

Strategic Plan

College of Journalism and Communications

Approved by the Faculty: Sept. 26, 2003

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College Overview

Our mission is to prepare exemplary professional practitioners and scholars for journalism and communications fields and to generate and exchange new knowledge about these fields. The College is the home for the world's most respected educators and scholars who advance the value, practice, and understanding of journalism and communications in a democratic society. The faculty are committed to preparing professionals and scholars to practice and teach in a global society, providing leading research and service while generating and sharing knowledge.

The College is a national leader in the professional education of communication practitioners as well as teacher-scholars for the field. The College is nationally accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. It offers B.S. degrees in advertising, journalism, public relations, and telecommunication and has approximately 2,200 majors in these four departments, including freshman through senior levels. The College's undergraduate curricula are concentrated at the junior and senior levels as is true of similar programs throughout the country. The College offers master's and doctoral degrees in mass communication and enrolls approximately 211 students at the graduate level. The graduate programs in mass communication are administered through the College's Division of Graduate Studies and Research.

The College's master's degree program began in the mid-1940s. Its doctoral program began in 1985 and is regarded as among the strongest in the field nationally—a tribute to faculty in the College who invested it from the beginning with high standards, high quality, and high expectations.

The graduate programs continue to evolve. In recent years we added a Master of Advertising degree and are adding a Master of Arts in Mass Communication specialization in multimedia journalism, 4/1 program in advertising sales, and distance education programs in Global Strategic Communications and Web Design and Online Communications.

The College also includes the Joseph L. Brechner Center for Freedom of Information; the Center for Media Innovation + Research; the Jerry Davis Interactive Media Laboratory; the Knight Division for Scholarships, Career Services and Multicultural Affairs; the Marion B. Brechner First Amendment Project; and six broadcasting facilities (the local PBS television station, WUFT-TV; the local National

Public Radio affiliate, WUFT-FM and its sister station, WJUF-FM whose signal reaches the State's central Gulf Coast; two commercial radio stations, WRUF-AM/FM; and a low-power commercial television station, WRUF-TV).

What characteristics do we share with other top programs?

- Balanced curricula that include a mix of conceptually based courses and practical/applied (skills) courses, with support and opportunities for undergraduate and master's students to obtain internships;
- Faculty depth and expertise that includes a balance of strong academic background/credentials and strong professional experience. Sometimes one individual has both, but the key is that the faculty as a whole includes breadth and depth of both academic and practical background and experience;
- Faculty noted for effective teaching, as well as productive, quality research/creative activities, and involvement and leadership in scholarly and professional associations at the national/international levels;
- Sufficient size to offer complete curricula, with sufficient faculty expertise to maximize curricular quality;
- Professional accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications;
- Budget adequate to provide high quality in administration, instruction, research/creative activities, facilities/equipment, and support services;
- A commitment to shared governance;
- Effective leadership, both position leadership (those holding administrative positions/titles) and leadership by influence (reputation of faculty and others among peers and key publics);
- Overall instructional student-faculty ratio (SFR) no higher than 35:1 (and generally lower, averaging approximately 29:1); instructional SFR in professional skills classes at a maximum of 20:1 (and often as low as 15:1);
- Sufficient quantity and quality of facilities and equipment to sustain high-quality teaching, research/creative activities, and service;
- Regular, systematic, and quality outreach to professionals practicing in the fields for which the programs prepare students;
- Undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students who compete successfully with students from other programs throughout the country in a range of activities at national and international levels (e.g., winning "top paper" or similar awards in nationally competitive research paper competitions; Hearst Competition for journalism students, Bateman Case Study competition in public relations, and ADDY competitions for advertising students);
- Alumni who include nationally known practitioners and leaders in their fields and in the academy;

- A commitment to preparing future journalism and communications professionals to work in a diverse, multicultural, global community;
- A faculty and student body inclusive across race, ethnicity, gender, and a curriculum that exposes students to issues of inclusiveness affecting journalism and communications;
- Ability to attract external funding, through philanthropy or contracts and grants.

Where does UF rank among Colleges of Journalism and Communications?

