and legal underpinnings of the industries related to mass media and their impact on society.	JMC 100 Media Issues I	JMC 321 Student Media Lab R	JMC 361 Advanced Media Production A	JMC 488 Communication Law A				
Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how mass	JMC 100 Media Issues I	JMC 233 Photography R	JMC 302 Introduction to Race and Media	JMC 303 Colloquium in Race and Media	JMC 321 Student Media Lab A			

media are used differently around the globe and of how to communicate effectively across the cultural boundaries found within a single diverse society.			A	A				
Students will be able to apply appropriate technologies to present information and images effectively and creatively.	JMC 165 Media Maker I	JMC 166 Media Maker II	JMC 233 Photography	JMC 261 Television Production	JMC 342 Communication Design	JMC 338 Broadcast News and Sports	JMC 351 Web Publishing	JMC 361 Advanced Media Production
Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to and consider ethical issues specific to the multimedia professions.	JMC 100 Media Issues	JMC 321 Student Media Lab	JMC 324 Advanced Reporting	JMC 338 Broadcast News and Sports	JMC 361 Advanced Media Production	JMC 488 Communication Law		

B. Outcome assessment measures. For each program outcome (from Section 3.C), identify *at least two* measures. These may be course-embedded components

(e.g., assignments, projects, exams) or other measures, such as pre- and post-tests, external certification or licensure, portfolio assessment, standardized exams, research presentation, juries, etc. You should be able to collect each measure every year unless the course is offered less frequently. Each measure will include:

1. Measure description. These are details about the artifact or assignment
2. Measure location. This is the course (or other exam or jury source) in which the measure occurs.
3. Student target. What percentage of students will meet what threshold of performance? This is the minimum acceptable target (e.g., 80% of students will demonstrate competency; 75% of students will earn a C or higher) that defines success.
4. Timeline. When will you measure the outcome? This may happen every time the class is taught, during a particular semester (e.g. annually in fall), or on a regular basis (e.g., every other year).

Outcome 1: Students will be able to write and edit clearly and correctly.

Measure 1

Measure Description: A portfolio of eight major writing assignments selected from 12 completed during the semester are edited by the student, then defended during a one-on-one meeting with the instructor to defend the assertion that they have improved each item in the portfolio. The writing samples included: deadline news story, team reporting assignment for the student newspaper, professional cover letter, governmental news release, descriptive writing passages, script for an existing video, traditional editorial, and a messaging/positioning document for marketing.

Measure Location: JMC 224

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Measure 2

Measure Description: In preparation for creating a writing portfolio, students are required to complete a two-hour online course titled "Cleaning Your Copy" created by the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit media institute and newsroom that provides fact-checking, media literacy and journalism ethics training to students and professional journalists. Because the instrument locks out students after a certain number of errors, successful completion of the course is considered to demonstrate competence.

Measure Location: JMC 224

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and legal underpinnings of the industries related to mass media and their impact on society.

Measure 1

Measure Description: Students complete a 9-12-page research paper on a topic related to communication law. Papers are evaluated through the use of a rubric that includes application of principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in a global context.

Measure Location: JMC 488

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Measure 2

Measure Description: From the course's first and third exams, 10 multiple-choice questions are selected as pertinent to demonstrate both student understanding of media history and the department's adherence to the multicultural standard of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Measure Location: JMC 100

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Outcome 3: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how mass media are used differently around the globe and of how to communicate effectively across the cultural boundaries found within a single diverse society.

Measure 1

Measure Description: In the one-semester-hour Introduction to Race and Media course, 25 students are required to write a memo in the role of Senior Diversity Adviser to the CEO of an imagined media corporation. Within this 1,200- to 2,000-word document, they were to provide a corporate rationale for giving higher priority to issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion – including recent events within the United States and the company's home state – then offer specific details for how this mandate would affect each of three divisions within the wide-ranging company. Students also provided a list of 10 relevant articles, books, or other relevant resources for distribution to employees.

Measure Location: JMC 302

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Every year

Measure 2

Measure Description: Students are required to select a nation, then research quantitative answers to 19 questions related to the nation's use of mass media, the extent of free speech for citizens and press, and the extent of Internet availability. Using this information, students also wrote a paragraph describing the biggest difference they observed between media practices in the United States and their selected nation, offering an opinion of whether one of the systems was "better" and why.

