

APPENDIX PT. II-A

Envisioning Tomorrow



School of Media and Journalism

Envisioning Tomorrow

A Strategic Plan for 2020-2025

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Our Story, Our Strengths

As the media industry has experienced rapid changes, the School of Media and Journalism has also experienced an accelerating evolution.

In 1924, the Department of Journalism was born at the University of North Carolina. This Department became a school in 1950.

In 1990, the school was renamed the School of Journalism and Mass Communication to reflect its broadening scope as a professional school, providing undergraduate and master's students a quality education in a variety of specializations across journalism (reporting, editing and graphic design, business journalism, broadcast and electronic journalism, photojournalism, multimedia) and strategic communication industries (advertising, public relations). In addition, the School supported scholarly research in political, social, and strategic communication; media effects, information processing, and audiences; media processes and production; media history; and media law.

The year 2005 marked a significant change in the School with the retirement of long-time dean, Richard Cole, and the launch of a vision initiative to revisit and reimagine its direction of the School. With this initiative as inspiration, and the 2013 Path Forward as its immediate foundation, the School adopted new vision and overarching mission statements to guide the School's strategic priorities to the present day.

In Fall 2015, the School marked its continued evolution with a new name—the School of Media and Journalism. Our integrated curriculum at the undergraduate level offers the potential for students to become exposed to multiple skills within the journalism specialization. Advertising and public relations specializations now share a single foundational course where students learn the basic principles of both professions. Other recent innovations within the School include an online master's program in digital communication (the first students entered in Fall 2011); a re-envisioned doctoral program curriculum; support of emerging technology and social media analytics labs; seed grants in support of grant-funded research predominantly, though not exclusively, in the area of health communication; and a noteworthy increase in experiential learning offered internally through courses and study abroad programs.

True to our vision, changes in our faculty, curricula, students, and the industries we serve have taken us along new and exciting paths. We continue to be committed to producing locally, nationally, and internationally recognized scholarly and creative work and preparing graduates who can innovate and invent modern media. At the same time,

we continue to be mindful of our history and remain firmly grounded in the values that underpin our scholarly/creative activity, our service, and our teaching across undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels.

Our current strengths include an excellent, *student-centered* education that prepares students to *write well, visualize data, and apply audio and visual* communication techniques to convey stories and complex information across journalism and strategic communication areas. Many students across program levels obtain *hands-on experience* in their coursework, as well as extracurricular creative or research endeavors through our School. Students have won numerous awards for their broadcasting and visual journalism work and their advertising and public relations campaign work with clients.

At the undergraduate level, a growing number of courses have become available for students to learn more about business and economic issues within and outside the media industry. A growing number of courses at all levels provide the data analytic skills needed to understand the audience and investigate issues of public import. We look forward to developing new opportunities to *experiment with cutting-edge technologies* and evaluate how to best apply these technologies for impactful storytelling.

Our staff's commitment to the success of every student is unparalleled, as is our support of students through *scholarships, internships, job placement, global travel and networking trips*, and opportunities to meet with and be mentored by industry professionals, thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friends of the School.

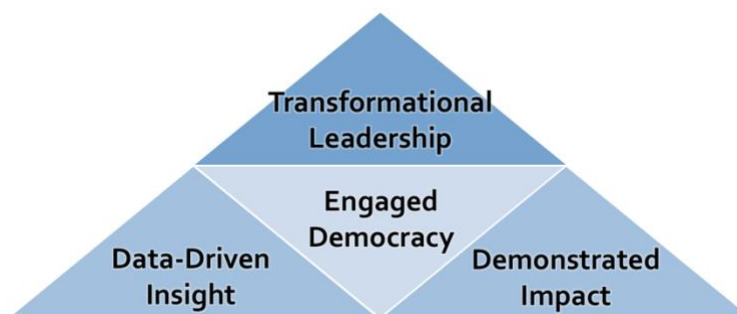
Faculty are known for their creative and scholarly output in numerous areas, including news design, multimedia journalism, motion graphics, strategic media, campaigns, health communication, political communication, public relations, media effects, media sociology, and media law. This blend of professional and research expertise is also a mark of distinction—few programs boast this dual strength. We continue to strive for new ways to capitalize on this dual strength and demonstrate our *national and international relevance* through this powerful combination of talents and tools.

