



THE UNIVERSITY of  
**MISSISSIPPI**

School of Journalism  
and New Media

2020-2021

# ANNUAL REPORT



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UNIVERSITY, MS 38677

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- **Key Highlights**
- **Accomplishments**
- **Personnel Changes**
- **Student Awards**

# INTRODUCTION

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Founded as a department in 1947, the School of Journalism and New Media was established July 1, 2009. Originally offering a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism only, the school added a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in 2011. This year, we will be celebrating both the 10th anniversary of IMC and the 75th anniversary of journalism instruction at the university.

## Vision, Mission and Goals

Our school's newest mission statement was adopted in 2019:

*The mission of the School of Journalism and New Media is to lead and excel in the education of a diverse body of students in journalism and integrated marketing communications. Grounded in truth, freedom of expression, responsibility and integrity, the faculty and staff will:*

- 1.** *Prepare students to succeed in an ever-changing, integrated and global media landscape.*
- 2.** *Encourage research and creative work to add to the body of knowledge and to serve the journalism and communication professions.*

In support of that mission, the school has a series of related goals →



# GOALS

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1  
IMPROVE

## Recruitment and Retention

*of a diverse student  
population*

The school has used the results of our 2020-2021 recruiting efforts in creating a new recruitment and retention plan for the upcoming cycle. The plan will include a combination of in-person, digital and personalized messaging to maintain our out-of-state student success (65%) and to improve our recruitment of in-state students as well as students of color. At the end of the spring semester we moved to all professional advising as part of an effort to improve student retention. We have been very successful this past year at recruiting graduate students and are developing new systems that should help ensure that this trend continues.

2  
LEVERAGE  
*Strategic*

## Hiring Opportunities Address Instructional

*Needs of Our Students*

The School has the opportunity to hire a faculty member with extensive video experience, which should help us expand the skill set of our integrated marketing communications students in this critical area. We are also searching for a faculty member who can support the phenomenal growth of our M.S. in Integrated Marketing Communications and are in the process of determining the specific subject matter expertise that can be most beneficial to the program.

## Key Highlights

### THE SCHOOL MADE STRIDES IN A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS THIS YEAR:

- Doubled our graduate student enrollment and expanded the number of assistantships offered;
- Improved the diversity of our student population year-to-year by 1% at the undergraduate level and by 23% at the graduate level;
- Honored professor Dr. Nancy Dupont as the first faculty member in the history of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) to win both the Edward L. Bliss Award for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education and the Larry Burkum Service Award in the same year.
- Earned more than 50 student awards in national, regional and state journalism and communications contests; and
- Attracted top talent in important instructional areas: data analytics, social media and public relations/crisis communications. With the addition of these faculty, we solidify the success of our fast-growing social media specialization and ensure the ongoing relevance of our PR specialization.

# IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Some of the School's most important accomplishments for 2020-2021 include:*



STUDENT MEDIA CENTER

## FACULTY WORK

Faculty in the School had an impressive year of scholarship and creative work in spite of the pandemic. They published four books, including Prof. Joe Atkins work, “Harry Dean Stanton: Hollywood’s Zen Rebel,” which won a Bronze Medal for biography from the national Independent Publisher Book Awards. In addition, research faculty published ten book chapters or journal articles, and Associate Professor Vanessa Gregory’s in-depth work about a woman detained by federal law enforcement during massive workplace raids in Mississippi was published in the October issue of Harper’s.

## GRADUATE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

Significant increases in our graduate program enrollment have been facilitated by more outreach to interested applicants and are in keeping with national trends. For the upcoming academic year, we have established new systems for streamlining enrollment and are working on additional recruitment strategies.

## TALBERT FELLOWS

Successfully enrolled 14 Talbert Fellows. This new program within our School gives us another way to recruit top students. Applicants must provide a portfolio outlining the work they have been doing in the broad

areas of journalism or integrated marketing communications. If selected for the program, they receive a \$1,000 scholarship annually and a chance to interact with IMC and journalism practitioners. This year's guests included national-level reporters from NBC and ESPN, and members of the commission to design Mississippi's new state flag.

## STUDENT AWARDS

Students in the School were recognized with a series of national awards including The Daily Mississippian (DM), which received two of the highest national honors in college journalism: Pacemaker and Pinnacle awards. DM columnist John Hydrisko was a national finalist for general column writing in the Society of Professional Journalists competition for large schools. Student Matthew Hendley was part of a Carnegie-Knight News21 "Kids Imprisoned" team that won the national Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for college media, and a school-produced project on climate change won a second-place award in the Best of the Web competition sponsored by the Communication Technology Division of AEJMC. A team of integrated marketing

communications students won second place in the District 7 American Advertising Federation National Student Advertising Competition. More than 2,000 students participate in this premier college advertising competition.



## Key Personnel Changes

This was a year of retirements in the school – Associate Professor Curtis Wilkie, Videographer/ Editor Mykki Newton and Professor Will Norton, Jr. retired. Professor Nancy Dupont will be retiring in August 2021.

Two new faculty were hired to join the school in August 2021 – Dr. Amanda Bradshaw will teach and research in the critically important areas of public relations and crisis communications, and Dr. Ike Brunner will focus on an emerging area of emphasis for our school -- data and social media analytics.

Brad Conaway was hired full-time as an instructional assistant professor after several years as a professional in residence.

The school's development officer William Fisher resigned to work with UM Athletics.

Dr. Jason Cain will serve as the Interim IMC Coordinator as Assistant Dean Scott Fiene returns fulltime to the faculty, and Prof. Charlie Mitchell will serve as the Interim JOUR Coordinator for the 2021-22 academic year while Dr. Deb Wenger is in the role of interim dean.



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