

**Mission**

The mission of the Department of Communication is to prepare students to be effective and ethical consumers and producers of personal and public communication in a diverse global society. To that end, the department prioritizes inclusivity and equity in order to serve all students in the development of basic communication skills and in the advanced study of mass media, public communication, and theatre.

**Departmental Units Submitting for Accreditation**

- Broadcast & Digital Journalism
- Print & Digital Journalism
- Public Relations

**Core Values**

As a unit that integrates various disciplines (such as Print & Digital Journalism, Broadcast & Digital Journalism, and Public Relations) towards a single goal of furthering responsibility in producing and consuming mass communication, we value a focus on: Equality, Ethics, Community Engagement, Resourcefulness, Collaboration, and the Practical Application of Scholarship. With our mission and core values aligned, we commit to the following goals.

**Strategic Goals**

**1. Instill competence and confidence in our graduates by offering them a competitive educational experience that prepares them for professional success.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Strategy 1a: Identify our core values and competencies and develop a curriculum capitalizing on those areas that are in line with current professional standards and practices.</li><li>○ Strategy 1b: Respond to students’ professional interests and goals when planning future curriculum</li></ul>
<p>Actions for success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Regularly conduct faculty workshops and concentration meetings to brainstorm and develop possible updates to the curriculum</li><li>○ Use special topics classes to initially test new curriculum offerings and assess student response to those offerings</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Strategy 1c: Recognizing the need for strengthened competencies, recruit and hire faculty best positioned to address those needs and provide necessary incentives to retain productive faculty members.</li></ul>
<p>Actions for success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Action: Find new avenues to advertise open positions and recruit beyond traditional academic sites.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: routinely survey identical positions to determine if our compensation package is competitive with other programs in the Southeast similar to ours.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 1d Provide students and faculty with the facilities, technology, and other resources necessary for staying competitive not only in the professional arena but also in the academic one.</li> <li>○ Strategy 1e Decentralize resources (such as technology or physical space) that prove to be barriers to student recruitment, retention, and success.</li> </ul>
<p>Actions for success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engage with other campus disciplines and departments to find shared resources available to our students and faculty (the library DMC for example).</li> <li>○ Communicate our needs to external stakeholders to encourage fundraising and donation which meet our needs.</li> <li>○ When possible, reduce technological and financial barriers (for example, cost of equipment, hardware, software) for current and potential students.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 1f In every facet, provide the opportunity to assess what we offer students, faculty, and the profession. Curriculum benchmarks should assess our students' adoption of core values and competencies. Faculty benchmarks should assess the positive impact of that member on the department. Community impact and student success following graduation should assess our contribution to the profession.</li> </ul>
<p>Actions for success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Formulate and routinely execute our assessment plan (currently in development) to evaluate program success.</li> <li>○ Gather feedback from outside professional sources to evaluate our success. For example, survey past clients in our PR Organizations class, internship providers and recent graduates. Allow opportunities for professionals to critique current student work and provide feedback for improvement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 1g While matriculating in our department, provide students with exposure to external stakeholders, internship experiences, and on-campus activities that strengthen their likelihood of current and future employment within our field.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Continue hosting events with such organizations as the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters, Mississippi Press Association, and the Public Relations Association of Mississippi that give our</li> </ul>

