

**Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ)**  
**School of Media and Communication**  
**The University of Southern Mississippi**

**Five-Year Plan (2022-2027)**  
**Adopted: July 28, 2022**

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) program in the School of Media and Communication is to provide excellent education in Journalism and Strategic Communication, and to graduate a highly qualified, diverse group of baccalaureate and graduate degree holders.

**Vision**

Our vision is to enhance significantly the instructional, technological, physical, and financial resources of the School in order to offer programs of the highest quality for the benefit of our students, the community, and the professions represented by the School.

**School background**

The School of Communication was established in 2018 with the merger of the School of Mass Communication & Journalism and the Department of Communication Studies. Effective Fall 2022, the name of the School will become the School of Media and Communication to better reflect the School's diverse range of majors.

As of Fall 2022, the School includes undergraduate majors in Communication Studies; Mass Communication & Journalism (digital journalism and strategic communication); and Media & Entertainment Arts (film, sound recording arts, video arts, and media and entertainment arts management). The School also includes master's and doctoral programs in communication as well as a master's in public relations.

The School's main goal for the next five years is strategically implementing the revised curriculum and increasing enrollment for all majors. The MCJ program has developed the following specific goals and targets:

**Goal #1: Recruit and retain high quality students in line with the School's mission.**

Action 1: The School's new Recruiting Coordinator will work with the faculty to draft a detailed recruiting plan to be evaluated and updated annually.

Action 2: Establish programming with local high schools and community colleges to promote our majors and encourage campus visits.

Action 3: Coordinate with the University Advisement Center to maintain in contact with freshmen and transfer students and consistently improve advising in the interest of retention.

Target: Increase student enrollment by 10% a year.

**Goal #2: Maintain and expand a vibrant curriculum that reflects ACEJMC standards and marketplace needs.**

Action 1: Secure ACEJMC reaccreditation of two undergraduate programs, Digital Journalism and Strategic Communication, as a national standard of program quality. Monitor programs to ensure ACEJMC values and competencies are integrated into class instruction.

Action 2: Monitor recent curriculum changes with the goal of evaluating and updating as necessary, including addition of programs to offer students certification in programs and platforms widely used in mass communication industries.

Action 3: Begin long-term planning for a Social Media and/or Digital Media majors to compliment the recently added Social Media Content and Strategy minor.

Target: Earn full accreditation in 2022-2023 and in 2028-2029.

**Goal #3: Expand cocurricular activities to offer students hands-on learning experiences.**

Action 1: Evaluate the recent reorganization of the Student Media Center for potential updates as needed.

Action 2: Increase participation in the schoolwide internship program and explore new programs to expand internship opportunities.

Action 3: Increase participation in student organizations to offset inactivity during the pandemic.

Target: Increase the number of students participating in cocurricular activities each year in the three areas listed above - Student Media Center, internships, and student organizations.

**Goal #4: Ensure the faculty, students, and curriculum reflect the diversity of the University and surrounding communities.**

Action 1: Maintain a diverse student body reflective of the University's overall population.

Action 2: Increase the diversity of faculty through targeted faculty searches as positions become vacant.

Action 3: Closely monitor and expand curricular programming to increase cultural communication proficiency.

Target: Continue to exceed university averages in percentage of School faculty and students representing diverse populations.

**Goal #5: Expand School outreach to alumni to better serve students and improve School programming.**

Action 1: Engage alumni, community, and professional partners in annual School event, including MAB Day, Strat Comm Week, Mississippi Press Association Day, Spring Banquet and Student Showcase, etc.

Action 2: Re-establish an alumni and professional advisory board to inform our curriculum and School programming.

Action 3: Expand School outreach to alumni through School social media accounts, newsletters, and the like.

Target: Meet with Advisory Board two times a year. Publish alumni newsletter once a year.

**Goal #6: Increase resources available to School faculty and students.**

Action 1: Increase the size of the faculty as justified by anticipated enrollment increase.

Action 2: Explore expansion of the School's physical footprint to enlarge School studios and facilities.

Action 3: Coordinate with University foundation for short-term and long-term fundraising initiatives.

Target: Hire a tenure-track assistant professor in Public Relations and a teaching assistant professor in Digital Media. Create an annual fundraising event.