

## **Strategic Plan**

### **College of Journalism and Communications (Response to the University of Florida's Strategic Plan)**

**Approved by the Faculty: Sept. 26, 2003; Revisions approved by the Faculty: April 7, 2004;  
Aug. 16, 2005.**

**Approved by the Dean: August 26, 2005.**

#### **College Overview**

The mission of the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications is to prepare exemplary professional practitioners and scholars for certain journalism and communications fields; to generate, translate, and disseminate new knowledge about these fields, especially the role and functions of journalism and communications in a democratic society, and to advance the understanding and practice of journalism and communications for a diverse global community.

The College is a national leader in the professional education of communications practitioners as well as teacher-scholars for the field. The College is nationally accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. It offers B.S. degrees in advertising, journalism, public relations, and telecommunication and has approximately 3,000 majors in these four departments, including freshman through senior levels. The College's undergraduate curricula are concentrated at the junior and senior levels as is true of similar programs throughout the country. The College offers master's and doctoral degrees in mass communication and enrolls approximately 240 students at the graduate level. The graduate programs in mass communication are administered through the College's Division of Graduate Studies and Research.

The College's master's degree program began in the mid-1940s. Its doctoral program began in 1985. Although still a relatively young program, the latter is regarded as among the strongest in the field nationally—a tribute to the pioneering faculty in the College who invested it from the beginning with high standards, high quality, and high expectations. The graduate programs continue to evolve. In recent years we have added a Master of Advertising degree and we will soon add a Master of Arts in Mass Communication specialization in converged journalism and a 4/1 program in advertising sales.

The College also includes the Joseph L. Brechner Center for Freedom of Information; The Documentary Institute; the Jerry Davis Interactive Media Laboratory; the Knight Division for Scholarships, Career Services, and Multicultural Affairs; and six broadcasting facilities (the local PBS television station, WUFT-TV; the local National Public Radio affiliate, WUFT-FM, and its sister station, WJUF-FM, whose signal reaches the State's central Gulf Coast; two commercial radio stations, WRUF-AM/FM; and a low-power television station, WLUF-TV).

The College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida is among the top-ranked programs in the nation. Overall, the top ten colleges of journalism and Communication in the United States, listed alphabetically, are: Florida, Georgia, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Indiana, Michigan State, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Syracuse, Texas at Austin.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the top ten programs in journalism and communications are at relatively comprehensive land-grant institutions. Many of these major

universities see a natural link between the fundamental role and function of journalism and communications in a democratic society and the importance of fostering excellent programs in these fields as part of the essential mission of a land-grant institution. Also of note is that nine of the ten are structured as colleges/schools headed by a dean.

**What characteristics do they share which place them at the top?** The top programs share:

- Balanced curricula that include a mix of conceptually based courses and practical/applied (skills) courses, with support and opportunities for undergraduate and master's students to obtain internships;
- Faculty depth and expertise that includes a balance of those with strong academic background/credentials and those with strong professional experience. Sometimes one individual has both, but the key is that the faculty as a whole includes breadth and depth of both academic and practical background and experience;
- Faculty noted for effective teaching, as well as productive, quality research/creative activities, and involvement and leadership in scholarly and professional associations at the national/international levels;
- Sufficient size to offer complete curricula, with sufficient faculty expertise to maximize curricular quality;
- Professional accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications;
- Budget adequate to provide high quality in administration, instruction, research/creative activities, facilities/equipment, and support services;
- A commitment to shared faculty governance;
- Effective leadership, both position leadership (those holding administrative positions/titles) and leadership by influence (reputation of faculty and others among peers and key publics);
- Overall instructional student-faculty ratio (SFR) no higher than 35:1 (and generally lower, averaging approximately 29:1); instructional SFR in professional skills classes at a maximum of 20:1 (and often as low as 15:1);
- Sufficient quantity and quality of facilities and equipment to sustain high-quality teaching, research/creative activities, and service;
- Regular, systematic, and quality outreach to professionals practicing in the fields for which the programs prepare students;
- Undergraduate, master's and doctoral students who can compete successfully with students from other programs throughout the country in a range of activities at national and international levels (e.g., winning "top paper" or similar awards in nationally competitive research papers competitions; national Hearst Competition for journalism students and Bateman Case Study competition in public relations, InterAD international advertising student competitions, and the Echo national marketing competition);
- Alumni who include nationally known practitioners and leaders in their fields and in the academy;
- A commitment to preparing future journalism and communications professionals to work in a diverse, multicultural, global community;
- A faculty and student body that are inclusive across race, ethnicity, and gender, and a curriculum that exposes students to issues of inclusiveness affecting journalism and communications;

- Ability to attract external funding, through philanthropy or contracts and grants.