Measure Location: JMC 100

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Outcome 4: Students will be able to apply appropriate technologies to present information and images effectively and creatively.

Measure 1

Measure Description: Students designed a digital publication that presents complex content through cohesive visual storytelling. The project emphasizes effective use of layout and imagery to communicate information creatively and clearly using industry-standard technologies. For this assessment, only the final project is evaluated based on defined design criteria; progress work is graded separately and is not included in this assessment.

Measure Location: JMC 342

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Measure 2

Measure Description: Students in Media Maker 1 produced a 2-minute video as a final project. The assignment consisted of writing a script for an on-camera opening, identifying subjects and setting up the interviews with them, recording the interviews using industry-equivalent video production equipment and editing the content into a concise and engaging package. Throughout the project students were expected to maintain standards for visual aesthetics and sound management established earlier in the semester.

Measure Location: JMC 165

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Outcome 5: Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to and consider ethical issues specific to the sports media professions.

Measure 1

Measure Description: Students in Advanced Media Production are tasked to create a promotional video for a sports-related client in the community. The project is evaluated by several criteria, including quality of sources, quality of research and analysis, quality of visual presentation, and students' ability to work with and portray clients in an accurate light. The first of the criteria evaluates a student's ability to apply critical thinking skills in the creation of the product. The second criterion evaluated the ability to accurately portray the positives of the client without too much dramatization.

Measure Location: JMC 361

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

Measure 2

Measure Description: Students in Advanced Media Production were tasked to create a promotional video for a sports-related client in the community. The project is evaluated by several criteria, including quality of sources, quality of research and analysis, quality of visual presentation, and students' ability to work with and portray clients in an accurate light. The second of the criteria evaluates a student's ability to work ethically, pursuing reputable and accurate sources to support the group's points. In addition, the assigned clients required an analysis of related ethical issues.

Measure Location: JMC 361

Student Target: Acceptable target: The average grade for all students exceeds 80% on this assignment, and individual grades for at least half the class exceed 90%.

Measurement Timeline: Each year

7. Required Institutional Support

A. Faculty requirements and availability.

1. Describe the new program's impact on faculty workload. Your narrative should provide supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members will be adequate to support the program.

Initially, the program should have minimal impact on faculty workload. It replicates the Multimedia degree substantially with the only addition of a single course. Future additions in the department or the availability of new adjunct instructors will allow expansion of course offerings.

2. If program delivery requires a faculty hire, provide an expected salary range and forecast potential faculty availability.

Not applicable.

3. If the plan includes part-time instructors, include total cost per year for adjunct pay.

\$6000-\$9000 for two or three courses.

- #### B. Impact on existing programs. Identify any existing programs/majors from which the new program would draw students and estimate enrollment effects on existing programs in the home department or other departments.

This degree would supplant Multimedia degree, and will draw to some degree students who would otherwise enroll in the Journalism degree.

- #### C. Program director. Identify the program director (who may or may not be the department chair). If the program director does not have a terminal degree in the discipline, provide a justification of the director's qualifications.

Hutton Harris will serve as program director. Professor Harris is in the process of earning his Ph.D. in mass communication from Texas Tech with an emphasis on Sports Media.

- D. Staff requirements. Indicate need for new staff (providing expected salary range and forecast suitable applicant availability) and evaluate effect on existing loads of current staff who will serve the program.

Growth in the degree will necessitate the addition of one or more staff members in ACUTV. Ideally, an additional staff member can be credentialed and take on one course in the sequence

- E. Library resources. Identify discipline-specific library resources necessary to serve the requirements of the program. These may be existing holdings and services and new ones.

No change from current needs. Students will use equipment and electronic resources already available. Students will access the suite of Adobe Software now available to all students.

Additionally,

1. Describe how faculty and students will access information electronically and on site, and explain how they will receive instruction about how to do this.

Students will use the existing Brown Library resources electronically and on site.

2. Describe requirements to support students in their access to and use of learning resources.

None.