Building from the School's previous strategic plan, A Path Forward, and informed by information gathered from the Fall 2018 school retreat, Spring 2018 faculty and staff interviews, prior accreditation and self-study reports, and market research by the School's graduate program, this document lays out the five-year design for continuing our trajectory toward an integrated, progressive, and innovative body of professionals and scholars who will give tomorrow's students the creative and analytical skills needed to transform the world of media.

Overarching Principles

The School of Media and Journalism is committed to the following four principles throughout all of its work, from operations to curricula to scholarly and creative output:

- **Transformational leadership** – We will be inspired and prepared to lead from any seat, to recognize, embrace and adapt to change and disruption, and to become visionary guides for industry leaders and policy-makers alike.
- **Data-driven insights** - We will be skilled in identifying, gathering, and analyzing data in order to derive and report groundbreaking insights, build theory from rigorous research, understand the media’s impact (both intended and unintended) on audiences and communities, and lead conversations about the role of media in shaping public discourse.
- **Engaged democracy** – We will embody the principles of free speech, press, and expression and our work will contribute to a more engaged, informed, and strong democracy.
- **Demonstrated impact** – We will demonstrate our impact in shaping our local, state, national, and international communities through our teaching, creative and scholarly work, and outreach; through continual measurement and discussion, we will achieve a deep understanding of how our work touches and affects these communities.



We will infuse at least two of these four principles into every course and school-based initiative at all program levels (undergraduate and graduate). Evidence of these principles will be apparent in the output of our graduating students, as well as the creative and scholarly output of our excellent faculty.

Strategic Priorities

Guided by our four overarching principles expressed above, we will channel our educational, creative, and scholarly efforts into developing and supporting the following five priorities:

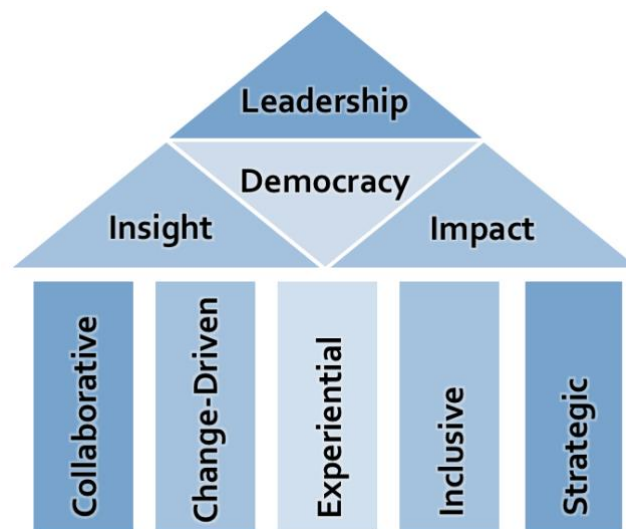
- **Reenvisioning the School as an adaptive hub** - Our School is at the intersection of many fields and serves as a hub that fosters **collaboration** and **integration** within and outside our walls.
 - Internally, we will support opportunities for collaboration and integration between and within journalism and strategic communication, as well as between and within professional practice and research.
 - Externally, we will identify and cultivate key partnerships within the university, in industry, with local and state communities, and with national and international partners.
 - In our internal and external efforts, we will remain vigilant and adaptive to change so that we may evolve in how we apply our areas of expertise to address contemporary issues of industry or societal importance.

- **Embracing and driving change** - We will promote and facilitate:
 - Experimentation with new teaching methods and models,
 - Opportunities to lead industry experimentation and innovation,
 - Generation of new knowledge by using novel or creative techniques, and
 - Self-directed learning and continual advancement.

- **Expanding experiential education** - We will build on our strengths in offering hands-on, project-based education and development of:
 - New project-based learning opportunities inside and outside of the curriculum,
 - Engagement opportunities with local, national, and international constituents and communities, and
 - Partnerships with community and industry sources who have unique insights and expertise.

- **Prioritizing diversity and inclusion** - We will continue to embrace, discuss, and strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion with intentionality, from classroom instruction to scholarly and creative activities, to the procedures and policies of our School.