<p>students access to current professionals in hopes of building connections helpful in finding future employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue supporting the position of internship coordinator and provide that position with tools for success.</li> <li>○ Maintain and possibly expand our contributions with Hail State Productions and ESPN/SEC Network to give students beneficial experience during their time with us.</li> <li>○ Track, publicize, and connect our alumni from across the country and globe so that the pride and recognition of our department can be felt on a larger scale.</li> </ul>
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**2. Encourage and support research and creative works that inspire fresh ideas, offer new solutions, and critically analyze issues we encounter in our world.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 2a Provide incentives to increase and reward productivity of peer reviewed scholarship and creative works.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Continue awarding departmental research award with a stipend to honor those who have performed at a high level.</li> <li>○ Action: Provide financial assistance when allowable to support faculty collaborations and interactions with professors on and off-campus as well as outside professionals in our field.</li> <li>○ Action: Encourage eligible faculty to apply for sabbatical and provide departmental assistance with their application.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 2b Allocate available resources to properly promote and share faculty works with external academic communities increasing awareness of our brand.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Provide travel funding for professors and instructors to present at national/international conferences.</li> <li>○ Action: Distribute a newsletter to external stakeholders which contains a spotlight piece on research being currently conducted/published in the department.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 2c Find creative strategies to increase extramural funding of research and creative works.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Host experts in grantsmanship from within our discipline to give advice and assistance in helping our faculty successfully apply and earn outside funding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 2d Create relationships across campus and disciplines that inspire collaborative research and creative projects.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Use our connections with the SSRC to promote collaborative research.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Promote our skills and assistance to other centers and institutes across campus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 2e Network with external industry, alumni, and external stakeholders to investigate possible collaborations and joint projects that lead to productive scholarship, creative works, and increased visibility of the department.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Use alumni and advisory board connections to network with professionals in the field to assess any needs our researchers could address</li> <li>○ Action: Use our PR Organizations and PRISM classes to promote our services to the local community and state.</li> </ul>

**3. Expand and promote our department’s identity through community engagement, public service, and assistance in analyzing messages in a continuously changing and frenetically paced media landscape.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 3a Demonstrate the department’s commitment to professional education through workshops, seminars, continuing education courses, and other innovative offerings.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Use our associations with groups such as the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters, Mississippi Press Association, and the Public Relations Association of Mississippi to provide in-house workshops, luncheons, and other interactions with our faculty to gauge current trends, needs, platforms, etc. so our faculty is knowledgeable about the state of the industry.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 3b Develop new opportunities to incorporate service-learning components in our curriculum.</li> <li>○ Strategy 3c Assess the need for mass communication education in the local elementary and secondary schools, service that need, and build relationships with those schools.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Establish a relationship with our partnership school in which we gain access to students and they gain our expertise in media production and criticism. Collaborate with the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association at The University of Mississippi on various projects.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 3d Ensure faculty participate in key positions of leadership within the university and community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Strive to always have a member of the Department on top university committees like Holland Faculty Senate and UCCC.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 3e</li> </ul>

Increase community awareness and use of our department's classes and services, like Prism and PR capstone classes, that could benefit local organizations and businesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Promote through the Office of Public Affairs, community newspapers, and broadcasters instances where these classes aid in an organization's goals.</li> <li>○ Action: Provide speakers at local civic, nonprofit, and religious organizations who can detail our services to their group.</li> </ul>

**4. Combat Mississippi's past history and current perceptions of intolerance and discrimination by celebrating our cultural richness, promoting inclusivity, and cultivating pride in the different perspectives expressed on our campus.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 4a Demonstrate the benefits of diversity to students by offering multicultural learning environments and activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Per ACEJMC standards, ensure all classes under the auspices of accreditation have some component of diversity, inclusion, and equity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 4b When advertising and recruiting for available faculty and staff positions, seek out avenues that provide a diverse applicant pool.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Express our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity in all position announcements, be it through the university or through other industry-related groups</li> <li>○ Action: Ensure that our position announcements are being communicated through organizations devoted to underrepresented groups in journalism.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 4c Cultivate and retain relationships with alumni from underrepresented groups who aid our efforts in recruiting, retaining, and graduating students from those groups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 4d Ensure diversity on all advisory boards.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Periodically review the makeup of our alumni/advisory boards and make adjustments when needed to ensure diversity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategy 4e Maintain a committee of faculty, staff, and students to assess the department's commitment to diversity, plan future efforts, and evaluate current performance on such initiatives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Action: Schedule and conduct recurring meetings of a departmental diversity, inclusion, and equity community to explore areas where further diversity efforts could be made.</li> </ul>