



2025-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



Department of Journalism
and Strategic Media





The Department of Journalism and Strategic Media (J+SM) is a professionally focused academic department at the University of Memphis. It seeks to train the next generation of journalists and communicators across the breadth of their industries. Journalism and Strategic Media is a vital part of the College of Communication and Fine Arts and follows in the footsteps of the University's mission to provide transformative educational experiences.

This strategic plan for the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media reflects the overarching goals of the institution while embracing the unique professional contributions of the Department. Our plan is aligned with the University of Memphis' strategic plan, Ascend, as well as the plan for the College of Communication and Fine Arts.

MISSION STATEMENT

We produce career-ready graduates for ever-changing media professions. We produce industry-relevant research and engage in profession-driven public service for the benefit of our communities and industries.

VISION

We seek to be the nation's leading urban journalism and mass communication program.

VALUES

The University of Memphis Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, as an engaged learning professional program, celebrates:

- + the pursuit of excellence in journalism and strategic media teaching and research.
- + integration of our programs with the Mid-South professional community and the broader global community.
- + a collegial environment that supports the breadth of our community and encourages the richness of free expression.
- + creating relationships with students to help them persist and succeed.
- + growing relationships across CCFA and the University.

GOAL 1: AGGRESSIVELY PROVIDE ACCESS

Grow enrollment while simultaneously improving student preparedness by pursuing a diversified and far-reaching recruitment strategy that emphasizes our department's compelling value proposition.

A. Strengthen and expand recruitment.

1. Enhance departmental recruitment messaging.
2. Host more on-campus events and tours for prospective students and parents to foster relationships between faculty and students, allowing students to “see themselves at the UofM.”
3. Use international University partnerships to create a pipeline of students for our graduate programs.

B. Build enrollment.

1. Expand recruitment targets beyond the Memphis metro area.
2. Increase strategic recruitment from non-traditional student segments.
3. Work with academic counseling to raise awareness of career opportunities and translatable skills in J+SM majors.
4. Support transfer and non-traditional students by guiding them through the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) process, taking advantage of existing experience to optimize their degree progress.

C. Enhance student preparedness and academic success.

1. Expand dual enrollment opportunities regionally.
2. Ease the transfer student experience through effective advising.
3. Work with community colleges to align their programs to smooth the pathway for transfer students.

GOAL 2: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUCCEED

Foster an exciting, all-encompassing student experience that encourages students to persevere, grow and thrive while laying the foundations for future success and creating an enriching lifelong bond with the University and J+SM.

A. Increase student engagement with career fields.

1. Integrate career competencies into all coursework.
2. Increase connections with local journalism and strategic media industry partners to provide paid internships.
3. Collaborate with Career Services, alumni, fellow departments and outside organizations to increase new networks of professional opportunities for students.
4. Continue to develop and promote workshops and curriculum emphasizing professionalism and portfolio development for students.

B. Enrich campus and community engagement.

- Produce programming for students campuswide to provide them with positive experiences related to our program areas.
- Prioritize student experiences beyond the classroom through collaboration with the Study Abroad Office, professional student organizations and colloquia/research activity.
- Encourage faculty and staff involvement in student organizations, including helping students create new opportunities.
- Create networking events across majors for students with participation from staff, faculty, alumni and local chapters of professional organizations.

C. Ensure a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

1. Train staff and faculty to create a student-focused environment where students are offered consistent support in an inclusive environment.
2. Increase staff, faculty and graduate assistant knowledge of resources for students.
3. Update and maintain interesting, comfortable and inclusive physical places for students.
4. Offer tutoring and tech access in student-staffed computer labs for additional learning support and guided work time.



GOAL 3: OUTCOMES-FOCUSED ACADEMICS

Deliver a rigorous, practical, well-rounded and supportive academic experience through innovative programs and teaching methods that focus on student success and prepare our students for the workforce and graduate education.

A. Prepare students for the workforce.

1. Use capstone experiences and, where appropriate, other skills-based classes to serve local, state, regional and national organizations.
2. Develop Study Abroad and Study Away programs for students across disciplines to expand opportunities for experiential and service-learning experiences.
3. Leverage the Obsidian PR Social Media Lab to collaborate with local policy makers, community leaders, nonprofits and media to generate research.
4. Continue to improve professional standards of student media outlets in the Department.