The College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida is among the top-ranked programs in the nation. In every national ranking of programs in the fields of journalism and communications over the years, all four of the College's undergraduate programs and the master's program have ranked consistently among the top 10. Their evaluations include rankings of colleges as a whole as well as rankings of individual academic specialties. Other top programs in journalism and communications at AAU institutions in the United States include, in alphabetical order, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Indiana, Michigan State, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Northwestern, Penn State, Syracuse, and Texas at Austin. It is noteworthy that the majority of the top programs in journalism and communications are at relatively comprehensive land-grant institutions. Many of these major universities see a natural link between the fundamental role and function of journalism and communications in a democratic society and the importance of fostering excellent programs in these fields as part of the essential mission of a land-grant institution. Also of note is that most of the top programs are structured as colleges/schools headed by a dean.

The College's graduate programs also are highly regarded. For example, in the only ranking of journalism and communications programs conducted by *U. S. News & World Report* (1996), the College's graduate programs in advertising, public relations, and telecommunication (radio/television) were ranked second nationally, and the journalism program was ranked sixth nationally. In our fields, these rankings generally are regarded also as reflecting rankings of the undergraduate programs. No other college in the nation had all of its programs ranked in the top six.

The College's doctoral program, which began in 1985, also has gained recognition as one of the top programs in the nation. A 2010 study published in the *Journal of Communication* analyzed the quality of 102 communication doctoral programs in the United States.¹ The results ranked the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications at number six among NRC programs. Our position placed us just

¹ Barnett, G., Danowski, J., Feely, T. & Stalker, J. (2010). Measuring quality in communication doctoral education using network analysis of faculty-hiring patterns. *Journal of Communication*, 60, 388-411.

behind programs at Stanford, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Illinois—Champaign, and ahead of prominent programs at Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Minnesota, and Northwestern University. The study assessed program quality by using objective and quantifiable indicators rather than subjective rankings that are common in other rankings, emphasizing the number and quality of programs that hired new Ph.D.s from each institution. Doctoral programs that ranked highest in quality were ones that had a larger number of graduates hired at the most prestigious schools.

Other overall college rankings have included those by such organizations as the Associated Press Managing Editors Association and the Radio Television Digital News Association, and media including *Madison Avenue* and *The Gannett Center Journal*. The top-ranking status of the College also has been validated by the support the College has received over many years from the major foundations that fund programs in journalism and communications, including The Freedom Forum (the former Gannett Foundation) and The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Since 1990, the Knight Foundation, for example, has awarded 16 endowed chairs, with grants of \$1.5 million each, only to elite journalism programs in the United States. One was given to UF's College of Journalism and Communications.

The College of Journalism and Communications is positioned to play a significant role as the University of Florida continues to enhance national recognition through top-10 rankings across disciplines. The College is, by its nature, interdisciplinary. The study of journalism and communications not only is essential for understanding and functioning in a democracy, it also is critical in today's global society. The media often convey information from across the intellectual and social spectrum. Teaching, scholarship, and outreach/service related to the roles and functions of journalism and communications are significant components of 21st century universities. The College is a leader in research in emerging media across all disciplines.

What are our Core Values and Principles?

The faculty members of the College of Journalism and Communications are dedicated to research, teaching, and service that demonstrate commitment to the following:

- Shared governance among administrators and faculty members
- Excellence in education, scholarship, and service that enhances the reputation of the College
- The critical role of journalism and communications in creating and sustaining open and transparent communication in free societies
- The ethics and values of the professions we serve
- Professional advancement for journalism and communication professions through

- social responsibility and strategic contributions to organizations
- Innovation in teaching, scholarship, and service that is responsive to industry trends
 - Teaching, scholarship, and service that foster collaboration across departments and disciplines yet preserve the unique expertise of individual faculty members and the values of the College's various professions
 - Appreciation of the dual role of faculty members as teachers and scholars
 - Integration of theory and practice in the College's various curricula
 - Diversity among students, faculty, and staff and an appreciation for diverse experiences and perspectives
 - Internationalization and dedication to the responsibilities of journalism and communications professionals and scholars in a global society
 - Access to quality education for a broad range of constituencies through distance and professional master's courses and programs

Goals and Strategies:

The overall goal of the College of Journalism and Communications is to enhance and deepen the reputation of the College as one of the nation's top-ranked programs in the graduate and undergraduate study of journalism and communications.