### **Where does UF rank among Colleges of Journalism and Communications?**

In every national ranking of programs in the fields of journalism and communications for more than 20 years, all four of the College's undergraduate programs and the master's program have ranked consistently among the top ten. In recent years, the College's doctoral program, which began in 1985, also has gained recognition as one of the top programs in the nation. Their evaluations include rankings of colleges as a whole as well as rankings of individual academic specialties. For example, in the only ranking of journalism and communications programs conducted by *U. S. News & World Report* (1996), the College's graduate programs in advertising, public relations, and telecommunication (radio/television) were ranked second nationally, and the journalism program was ranked sixth nationally. In our fields, these rankings generally are regarded also as reflecting rankings of the undergraduate programs. No other college in the nation had all of its programs ranked in the top six. More recently (December 2001), using an example of rankings within a single field, the College's graduate program in public relations was ranked third in the nation. Other rankings have included those by such organizations as the Associated Press Managing Editors Association and the Radio-Television News Directors Association, and media including *Madison Avenue* and *The Gannett Center Journal*.

The top-ranking status of the College also has been validated by the support the College has received over many years from the major foundations that fund programs in journalism and communications, including The Freedom Forum (the former Gannett Foundation) and The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Since 1990, the Knight Foundation, for example, has awarded 16 endowed chairs, with grants of \$1.5 million each, only to elite journalism programs in the United States. One was given to UF's College of Journalism and Communications.

The University of Florida has embarked on a mission to become one of the nation's top ten public universities. To that end, the University has developed a strategic plan designed to help individual programs within the University to improve national rankings. The University's strategic plan calls for the allocation of resources to enhance programs and to emphasize interdisciplinary study and the internationalization of the University.

The College of Journalism and Communications is positioned to play a significant role as the University strives for excellence, national recognition, and top-ten rankings across many disciplines. The College is, by its nature, interdisciplinary. The study of journalism and communications not only is essential for understanding and functioning in a democracy; it also is critical in today's global society. The media often convey information from across the intellectual and social spectrum. Teaching, scholarship, and outreach/service related to the roles and functions of journalism and communications are significant components of 21<sup>st</sup> century universities.

### **Goals and Strategies:**

The overall goal of the College of Journalism and Communications is to enhance and deepen the reputation of the College as one of the nation's top-ranked programs in graduate and undergraduate study of journalism and communications.

This Strategic Plan lists goals and presents strategies to meet those goals. This plan is not intended to be a comprehensive document. Rather, the plan was formulated in response to current directions of the University of Florida as stated in the University's strategic plan. To that

end, the College endorses and incorporates the following underlying philosophy expressed by President Young in the UF Strategic plan:

*Faculty must have the opportunity to grow in scholarship, to develop leadership skills, and to polish their teaching techniques. If the University is to advance, it must have a long-term program of faculty development and evaluation. Sustained development of leadership skills among faculty is needed to insure the vitality of shared faculty governance, to foster the development of interdisciplinary projects and programs, and to refresh the leadership of academic and administrative units. The university's success depends on the ability of faculty members to formulate a vision for their units and to initiate strategies to realize unit goals. Faculty should share in developing these programs, and I encourage faculty to participate in shared governance through the Faculty Senate, departments, and colleges.*

The goals and strategies of the College of Journalism and Communications Strategic Plan are listed in seven categories. The goals, first approved by the faculty on Sept. 26, 2003 and subsequently revised, appear below.

## **1. Shared Governance**

**Goal:** The College's success depends on the ability of faculty members to formulate a vision for their units and to initiate strategies to realize unit goals. Faculty should share in developing these programs and should participate in shared governance of the college. The faculty and administration will work together in a culture of shared governance that endorses shared authority and responsibility for implementation of strategies to achieve the goals set forth in this plan.

### **Strategies**

- A. Elect a standing committee on shared governance that will continue the process of developing strategies to meet this goal.
- B. Increase shared governance, including significant faculty participation in governance regarding budgets, curriculum, development of grants, enrollment, hiring, ~~and~~ tenure and promotion, and other similar decisions.
- C. Re-examine and update the college constitution to reflect goals and strategies related to ~~self~~ shared governance.

## **2. Graduate Enrollment/Education**

**Goal:** To maintain the College's position among the top master's and doctoral programs in the nation and to grow and enhance graduate enrollment and increase the proportion of graduate students in the overall college enrollment.