B. Increase Department submissions to industry-standard awards programs.

1. Seek awards programs through industry and academic organizations.
2. Financially support award-winning students with entry fees and travel reimbursement.

C. Deliver high-quality, professionally relevant instruction.

1. Use learning management software to its full extent to serve on campus and online students.
2. Prepare all courses to the UofM Global Gold standard.
3. Adjust the curriculum as necessary driven by assessment and professional trends.

GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Perform life-changing, interdisciplinary research and scholarship that is supported by world-class infrastructure and conducted by highly motivated researchers addressing the community and society's greatest challenges.

A. Increase external funding for research in journalism and strategic media.

1. Seek federal and foundation grants for research initiatives.
2. Develop research teams and centers to attract external funders and donors.

B. Increase undergraduate and graduate research outputs.

1. Establish research teams and centers to attract highly motivated graduate students to the doctoral program.
2. Increase student participation in existing research groups, forums and projects.
3. Develop additional curricular structures to allow for student research especially at the undergraduate level.
4. Increase graduate funding to more effectively include graduate assistants in a research capacity and to guarantee three years of support for doctoral students.

C. Provide additional support for faculty and student research.

1. Establish departmental research seed grants.
2. Work with CCFA to align grant writing resources.
3. Encourage faculty to take advantage of existing on-campus funding opportunities through CCFA and the University's research office.
4. Promote and celebrate the research and scholarship produced by faculty to increase its reach and promote J+SM as a research unit to the College, University, and greater academic community.

GOAL 5: RECRUIT, RETAIN, REWARD AND RECOGNIZE OUR PEOPLE

Cultivate a respectful, supportive culture for our exceptional faculty and staff that recognizes and rewards excellence and success and that provides ample opportunities for personal growth, professional development, promotion and leadership.

A. Reward and retain excellent faculty and staff.

1. Provide faculty, staff and graduate assistants with professional development for all stages of their careers.
2. Nominate faculty and staff for College, University, and external awards.
3. Develop a regional exchange program for faculty.

B. Recruit exceptional faculty and staff.

1. Advertise faculty job openings on AEJMC and appropriate professional groups.
2. Facilitate full-service onboarding for faculty and staff.
3. Offer an interview experience that encompasses the whole of life in Memphis.
4. Strive to offer nationally competitive salaries and start-up packages for new faculty.



Rendering for MJ 210 Multimedia News Lab.

GOAL 6: EXEMPLIFY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Optimize operational efficiency and effectiveness through the establishment of high standards and expectations to maximize resource utilization and to uphold accountability.

A. Enhance facilities

1. Advocate for updates of the Meeman Journalism Building using Department, College and University resources.
2. Renovate MJ 210 into a Multimedia News Lab with video studio spaces.
3. Maintain a robust student equipment operation.
4. Explore technology changes to better serve students.

B. Grow toward process excellence.

1. Develop bylaws for Department committees.
2. Review legacy processes and identify areas for reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.

GOAL 7: GENERATE AND STEWARD FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Increase funding and improve resource allocation to fuel growth through better alignment of internal priorities and external funding opportunities, through funding diversification and through application of financial best practices.

A. Cultivate and maintain donor relationships.

1. Strengthen relationships with local and national foundations.
2. Implement an alumni giving program focused on departmental needs.
3. Increase the number of grants that faculty apply to each year.
4. Capitalize on naming opportunities and sponsorships to secure major donors.

B. Adhere to the new RCM budget model.

1. Explore ways to improve financial efficiencies.
2. Diversify and build revenue streams.



LIVING DOCUMENT STATEMENT

The Department's strategic plan is a dynamic framework, designed to guide our efforts. The plan will be assessed and reevaluated periodically to ensure alignment with the University of Memphis' Ascend and CCFA's strategic priorities and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our students, faculty, staff and community. This deliberate process allows us to measure progress, incorporate stakeholder feedback and adjust strategies when necessary, ensuring that the plan continues to serve as an effective roadmap for achieving excellence. Through assessment and reflection, we maintain accountability, transparency and a commitment to continuous improvement as we adapt to an ever-changing world.



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The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University.
It is committed to education of a non-racially identifiable student body.