This Strategic Plan lists specific goals and strategies to meet this overall goal. This plan is intended to be a dynamic document that is continually revised and provides a basis for which the faculty and administration share in the pursuit of common goals and frequent re-examination of those goals. The plan is assessed by the faculty each semester and plays a role in allocation of resources as well as decisions regarding hiring and curriculum.

The goals and strategies of the College of Journalism and Communications Strategic Plan are listed in eight categories. The goals, first approved by the faculty on Sept. 26, 2003, and subsequently revised as stated above, appear below.

1. Shared Governance

Goal: The College's success depends on the ability of faculty members to formulate a vision for their units and to initiate strategies to realize unit goals. Faculty should share in developing these programs and should participate in shared governance of the College. The faculty and administration will work together in a culture of shared governance that endorses shared authority and responsibility for implementation of strategies to achieve the goals set forth in this plan.

Strategies

- A. Continue to increase shared governance, including significant faculty participation in governance regarding budgets, curriculum, development of grants, enrollment, hiring, tenure and promotion, and other similar decisions.
- B. Re-examine the College's constitution every two years and update as needed to reflect goals and strategies related to shared governance.
- C. Begin to extend shared governance to departmental levels by creating bylaws and implementing best practices.
- D. Improve meeting management skills of faculty by using agendas and minutes; ensure follow-up on actions by shared accountability to use time productively to advance stated goals and objectives.

2. Graduate Enrollment/Education

Goal: To maintain the College's position among the top master's and doctoral programs in the nation and to grow and enhance graduate enrollment and increase the proportion of graduate students in the overall college enrollment.

Strategies

- A. Maximize use of existing resources and seek additional resources to increase and refine recruiting and promotion efforts, possibly involving the College's communications director.
- B. Maintain the high quality and national and international diversity of the College's graduate student population as we grow graduate enrollment.
- C. Seek additional funding for assistantships and fellowships to remain competitive in recruiting the highest-quality doctoral students.
- D. Continue to conduct research and analyses to ascertain fields of master's and doctoral study in greatest demand.
- E. Complete planning and implementation of 4-1 programs where appropriate; develop systematic, effective, and ongoing methods of informing undergraduates of 4-1 opportunities in the College.
- F. Implement newly-developed specializations in emerging journalism technologies and media sales and management.
- G. Enhance interdisciplinary teams and reduce barriers to team work within the College and with units across the University. In particular, maintain and enhance emphasis on international/cross-cultural communication, science/health communication, media law, and political communication specializations. Reduce barriers to team and interdisciplinary teaching.

H. Enhance graduate student involvement in the College's multimedia properties.

3. Research and Creative Activities

Goal: To continue to increase the quantity and quality of faculty and graduate student refereed research and juried creative activities at the national and international levels.

Strategies

- A. Continue to improve the research infrastructure within the College, including space, equipment, personnel, and funding.
- B. Increase the number and amount of externally funded research projects in the College.
- C. Hire new faculty at the associate and full professor levels to provide mentors for new faculty and graduate students and additional research leadership and prominence for the College.
- D. Further develop the reward system for faculty who are productive researchers and grant-seekers, including additional assigned time for research; increased professional development funds; additional "research summers" funding; summer funding for grant writing, and additional assignment of graduate research assistants.
- E. Encourage research and creative activities of the College in interdisciplinary areas that will take advantage of College and University strengths.
- F. Enhance the national/international research reputation of the College and University by evaluating how to best recognize practitioners and scholars who are using and conducting research on the use of innovative media.
- G. Continue to encourage faculty involvement in editorships of prestigious national and international journals and seek resources to support and reward faculty members who serve as editors.

4. Internationalization

Goal: To maintain and improve the quality of the College's efforts to prepare our students to function in a multicultural, diverse global community and enhance the internationalization of UF in teaching, research, and service.

Strategies

- A. Continue to integrate international/cross-cultural/social issues in courses by encouraging suggestions for further internationalization of the curriculum including the 4-1 graduate programs; continuing to host international speakers in courses to provide students international exposure; continuing to develop technological

capabilities related to international digital conferencing; and continuing to develop and implement curricular activities and projects that allow students hands-on experience in functioning in a diverse global community.