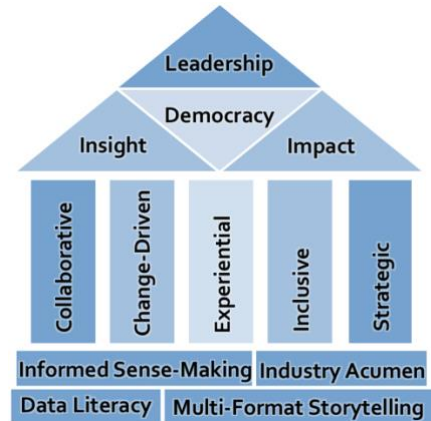
- Our commitment to diversity and inclusion extends to age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic group, geography, religion, thought, philosophy, perspective, disability, and veteran status.
- **Elevating our business strategy** - We will continue to improve our governance and procedures to achieve a unified, synergistic operation that embodies our overarching principles through our:
 - Adoption of new technologies that centralize data collection, monitoring, and assessment across the School in order to
 - Demonstrate our educational effectiveness and broader impact,
 - Monitor our progress toward realizing our priorities, and
 - Perform effective financial strategic analysis, budgeting, and forecasting,
 - Redefinition of staff and administrative roles to facilitate nimble, adaptive, and efficient task-oriented work flows while encouraging shared ownership and responsibility,
 - Investment in the professional development of staff,
 - Support for seeking and management of external funding opportunities, and
 - Diversification of financial support at the graduate and undergraduate program levels.



These priorities not only guide our educational, creative, and scholarly work, but they also focus our attraction, development, and retention of talent across staff, students, and faculty to strengthen our local, national, and international reputation.

Curricular Competencies

Through a creative, adaptive, and analytical approach, our School will produce graduates at all program levels who reflect our overarching principles and who are proficient in the following areas of expertise:



- **Storytelling in multiple formats** - We will deliver a strong writing foundation, as well as expertise in the application and creation of audio and visual forms of communication. By providing strength in written and visual language, our graduates will be expert, effective communicators who understand how to produce and share content in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes. Graduates will also have a deep understanding of audiences and audience diversity, as well as an approach to content creation and delivery marked by social intelligence and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- **Informed decision- and sense-making** – We will imbue our graduates with the ability to apply conceptual, critical, and adaptive thinking to identify problems, gain valuable insight, develop effective strategies for solving problems, and engage in high-level development of theories and concepts for understanding issues, audiences, and change in the industries we serve.
- **Data literacy** – We will excel in conveying essential expertise in the extraction, critical examination, interpretation, and application of numerical and other forms of data. Graduates will be able to glean insight from data and communicate these insights to audiences in an informed, effective, and ethical manner.
- **Industry acumen** – Our students will be knowledgeable and astute in the business of media through the combination of market and economic knowledge with the legal, ethical, and historical principles that have shaped the media industries. Our graduates will be uniquely positioned to understand, facilitate, and lead change, and they will do so with an entrepreneurial spirit.

With these competencies, our graduates will be able to skillfully and creatively apply theory, research, and practice to the reporting and solving of real-world problems within any given subject. As such, we encourage students to seek **additional expertise in a specific subject or content area**, so that they may demonstrate our School's role at the intersection of fields.

Major Initiatives

Building on existing strengths within our School and reflecting the strategic priorities and curricular competencies listed above, we will develop and support four intersecting hubs, or areas of focus, that span journalism and strategic communication—topical hubs in **public life** and **healthy communities** and non-topical hubs in **storytelling innovations** and **audience analysis**.

- **Public Life** - This area is about democracy, especially the ways that citizens, organizations, and the media interact with each other and with political actors and policy-makers. We will expand the existing activities and education that have been associated with the Program on Public Life, the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, and the Center for Media Law to create a nexus of excellence in political research, reporting, and strategy and an understanding of the role that businesses, including media and technology industries, have played and continue to play in democracy. Through innovations in research and practice and data-driven insights, this hub will help new generations of students and practitioners strengthen democracy through journalism, public relations, advertising, and research that supports an informed and engaged public.
- **Healthy Communities** - Our creative and scholarly strengths across journalism and strategic communication extend to the role of media and communication in the public's health and well-being. We are uniquely positioned to build on our existing foundations in health communication and in environment and science communication to become thought leaders in the creation and dissemination of communications related to the health of the individual and of the community, as well as to conduct research and lead conversations about the reach, impact, and policy implications of these messages for the public good.
- **Storytelling Innovations** - Threaded throughout our fabric is a spirit of invention and entrepreneurship within journalism and strategic communication. In embodiment of this spirit, we will leverage the strengths of our storytellers, our Reese News and Emerging Technologies labs, our many content-producing programs from the Carolina Photojournalism Workshop to Heelprint Communications, and the potential of the Curtis Media Center to push boundaries in developing and experimenting with creative new storytelling structures, formats, delivery systems, and content-gathering technologies and provide evidence-based leadership into tomorrow's media landscape.

