

Approved by the faculty on November 29, 2018.

STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

The School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi is a global community of truth seekers and storytellers, dedicated to instilling standards of professional excellence and guiding students in pursuit of meaningful careers.

OUR MISSION

As an academic unit of the University of Mississippi, the School of Journalism and New Media will lead and excel by engaging minds, transforming lives, serving others and encouraging intellectual curiosity grounded in critical thinking.

OUR PRIORITIES

- Attract top talent – both students and faculty, who represent diverse viewpoints and groups;
- Inspire and engage students and the larger communications audience, either in the classroom or with the creative and scholarly work we produce; and
- Cultivate lifelong relationships with graduates and professionals.

Priority One: Attract Top Talent, Both Students and Faculty, Who Represent Diverse Viewpoints and Groups

Description and Rationale:

The target of the School since its founding in 2009 has been to be a leading school, engaged globally, in both journalism and integrated marketing communications. Increasing awareness of the school and its programs is fundamental to enrolling diverse, motivated, talented students whose success will further enhance the school's reputation and will help in retaining faculty and attracting faculty candidates who are or will be leaders in their fields of research and practice, teaching and service.

Objective One — Increase awareness and recruitment of prospective students, especially high-aptitude students diverse in terms of race, culture and life experience.

Tactics to achieve:

- Maintain and distribute accurate program descriptions and other recruitment materials in digital form on the school's website and in printed form as part of the recruitment process.
- Support and document significant work produced and awards and other honors won by students and faculty in the School.
- Establish and maintain contact with prospective students identified:
 - At recruiting events of the Office of Admissions, with special attention to those for Opportunity Scholars (underserved populations):
 - At events for National Merit Scholars, through Summer College programs of the Division of Outreach;
 - At regional and national Scholastic Press events and other programs, including but not limited to the Freedom Forum Diversity Institute's Free Spirit Conference;
 - By alumni recruiters.

- Develop a diversity recruiting plan in support of the School's goal to match or exceed the university's proportion of students of color.
- Reserve and dedicate a substantial portion of the school's scholarship or other enrichment funds for School majors enrolled in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College or as Provost Scholars.
- Expand the role of the School-based Mississippi Scholastic Press Association in recruiting students. The focus will be broadened to include students who have an interest in both media and integrated marketing communications careers. Efforts will include skills workshops for high school students and advisers and scholarships through MSPA for high- performing high school students who enroll in the School.
- Endorse and support financially the work of School or campus organizations that help build a sense of community for students, particularly those serving international and/or minority students, such as the UMABJ and others.
- Encourage students to spend time at the Student Media Center (in addition to academic buildings) during campus visits.

Metrics for Success:

- Uniformity and clarity of public information about the School and its programs will be achieved and maintained across all platforms. (Dean's office):
 - Printed and online materials will have been reviewed and updated at least annually. (Dean's office)
 - Build and implement a mechanism for documenting and publicizing select faculty research, publications and recognitions. (Marketing team)
 - Select student awards and recognitions will have been documented in news releases and in digital media. (SMC director)
- The School will have recorded a 100 percent participation rate at all campus browse fairs, college preview days and other events (Dean's office):
 - Letters and school information will be sent to prospective students identified at conferences and conventions. (Dean's office)
 - Correspondence will be established and maintained with any and all students identified as prospective undergraduates by alumni. (Dean's office)

- Develop a diversity recruiting plan and track progress in enrolling students of color with a goal to match or exceed the proportion in the university. (Diversity Committee)
- The average entering ACT score for the School's students will trend upward at least .1 percentage point each year. (Dean's office)
- Track the average four year-retention rate. The goal is to see an upward trend in retention of at least 1 percentage point each year. (Advising director)
- Develop mechanism to track the percentage of MSPA clinic participants enrolling in the School with a goal of seeing an increase of at least 1 percentage point each year. (MSPA director)
- Track participation in regional/national conferences associated with student organizations that help build a sense of community for students. (Student Organization Advisors)

Objective Two — Recruit and support a broad-based, diverse faculty of recognized researchers, innovators and contributors to the media and integrated marketing communications.

