

The Media School

Of the Future:

Drake's School of Journalism and
Mass Communication in 2017

*A report from the
Task Force on the Future of the
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
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Overview

New and evolving media are transforming the media landscape, with consumers increasingly using non-traditional channels and forms of communication. In fact, technology has spawned an era of global media entrepreneurship. Traditional media, however, have been uneven in their response to the challenges of these innovations, with much of the growth and development coming from individuals. At the same time, American trust of the news media is at an all-time low, making it essential for media professionals to regain public confidence.

Individuals who hope to succeed in this environment must be strategic, global thinkers with diverse communication skills and a solid ethical underpinning. Integration—of knowledge, skills, technology, concepts, and resources—is the key to success.

Drake University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication is well positioned to meet the challenges of the media of the 21st Century. Its location in a private university in a media-rich city offers opportunities for integration with units across campus and with professionals throughout the community, nation, and world.

The Unique Position of Drake's SJMC

The SJMC stands apart from other journalism schools across the country because of its combination of the following traits:

- Its emphasis on practical, experiential learning through on-campus work, internships, and apprenticeships.
- Its location in a media center with access to national and international magazine and newspaper publishers; outlets for major networks including public television; advertising and public relations agencies; state government; and state- and national-level organizations.
- Its position in a private university, which offers students a breadth of knowledge and understanding through access to other schools and colleges and to programs across campus.
- Faculty with practical experience and a commitment to mentoring students and graduates.

Position Statement: *Drake's School of Journalism and Mass Communication* provides hands-on professional education in a media-rich environment, and mentors for life.

Focus of the Future

The SJMC has the responsibility to teach media professionals as well as media users and, potentially, citizen journalists. Curricular revision, then, has to address the needs of SJMC majors and minors as well as other majors across campus. Likewise, the needs of SJMC students for general education in liberal arts as well as in other professions must be addressed.

Media professionals of the future need an understanding of all media but expertise in one area. All need quality writing, reporting, editing, and research skills; the ability to work on multiple platforms; knowledge of the basic mechanics and language of new media; an understanding of and, in some cases, mastery of graphic design; a foundation in personal and professional ethics, media history, and law; global understanding; and collaboration skills. Entrepreneurial skills will become increasingly important, especially for evolving media.

Media users need the skills to critically analyze the media, with the recognition of the essential role of a free press. Citizen journalists need a foundation in reporting, writing, media law and ethics.

Mission Statement: *Drake's School of Journalism and Mass Communication* strives to educate strategic, global thinkers with diverse media and communication skills and a solid ethical underpinning who are prepared to respond to a rapidly changing media environment.

Goals and Strategies for the Future

OVERALL GOAL

By 2017, Drake's SJMC will be nationally recognized as one of the top ten schools in preparing students for a highly dynamic professional environment.

PROCESS GOAL 1

Currency: The School will maintain a position in the forefront of media evolution.
NOTE: The attached "Four-Year Plan" is an illustration of course convergence, development, and innovation.

Objective 1: SJMC courses will converge at all levels of the curriculum, to allow student exposure to multiple media platforms.

Objective 2: The SJMC faculty will evaluate the curriculum—major as well as core courses—biennially for currency and innovation. The review process will include current students, alums, and media professionals.

- Strategy 1: Writing, editing and reporting will remain the School's hallmark, but design skills, including audio, video, and print photography, will be given increased importance.
- Strategy 2: Majors will be retained but de-emphasized, with more cross-curricular opportunities offered with an emphasis on collaborative work and problem-solving.
- Strategy 3: Internships and apprenticeships will be given increasing support, perhaps with the creation of a professional residency in which students work with several media outlets, agencies and organizations in a one-semester planned experience.
- Strategy 4: The SJMC will emphasize service to the university, both in skills courses and in media criticism and ethics courses.
- Strategy 5: The SJMC will develop a more rigorous general education curriculum for SJMC students and will encourage continued development of Drake's Areas of Inquiry program.
- Strategy 6: Opportunities for customization of the learning experience will be encouraged, emphasizing cross-curricular, collaborative approaches.
- Strategy 7: Online portfolio development will begin with the students' first skills class and will build throughout their career.

PROCESS GOAL 2

Ethics: An emphasis on personal and professional ethics will be the cornerstone of an SJMC education.

- Objective 1: All SJMC courses will have an ethics component.
- Objective 2: Outside professionals will be used to present case studies on ethical issues and their consequences, with an emphasis on ethical problem-solving.
- Objective 3: The Honor Code and Pledge, approved in 2006 by the SJMC faculty, will be supported by a special event each fall for new students.
- Objective 4: A cross-curricular focus on ethics will be developed campus-wide.