- **Audience Analysis** - Whether from the lens of journalism, strategic communication, industry or academic developments, we are experts in creating, disseminating, discussing, and testing content with purpose. Yet, it is the people—the audience—who are at the center of all of our efforts. Expanding upon our Research Center to include a social media monitoring lab, a strong collaborative tie with the Computational Communication Research Lab, and improvements on our existing data gathering and analysis capabilities, we will provide unparalleled training and understanding of audiences, markets, and the public at large, and we will lead innovation in audience insight through creative applications in data collection, monitoring, and analysis.



These intersecting hubs will extend our existing strengths and immersive programs, integrate creative and scholarly expertise, and serve all programs in the School. Students and faculty will have the opportunity to focus their efforts within a single hub or take advantage of the naturally occurring connections across multiple hubs to develop expertise within their area of study. Each hub will be characterized by:

- Relationships cultivated with community, industry, and campus partners relevant to each of the four hub areas.
- Large lower-level rotating topical undergraduate courses that provide substantive knowledge relevant to:
 - Public Life - rotating between political communication and the role of business and economics in public life, and
 - Healthy Communities - rotating between health communication and environment and science communication.

- Smaller seminar-style courses in partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Research, Carolina Center for Public Service (through their APPLES service-learning program), or other partners in the community or industry to provide a more comprehensive, in-depth exploration of each focus area.
- Senior- or capstone-level project-based courses that combine creative content expertise with evidence-based or investigative skills to serve multiple hubs in an integrative experience for students interested in journalism, advertising, and public relations.
- An immersive summer or academic year-long experience open to qualified undergraduate and graduate students that fully engages students in applying Storytelling Innovations and Audience Analysis to a topic within Public Life or Health and the Environment.
- 800-level graduate seminars that provide substantive knowledge relevant to:
 - Public Life and
 - Healthy Communities.
- Academic and applied research output reflecting the four hubs.
- Identification of interdisciplinary opportunities across campus to demonstrate our strengths at the intersection of these hubs.
- Development of funds to support pilot work that would encourage cross-campus collaborations in or across focus areas.
- Training opportunities for relationship development and fund seeking.
- Support for public-facing reports, data visualization, media relations, and other outward communications demonstrating our thought leadership.

Current faculty interests and courses will be identified as serving one or more of these hubs. Efforts will be focused on integration and collaboration that enriches the student experience and creative/scholarly output from faculty partnerships. Guest speakers and visiting lecturers that come to the School are expected, at least in part, to serve and invigorate these four hub areas. The activity of each hub will interconnect with opportunities for experiential learning within undergraduate and graduate courses and ensure opportunities for information discussion and exchange. By doing so, we will demonstrate and accelerate our impact in leading thought and innovation in media and journalism.

Initial Action Items

As we continually revisit and operationally define this five-year vision for tomorrow, we first present key actions to be initiated the first year of this strategic plan and completed by the end of Fall 2020.

- School-Wide
 - Create the organizational structure needed to begin development of the hubs in Public Life, Healthy Communities, Storytelling Innovations, and Audience Analysis—task forces comprised of faculty representing journalism, strategic communication, research, and professional tracks, with at-large staff, charged with developing their given hub while communicating with the other task forces to ensure cross-hub collaboration.
 - Develop core coursework and identify the current, relevant courses and creative/scholarly activity that can be incorporated to create the four hubs.
 - Support the Diversity and Inclusion committee aims to make diversity and inclusivity efforts an active part of our community, curriculum, and goals.
 - Build faculty strength in the area of data literacy, especially as applied to a journalism orientation, but recognizing the need to also strengthen data literacy with a strategic communication orientation.
 - Build faculty strength to support the Public Life hub, especially as applied to a strategic communication orientation, but recognizing the need to ensure continued strength in journalism.
 - Develop immersive experiences supporting the hubs that fulfill the goals of integration and collaboration across practice and research, and across journalism and strategic communication orientations.

- Undergraduate Education
 - Invest in the redesign of all lower-level core courses to provide students with the basic knowledge of journalism, advertising, and public relations areas needed to understand of how these media industries interconnect.
 - Invest in the identification and redesign of at least 50% of courses below the capstone level and all capstone courses to deliver:
 - Data literacy, including basic numeracy, analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data, data visualization, and/or use of databases,
 - Industry acumen, including business and/or economic models, finance knowledge, and/or business issues related to entrepreneurship, and