Tactics to achieve:

- Faculty will be supported financially to conduct research, to make presentations and to participate in professional service to the extent the school's resources permit. Opportunities to apply for sabbatical leave or course reductions will be created.
- Collaboration with faculty on campus and at other institutions, including international institutions, will be encouraged and supported financially or through course assignments. Participation in Study Abroad, StudyUSA and other relevant programs also will be supported.
- Faculty will be encouraged and supported financially or through course assignments to engage in professional and academic projects, including development of documentaries, articles, commentaries and books for the academy, mass media and public marketplace.

- Recruiting of faculty and instructional staff will be based on national searches that will include advertising in broader media with special invitations to encourage applications from women and minorities.
- Faculty will be encouraged and supported in efforts to expand their skill sets in order to foster improvements in their teaching, research or creative work.
- The support faculty hiring process will reflect the school's desire to maintain a diverse faculty and expand instructional capabilities.

Metrics for success:

- Each member of the tenured or tenure-track faculty will produce at least one professional project, publish one research project or present research (collaborative or otherwise) at a relevant national or international conference each year, as reported annually at a full faculty meeting. (Dean's Office)
- School faculty, in terms of women and minorities, will mirror or exceed the proportions of the university. (Diversity Committee)
- School faculty will be alerted to sabbatical opportunities and may apply for course reductions to support research or creative work. (Dean's office)
- Professional development opportunities will be publicized and efforts noted by faculty in their FARs. (Dean's office)
- Diversity in support faculty hires will be a priority with a goal to mirror or exceed the diversity of the full-time faculty. (Dean's office)

**Priority Two:
Inspire and Engage Students and the Larger
Communications Audience**

Description and Rationale:

The School is committed to providing excellent teaching, intellectually engaging learning experiences and academic support. In addition, contributing to a wider audience – those

interested in research and creative work related to the fields of journalism and integrated marketing communications – is essential to meeting the school’s objectives.

Objective One – Broaden learning and growth experiences for students that will enhance their skills and help launch their careers.

Tactics to achieve:

- Promote excellence in teaching and learning by adding permanent faculty in sufficient numbers to meet strategic goals for instructional quality, timely graduation and student/faculty ratio ideals, which are articulated in the university’s strategic plan.
- Expand and document student-learning experiences both in and out of the classroom, promoting professional development, community engagement and cross-cultural awareness. The Student Media Center and other laboratory initiatives are crucial in this effort.
- Embrace accountability by relying on data-driven decision-making. Continue cohort tracking and final project evaluations across core journalism courses, as well as rubric-driven evaluation of IMC campaigns courses, to evaluate learning outcomes and identify specific ways to improve teaching and curricula.
- Continue to revise and revamp course offerings and content to ensure students learn foundational and transformational skills to acquire jobs and succeed in journalism and integrated marketing communications professions.
- Ensure useful and accurate advising for all of our students, paying particular emphasis to the need to eliminate barriers to a timely graduation.
- Expand collaboration between school faculty, the Student Media Center, other media lab opportunities and professional outlets. Efforts will include establishing procedures for publication/dissemination of student work.

Metrics for Success:

- Match and maintain university faculty/student ratio reported by university as a whole. (Dean’s office)
- Document for internal and external audiences the learning experiences outside the classroom, including depth reports, special projects, weekend reporting trips, etc. (Marketing team)

- The full faculty will review an annual report from curriculum committee to assess currency and responsiveness of programs. (Curriculum chair)
- The full faculty will review an annual report on assessment to make sure curriculum revision is informed by the data. (Assessment chair)
- Track 4-6 year graduate rates and meet or exceed the university's goals. (Dean's office)
- Conduct an annual exit survey of graduates to determine their career preparedness. (Dean's office)

Objective Two – Increase visibility and production of scholarly and creative work produced by both students and faculty.

Tactics to achieve:

- The School will develop metrics for excellence in research and creative activity in the School.
- Craft a plan to increase the school's capacity for individual, collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship and innovation and identify ways to involve students in these activities.
- Display student and faculty creative work, either through publication on School sites or via exhibits throughout the building.
- Offer regular brown-bag sessions for School faculty and students, where they share scholarly or creative work, expertise and professional experiences.