- B. Expand study-abroad programs in which students attend classes at a UF international remote campus site or complete coursework while abroad through distance education.
- C. Encourage strategic partnering with international faculty members by supporting international exchanges and joint research endeavors.
- D. Continue to develop new professional certificate programs that will attract international students.
- E. Continue to pursue international grants and research projects emphasizing opportunities for interdisciplinary partnerships with colleges and units at UF.
- F. Continue to expand the international mission and activities of the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information. Attract additional resources to support the Center's goals to study, collect, and disseminate information about freedom of information laws and policies around the world.
- G. Enhance existing relationships with international programs and offices on campus by developing an outreach program that will make the College more visible in the international community. The program could include an annual international conference hosted by the College as well as seminars and certificate programs for international media professionals, students, and academics.
- H. Continue to build relationships with international media professionals in the state, nation, and world and develop international internship opportunities.
- I. Increase efforts to promote democracy and enhance understanding of the role of journalism and communications in the construction and consolidation of democratic societies.
- J. Conduct workshops to assist faculty members in integrating international perspectives into courses where appropriate.
- K. Continue to include international teaching and research as a factor in the hiring and evaluation of faculty members where appropriate.
- L. Develop opportunities for multi-lingual or bi-lingual media training.

5. Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Initiatives

Goal: To maintain and enhance collaborative efforts across departments and interdisciplinary programs and activities.

Strategies

- A. Develop strategies to increase awareness and understanding across campus of the role

of the College and its mission, with a special emphasis on research/creative activities and accomplishments and how College of Journalism and Communications scholars contribute to interdisciplinary endeavors and other strategic priorities of the University.

- B. Maintain and enhance graduate programs in media law, political communication, international communication, innovative media technologies, and science/health communication.
- C. Enhance and facilitate development of specific interdepartmental programs such as media management and a converged newsroom. Create partnerships with other disciplines, including engineering and computer science (incorporate global positioning, video and audio, wireless Internet and streaming technology).
- D. Continue to develop partnerships with other disciplines in grant development and research projects. Specifically, the College should continue to partner with colleagues in other colleges, such as the College of Medicine and the College of Engineering, and should develop partnerships with other colleges/units, as appropriate and feasible, on journalism and communications perspectives as they relate to research priorities of the University.
- E. Provide leadership for the University and partner with faculty members in other disciplines for research and development in new information technologies.
- F. Partner with other disciplines within the University in a series of specialized course offerings aimed at long-term public service to increase awareness of advances in the sciences, for example, environmental reporting, medical/health reporting, the arts, economics, and history.
- G. Continue to establish interdisciplinary institutes on communications and democracy, incorporating key roles of advertising, journalism, public relations, and telecommunication in the democratic process both here and abroad. Pursue funding from foundations such as the Knight Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, The Fulbright Commission, and government agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. State Department.
- H. Pursue creation of an annual interdisciplinary conference on Telecommunication Policy and Regulation in conjunction with the College of Business Administration and the Levin College of Law.

6. Professional Reputation/Stature

Goal: To remain a national leader and further enhance the national and international reputation of the College and University by continuing to provide cutting-edge professional undergraduate and graduate education, leadership, and service. By doing so, the College will continue to be a magnet for top students in Florida and the world and our students will continue to be the top choice for potential employers.

Strategies

- A. Complete development of the master's specialization in multimedia journalism, the converged newsroom, and the covered newsroom facility. Encourage participation by students from other relevant disciplines of the University in projects involving topics related to those disciplines.
- B. Continue to upgrade facilities for magazine and visual communications, including photojournalism curricula.
- C. Continue to upgrade computer labs, including introduction and maintenance of Macintosh computers to provide a dual-platform environment for all curricula.
- D. Establish a program to increase student contact with state media professionals in major media outlets, public relations firms, advertising agencies, and other communications fields in the high national profile media markets of South Florida, Tampa-St Petersburg, and Orlando.
- E. Continue to develop a process for more effective tracking of alumni to assist in job placement and in generating a diversity of internship opportunities.
- F. Continue to strengthen relationships with journalism and communications professionals, especially through department Advisory Councils, the College's Board of Advocates, the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, and programs like the Hearst Visiting Professionals and The Freedom Forum Distinguished Visiting Professor. Increase overall efforts to bring nationally and internationally known media professionals and mass communication scholars to campus.
- G. Develop a process to conduct regular, systematic evaluations of national and international reputations of the College.

