

2021 School of Communication & Journalism Strategic Plan
Timeline: 7 years

Approved by School faculty: Aug. 21, 2021

School of Communication & Journalism Overview

The School of Communication & Journalism offers the following programs:

- B.A., Communication Studies, with emphases in: Corporate Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Mass Communication, and Communication in Organizations (online)
- B.S., Health Communication, both on campus and online programs (interdisciplinary with the Department of Public Health)
- B.A., Journalism, with emphases in: Journalism, Broadcast Journalism, Public Affairs Reporting, and Sports Media Relations
- B.A., Public Relations
- B.A., Television and Video Production
- Departmental honors in Communication Studies for students in the Communication Studies, Health Communication, Public Relations, and Television and Video Production programs
- Departmental honors in Journalism for students in the Journalism program
- An accelerated MA program
- Twelve undergraduate minors
- M.A. in Communication Studies, with emphases in: Interpersonal Communication Processes, Media and Critical Studies, and Strategic Communication
- M.A. in Communication Studies, online degree with an emphasis in Communication and Leadership
- Graduate Certificate in Communication Processes
- Dual credit CMN 1310G in both D214 and downstate formats

SC&J Mission Statement

The School of Communication and Journalism prepares students to think critically, act responsibly, and produce creatively to better communicate in a diverse, democratic society. Our school offers a variety of majors that combine liberal arts education with professional and hands-on training. Courses are designed to develop oral, written, relational, digital and visual skills critical to the fields of communication and journalism. We foster communication approaches that facilitate freedom of expression, transparency, advocacy, and civic engagement.

Strategic Directions

- I. Develop a SC&J Identity
- II. Increase Enrollment
- III. Enhance student success
- IV. Foster Alumni relationships
- V. Expand Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work
- VI. Streamline Processes to Improve Effectiveness
- VII. Embrace Diversity

Strategic Direction 1: Develop a SC&J Identity

- Goal 1: Establish, foster and communicate the SC&J's identity internally and externally.
 - Create SC&J social media accounts that post content which fosters a coherent identity
 - Nominate at least five students each academic year for university awards, scholarships, and recognition
 - Nominate at least one alum each year for an alumni award
 - Use hallway and classroom spaces in Buzzard Hall to make the School visible and ensure we communicate that our students are a central part of the school
 - Make all speakers and events known to members of the school and encourage participation
 - Document and communicate all happenings in the School
 - Include the School's logo on all promotional materials
 - Develop a process for centralized promotion and communication of events
 - Establish a school calendar with all events (print/digital/sharepoint)
 - Increase faculty involvement on university committees

- Goal 2: Establish and foster a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff to the SC&J.
 - Use signage/posters to highlight student and faculty accomplishments (dean's list, student organizations, study abroad experiences, alumni stories, etc.)
 - Utilize large computer screen in main office to showcase school news, information, speakers, etc.
 - Encourage interdivisional projects such as shared Redden Grants, team-teaching, SCJ class proposals, etc.
 - Create an academic year kick-off social for faculty, staff, and graduate students
 - Host a homecoming event – for faculty, staff, students, and alumni
 - Host a social event as a finale to “School's Out”

Strategic Direction 2: Increase Enrollment

- Goal 1: Engage in coordinated, strategic recruiting experiences
 - Develop and execute a SC&J-wide recruiting plan that enhances the recruiting experience for students and increases success
 - Rethink and redesign our current contact point messages
 - Highlight the quality of our curriculum and student experiences
 - Reinforce our identity through our promotional materials
 - Identify and share all opportunities for incoming student aid
 - Highlight outcomes for graduates
 - Focus on the opportunities created by graduating from the SC&J
 - Determine ways to reach adult and non-traditional learners
 - Highlight need for a flexible and transferrable skill set as industries are disrupted and the gig economy continues to grow
 - Focus on increased need for content creation, particularly persuasive advocacy through narrative and visual storytelling in a variety of industries
 - Communicate to move more students from “inquired” to “applied”
 - Improve communication with prospective students through social media and direct correspondence
 - Develop new opportunities for students to experience the SC&J before they enroll
 - Increase faculty participation in student recruitment
 - Formalize the student ambassador program
 - Collect and share information about recent graduates highlighting job titles and roles via social media and/or website
 - Obtain the “first choice” designation from the graduate school
 - Pursue new programs as appropriate
 - Develop outreach to guidance counselors, specifically to educate them about career options for our majors

- Goal 2: Situate the SC&J as a first choice for transfer students
 - Assess the value of our current 2+2 agreements
 - Create 2+2 agreements for transfer students in feeder schools that feature programs connected to our majors
 - Highlight the ability to complete our degrees in a timely manner