PROCESS GOAL 3

Organization: The structure of the university will facilitate the integration of the SJMC and other schools and colleges.

- Objective 1: A more formal relationship with Drake's graphic design program will be developed, with the goal of integrated teaching with journalism and graphic design professors and, ultimately, an interdisciplinary major in Publication and Web Design.

- Objective 2: Increased connections in content areas such as health, science, business, education, and law will be developed.
- Objective 3: Undergraduate business-related areas of study will be developed with the College of Business and Public Administration, including:
 A Business of Journalism course
 An entrepreneurship program for evolving media
- Objective 4: The administrative structure of the SJMC will ensure that the School will maintain its position as a comprehensive unit while responding to evolving needs of the marketplace.
- Strategy 1: The School will be organized around two main areas of study: Multimedia Journalism and Strategic Communication, with current majors reconfigured to include traditional and evolving media components.
- Strategy 2: The current interdisciplinary documentary program will be integrated into the curriculum.
- Strategy 3: Video and still photography will be integrated into the curriculum, as part of the SJMC core curriculum rather than as a major.

PROCESS GOAL 4

Professional Connections: The SJMC will develop integrated relationships with professional constituencies for expanded learning opportunities and exposure to technology.

- Objective 1: Internship and apprenticeship opportunities locally and nationally will be formalized and increased.
- Strategy 1: Relationships with SJMC alums in Des Moines and in key markets, such as Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York, Kansas City, San Francisco, St. Louis and Denver will be extended.
- Strategy 2: Employers will be encouraged to create internship tools, including a learning manual for student interns.
- Objective 2: Opportunities with other Drake departments and services will be expanded.
- Strategy 1: A targeted interdisciplinary major in sports media will be developed.
- Objective 3: Relationships with other educational institutions locally will be extended to supplement the educational opportunities of Drake students as well as the students at the other institutions.

Objective 4: Relationships with educational institutions in other media and communication centers, such as New York and Washington, DC will be extended.

PROCESS GOAL 5

Teaching Innovation: Integrated teaching and hands-on learning will be the School's model of education.

Objective 1: The sharing of skills and expertise throughout a variety of classes will be expected.

- Strategy 1: All SJMC faculty members will team-teach at least one converged course or lab a semester.
- Strategy 2: Local and national professionals will be used as teachers and mentors.
- Strategy 3: The SJMC will provide faculty with opportunities to attain and retain appropriate technical proficiency.
- Strategy 4: New SJMC faculty searches will focus at least partially on multi-media experience.

Objective 2: The classroom will be extended beyond Drake.

- Strategy 1: Courses will be offered in media outlets, agencies and organizations, when possible and appropriate.

Objective 3: Hands-on education will remain the approach to all skills courses.

- Strategy 1: Outside professionals will be used to present thoughtful and innovative approaches to problem-solving in the industry in a "How I Do What I Do" section of JMC30 and JMC40.

PROCESS GOAL 6

Globalization: Drake SJMC students will graduate with a global view of culture and the media.

Objective 1: A comprehensive worldview and global experiences will be expected of students.

- Strategy 1: Study abroad will be encouraged and facilitated.
- Strategy 2: Relationships with international media outlets, agencies, and organizations will be forged.
- Strategy 3: Increased international internships will be developed.

PROCESS GOAL 7

Publicity and Promotion: To fulfill the charge "that the stature of the SJMC is recognized by both prospective students and employers," the SJMC will be aggressively promoted and publicized.

Objective 1: A strategy will be developed and implemented to promote and publicize the work of the Task Force.

Objective 2: A yearly strategy will be developed and implemented to promote and publicize the SJMC's progress toward the Process Goals 1 through 6.

Strategy 1: Publicity and promotion materials will be disseminated through new media channels such as Podcasts.

RESOURCES

Technology: Educating students in a converged setting requires up-to-date technology that changes constantly, faculty skills that require regular updating, and technical support.

To make this plan work, Drake must continue its funding focus on technology. The Media Lab, supported by private funds, and set to begin use next fall, is an important first step. The need for software and hardware support for this lab and for existing labs will intensify in coming years.

Outreach: Developing relationships across campus and throughout the local, national, and international community requires faculty and staff time. Much of this can be done with existing personnel, but the University would see a benefit by providing additional support for staff positions related to internships and faculty support related to cross-curricular education and community outreach.

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