7. Innovation and Emerging Technologies

Goal: To be a respected member among the community of global leaders in education and scholarship in digital communications that advances the professional disciplines we serve.

Strategies

- A. Increase and enhance emphasis on emerging communication technologies at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- B. Create graduate-level professional programs.
- C. Continue to improve and enhance technology infrastructure and computing facilities throughout the College to maintain our position on the cutting edge.
- D. Continue to assure that students are proficient in the use of software and technology

used in professions.

- E. Help faculty members identify and take advantage of opportunities to receive training in the use and implementation of emerging software and technology.
- F. Reassess regularly the specifications for the computer requirement for students.
- G. Establish departmental responsibility for creating and implementing a method to constantly assess what technologies are being used currently in its profession and bringing that into the curriculum in real time.
- H. Determine the appropriate concepts and principles for use of technology through research and communicate those with industry professionals.
- I. Create content fluency across platforms.
- J. Create a student and alumni population that recognizes the need for life-long learning and has the skill base to assess and adapt to new technologies as they emerge.
- K. Fill the gap between research and theory on the strategy and practical application of new technologies.
- L. Teach content creation and audience reaction processes to students so they can acquire the skills to measure and evaluate their organizations' use of strategic technologies.
- M. Use the Center for Media Innovation + Research as an ongoing opportunity to provide an environment for students and faculty to experience and conduct research on emerging technologies.

8. Distance Education and Entrepreneurial Activities

Goal: To establish the College as a preeminent provider of distance education programs and entrepreneurial activities for mass communication and related fields.

Strategies

- A. Develop online programs that provide top quality instruction and training to students via distance education and entrepreneurial activities to complement and build on our in-residence programs within the state, region, nation, and world.
- B. Provide new teaching opportunities to our instructors via distance education and entrepreneurial activities to complement and build on our in-residence programs within the state, region, nation, and world.

Summary

The College seeks to maintain its position as one of the top journalism and

communications programs in the nation. As the College grows in stature over the next few years, the College will remain committed to preparing exemplary professional practitioners and scholars for journalism and communications fields and to generating, translating, and disseminating new knowledge about these fields. The mission of the College aligns well with the directions of the University, especially with respect to the role and functions of journalism and communications within a global digital communications environment and advancement of the understanding and practice of journalism and communications for a diverse global community.

This plan outlines eight general goals and a number of strategies the College seeks to employ to meet those goals. Some can be achieved within the existing budgetary framework, but most will require additional resources. Some additional resources must be designated for faculty. This includes funding for additional faculty lines and for current faculty to engage in teaching, research/creative activities, and service of the highest quality. The University Strategic Work Plan places particular emphasis on hiring and retaining high-quality faculty members, creating an environment that fosters cutting edge research, and, providing excellence in education to a diverse and global community of students. We share these commitments. The College of Journalism and Communications is already ranked among the nation's best. However, *our overall goal is to continue to increase faculty productivity and national and international visibility in critical areas of study and provide excellence in teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level.* Therefore, we must combine existing sources of funding with new allocations to accomplish the following:

- Add tenure-track faculty lines at the assistant and associate professor levels to further enhance the national/international reputation of the doctoral program, to grow graduate enrollment, and to enhance curricular offerings, research/creative activities productivity and national reputation, particularly in science/health communication, media law, political communication, emerging media technologies, and international communication.
- Add tenure-track faculty lines at the assistant professor level to accommodate a reasonable percentage of the high numbers of UF students seeking majors in the College and to meet demands for courses.
- Maintain and expand resources for faculty to remain on the cutting edge of innovation, particularly involving collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives.
- Continue to provide funds for summer programs designed to facilitate research/creative activities and professional development of the faculty.
- Provide additional resources for faculty international activities, including teaching, research/creative activities, and international programs.
- Continue to develop the College's assessment plan, consistent with ACEJMC and SACS accreditation standards.

These goals can be achieved through the combined efforts of the faculty, staff, and

administrators in the College of Journalism and Communications and in the various disciplines across the campus, as well as the administration of the University.