Strategic Direction 3: Enhance student success

- Goal 1: Transform undergraduate and graduate student learning with a commitment to student success and the development of knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged graduates.
 - Establish a course proposal review process/timeline with a focus on course content, objectives, and delivery
 - Develop and maintain audio-visual equipment and multimedia facilities to provide high quality hands-on experience for our students
 - Increase faculty applications for Redden grants
 - Bring back the multimedia contest as a school wide event
 - Provide support to students who submit projects to outside outlets
 - Create a place for undergraduate and graduate students to learn about job and academic/graduate school options after graduation

- Goal 2: Increase the retention and graduation rates of SC&J students.
 - Increase faculty participation in early alerts for major classes
 - Track majors entering and exiting the program to better understand where they come from and where they are going
 - Survey students about academic wants and needs
 - Increase student involvement in RSO's aligned with their career interests
 - Increase student participation in internships
 - Explore starting a student advisory board
 - Host a student support retreat - half-day meeting addressing larger issues impacting our students and how we may help them with challenges they face. Potential areas of consideration:
 - Diversity training
 - Ally (safe-zone) training
 - Mental health
 - Career services
 - Food insecurity

- Goal 3: Advance teaching and learning through innovations in course design, teaching strategies, assessment, and partnerships with other campus entities and programs.
 - Add community and/or service learning components to classes
 - Support exploration of alternate course delivery systems that facilitate engagement and learning (8-week, hybrid, etc.)
 - Consider non-traditional scheduling and/or meeting styles to open space for experiential learning efforts, larger projects, community engagement, etc.

Strategic Direction 4: Foster Alumni relationships

- Goal 1: Collaborate with alumni to enhance student learning and encourage student/alumni relationships.
 - Build and maintain a reliable and updated communication channel between alumni and the school.
 - Recruit alumni as guest speakers in classes
 - Maintain an updated alumni list including collecting emails of recent graduates
 - Share a calendar of events with alumni
 - Offer alumni an easy way to connect with the school
 - Share stories of alumni success
 - Build a directory of alumni industry professionals to share ideas, thoughts and career advice through and SC&J Linked In page

- Goal 2: Foster an advancement agenda centered on the evolving needs of students and faculty.
 - Identify large projects that can be funded by alumni donations
 - Identify alumni who are potential donors and share with the director of development
 - Ensure contact with development when alumni are on campus
 - Begin an alumni mentoring program
 - Involve alumni in school events (such as School's Out or Homecoming)

Strategic Direction 5: Expand Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

- Goal 1: Create high-impact, innovative research, scholarship, and creative work that addresses and reflects the challenges faced by communicators in the 21st century.
 - When revising the DAC, ensure that diverse forms of scholarship and creative activity are valued
 - Support faculty applying for external funding
 - Promote research and creative activity output of faculty on SC&J social media/website or alumni newsletter or other communications

- Goal 2: Emphasize and integrate undergraduate and graduate research as part of the SC&J learning experience.
 - Participate in EIU's Student Research and Creative Activity conference hosted by the honors college each year (especially departmental honors students)
 - Increase participation in departmental honors
 - Increase, celebrate, and support student participation in on/off campus conferences, showcases and competitions
 - Identify rewards and incentives to recognize student research success
 - Identify and promote local and national student competitions and conferences in our disciplines, such as Bateman, Hearst, the Arthur Page Student Case Study Competition, AEJMC, etc.

Strategic Direction 6: Streamline Processes to Improve Effectiveness

- Goal 1: Develop flexible, effective, and efficient departmental processes.
 - Review and revise bylaws with the goal of increasing efficiency and reducing overall service load
 - Develop a SC&J technology plan focused on maximizing current resources and identifying potential sources of support

- Goal 2: Increase faculty engagement with departmental initiatives ensuring an equitable distribution of work and allowing faculty to focus their efforts in areas where they are most effective.
 - When revising the DAC, ensure that participation and quality of service are valued.

Strategic Direction 7: Embrace Diversity

- Goal 1: Foster a departmental culture that embraces difference, values cultural diversity, and lays the foundation for a learning environment that fosters respect and understanding while rejecting prejudice and intolerance.
 - Create and implement a department climate survey for students
 - Increase the number of students from underrepresented populations
 - Expand the diversity of the faculty
 - Develop study abroad proposals
 - Develop a support structure that includes student involvement opportunities, academic mentorship and faculty connections for underrepresented and first-generation SC&J students
 - Sponsor and co-sponsor events related to diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Goal 2: Increase faculty diversity by employing approaches that realize and retain greater numbers of diverse faculty members.
 - Broaden position descriptions and more forcefully articulate diversity language in advertising materials
 - Ensure search committees submit recruitment plans sensitive to diversity and that reach diverse networks
 - Actively support initiatives from the HLC QI “Strategic Plan for Diversifying Faculty and Staff”