- F. Physical resources. Identify needs for classroom, lab, and office space and impacts on existing space use. List necessary equipment. Provide costs for any construction or equipment.

ACUTV is a state-of-the-art facility constructed eight years ago to provide students with a professional-level experience. It requires \$25,000 to \$50,000 annually in upgrades, and the need exists to expand the studios, which would involve increased costs. Much of these costs for equipment, renovation and maintenance will exist without the creation of the Sports Media degree.

- G. Scholarships. Will the unit provide any unique scholarships to students in the program?

The department has several small endowments for scholarships, and students in the program will be eligible for those scholarships.

- H. Recruiting. To whom should the degree be marketed? What additional recruiting beyond general recruiting to the university will be needed, and what costs will we incur?

The Sports Media degree should be marketed to several overlapping groups, focusing on students whose career goals align with sports broadcasting, journalism, and media production. Recruiting should emphasize hands-on experience with ACUTV and coverage of NCAA Division I athletics and position ACU as one of the few Christian universities offering a dedicated Sports Media degree. It should highlight career pathways in sports journalism, PR, production, and management and showcase alumni success stories in sports media and connections to professional sports organizations.

Target market includes:

- High school students interested in sports broadcasting, play-by-play announcing, sideline reporting, sports writing, podcasting, and digital sports content creation.
- Students with experience in school media programs, such as those producing game livestreams, writing for school papers, or running sports social media accounts.
- Athletes who want to stay connected to sports through media careers after graduation.
- Students already interested in journalism, public relations, advertising, or multimedia production who are passionate about sports and want a specialized degree.
- Students at magnet schools, career academies, or Christian schools with broadcast, journalism, or sports marketing programs.
- Transfer students from community colleges with sports broadcasting, communications, or journalism coursework.

Geographic & Institutional Market

Recruiting should take place in Texas, especially in metropolitan areas with strong high school sports cultures (Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Abilene region). Outreach should focus on Christian high schools nationwide where sports are a major part of school culture, and recruiting should target high schools with strong UIL journalism and sports broadcasting programs.

- I. Additional cost to deliver program. Total expenses from sections A to H. Clarify which expenses are one-time and which are ongoing.

Additional costs would be minimal. Costs of faculty and adjunct staffing previously exists for the Multimedia degree, and maintenance and expansion

Stop here and resubmit to the vice provost. Section 8 is not required for all applications, and you will only need to complete it if requested by the SACSCOC liaison.

8. Additional Information Required for Substantive Changes

- A. Student support services. Describe specific programs, services, and activities that will support students enrolled in the program. Some examples of academic support services are teaching and resource centers, tutoring, academic advising, counseling, disability services, diversity and inclusion offices, teaching laboratories, career services, testing centers, student life, and information technology.
- B. Describe financial resources available to support the new program, including a budget for the first year of the program; projected revenues, expenditures, and cash flow; amount of resources going to external institutions or organizations contracted to provide support services for the program; the operational, management, and physical resources available for the change.
- C. Provide contingency plans in the event required resources do not materialize.

Approvals

The proposal aligns with institutional policies and processes, and the campus is prepared to support the proposed program as presented.

Wes Crawford
Wes Crawford (Apr 8, 2026 13:15:16 CDT)

04/08/2026

Vice Provost

Date

This proposal connects the program's student learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment plan completely and has designed a program that institutional systems can support.

Jessica Smith

04/09/2026

Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

The library has sufficient resources to support the program, or the comments below outline additional acquisitions required and their associated costs.

Mark McCallon
Mark McCallon (Apr 9, 2026 13:33:53 CDT)

04/09/2026

Associate Dean of the Library

Date

Comments, if needed:

We have developed a pro forma budget for the program under consideration.

Steven Rutt

04/10/2026

Chief Revenue Officer

Date

This proposal does not require additional review for institutional accreditation purposes, or I have worked with the faculty to gather the information necessary to notify SACSCOC or gain its approval.

Chris Riley

SACSCOC Liaison

Date

Step 3: Curriculum Approval Process

When all signatures are complete, attach an [Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes](#), conduct the department faculty vote to approve the new program, and continue the approval process as specified by the approval chart.

Updated 8/18/2025