Metrics for success:

- Metrics for excellence in research and creative activity developed and shared with faculty. (Tenure & Promotion committee)
- Track scholarly achievement and activities using metrics developed by the research committee. (Dean's office)
- Create exhibit space. Document exhibits and/or posts related to student and faculty creative work. (Dean's office)
- Conduct 2-4 brown-bag creative work/research presentations a year. (Research committee)

Objective Three – Achieve excellence in graduate education.

Tactics:

- Focus on recruiting high-caliber and diverse students to the School's graduate degree programs.
- Design a curriculum to foster key skills and creative thinking in students as a way to facilitate successful professional and academic careers.
- Provide support for graduate cohorts to enhance their academic experiences and create ongoing relationships as they embark on their careers.

Metrics for Success:

- Grow graduate enrollment while maintaining student-to-faculty ratio of 20-to-1. (Graduate directors)
- Meet or exceed the university's graduate school percentages for diversity of students enrolled in the programs. (Graduate directors)
- Analyze graduate student survey to set benchmarks for success in curriculum effectiveness. Review annually and present to graduate faculty. (Graduate directors)
- Conduct annual workshop centered around graduate student career readiness. (Graduate directors)

Objective Four – Create a setting and provide resources that foster personal and professional development of students, faculty and staff.

Tactics:

- Ensure the tracking of trends in technology and procedures for recommending upgrades of equipment and software.
- Continue efforts to build a new building, which would house the journalism and IMC programs, the Student Media Center, the Magazine Innovation Center, and other entities associated with the School.
- Continue creating collaborative spaces, better-designed labs and a more energized, cohesive environment.

Metrics for Success:

- Evaluate annually labs, software and equipment students use to produce content against industry standards and trends. Report to full faculty. (Technology chair)
- Implement capital building campaign plan. (Dean's office)
- Report annually on recommended existing facility improvements designed to foster collaboration and engagement. (Technology chair)

Priority 3:

Cultivate and sustain lifelong relationships with graduates and the professional community.

Description and rationale:

The School will listen to and engage with its alumni to capitalize on their expertise. We will strengthen ties to the professional community by inviting journalism and integrated marketing communication experts to engage with the school and by placing our students in professional environments.

Objective One — Foster creation of relevant, proactive communication with graduating seniors, alumni and industry professionals.

Tactics to achieve:

- Tap the Alumni Board and the Board of Visitors to develop an engagement plan to enhance the school's relationships with alumni and other relevant professionals.
- Sustain the student ambassador program and further strengthen its involvement in the school's culture.
- Gather and regularly update permanent contact information for graduates to facilitate ongoing communication.
- Continue publishing monthly e-newsletter from dean to alumni and distribute annual School magazine to alumni and friends.
- Continue inviting alumni to campus to present and teach or to be involved in other School activities.
- Continue to host the ACT Magazine and other conferences and events, inviting and involving alumni as participants often.

Metrics for Success:

- Develop alumni and professional engagement plan by Spring 2020. (Dean's office)
- Survey alumni to build database of permanent contact information. (Dean's office)
- E-newsletter and alumni magazine published regularly. (Marketing director)
- Alumni presentations and "official" visits, including those at ACT and other conferences tracked annually. (Dean's office)

Objective Two — Foster student and alumni career development through engagement with employers and other initiatives.

Tactics to achieve:

- Establish strategic relationships with key employers to facilitate internship and employment pipelines.
- Use industry professionals to review student work.
- Evaluate existing internship structures and develop a plan to improve them.
- Create or continue opportunities for visiting professionals, including alumni, to meet with students and critique their work, such as MAB Day.
- Survey May graduates in August to determine employment levels. Results will be used to inform curriculum.

Metrics for Success:

- Plan developed for improved internship program by Fall 2019. (Dean's office)
- Host an annual job fair in the spring semester for all students at the undergraduate and graduate level. (Dean's office)
- Track the number of students and professionals, including alumni, involved in critique sessions of student work and other forms of engagement. (Dean's office)
- Employment survey completed each August. (Dean's office)