### **Strategies**

- A. Maximize use of existing resources and seek additional resources to increase and refine recruiting and promotion efforts, possibly involving the College communications director.
- B. Maintain the high quality and national and international diversity of the College graduate student population as we grow graduate enrollment.
- C. Seek additional funding for assistantships and fellowships to remain competitive in recruiting the highest-quality doctoral students.

- D. Continue to conduct research and analyses to ascertain fields of master's and doctoral study in greatest demand.
- E. Continue to refine the process and increase the efficiency in processing student inquiries and applications.
- F. Complete planning and implementation of 4-1 programs where appropriate; develop systematic, effective and ongoing methods of informing undergraduates of 4-1 opportunities in the College.
- G. Implement newly-developed specializations in new journalism technologies and media sales and management.
- H. Maintain and enhance interdisciplinary work within the College and with units across the University. In particular, maintain and enhance emphasis on international/cross-cultural communication, science/health communication, media law and political communication specializations. Reduce barriers to team and interdisciplinary teaching.
- I. Enhance graduate student involvement in the College's media outlets.

### **3. Research and Creative Activities**

**Goal:** To continue to increase the quantity and quality of faculty and graduate student refereed research and juried creative activities at the national and international levels.

#### **Strategies**

- A. Improve the research infrastructure within the College, including space, equipment, personnel and funding. Faculty and graduate student research infrastructure needs include a telephone survey research facility, an Internet laboratory, focus group/experiment rooms, dedicated research equipment, specialized software for graduate students and faculty, team research meeting space, better library and research resources and more open lab availabilities.
- B. Increase the number and amount of externally funded research projects in the College. Given success of current faculty and the content strengths of the College, the greatest potential for such funding should come (1) at the government level from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the U. S. Department of Education, the U. S. Department of State, and the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA); and (2) at the private foundation level from the Carnegie Corporation, the PEW Trusts, the Markle Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.
- C. Hire new faculty at the associate and full professor levels to provide mentors for new faculty and graduate students and additional research leadership and notoriety for the College.
- D. Further develop the reward system for faculty who are productive researchers and grant-seekers, including additional assigned time for research; increased professional development funds; additional "research summers" funding; summer funding for grant writing, and additional assignment of graduate research assistants. Institute STAR program discussed in the summary below.
- E. Give priority to research and creative activities of the College in interdisciplinary areas that will take advantage of College and University strengths, particularly in (1) science/health communication, (2) political communication, (3) media law and freedom of information and access through Brechner Center and MBCAP projects, (4) The Documentary Institute, and (5) digital and new media technologies, and (6) international and intercultural initiatives.

- F. Enhance the national/international research reputation of the College and University by instituting an international award for excellence in research in mass communication. Additional funding will be necessary to accomplish this strategy.
- G. Continue to encourage faculty involvement in editorships of prestigious national and international journals and seek resources to support and reward faculty members who serve as editors.

#### **4. International/Cross-Cultural/Social Issues**

**Goal:** To maintain and improve the quality of the College's efforts to prepare our students to function in a multicultural, diverse global community and enhance the internationalization of UF in teaching, research and service.

##### **Strategies**

- A. Continue to integrate international/cross-cultural/social issues in courses by encouraging suggestions for further internationalization of the curriculum including the 4-1 graduate programs; continuing to host international speakers in courses to provide students international exposure; continuing to develop technological capabilities related to international teleconferencing; and continuing to develop and implement curricular activities and projects that allow students hands-on experience in functioning in a diverse global community.
- B. Explore creation of a study-abroad program in which students would attend classes at a University of Florida international remote campus site or complete coursework while abroad through distance education. This would provide an international experience for the students, further internationalize the University, and retain UF student credit hours. (This program may include an international/intercultural center in South Florida.)
- C. Encourage strategic partnering with international faculty members by supporting international exchanges and joint research endeavors.
- D. Develop new professional certificate programs, which will attract international students.
- E. Continue to pursue international grants and research projects emphasizing opportunities for interdisciplinary partnerships with colleges and units at the University of Florida as designated in UF's strategic plan.
- F. Continue to expand the international mission and activities of the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information. Attract additional resources to support the Center's goals to study, collect and disseminate information about freedom of information laws and policies around the world.
- G. Enhance existing relationships with international programs and offices on campus by developing an outreach program that will make the College more visible in the international community. The program could include an annual international conference hosted by the College; seminars and certificate programs for international media professionals, students and academics.
- H. Continue to build relationships with international media professionals in the state, nation and world and develop international internship opportunities.
- I. Increase efforts to promote democracy and enhance understanding of the role of journalism and communications in the construction and consolidation of democratic societies.

- J. Conduct workshops to assist faculty members in integrating international perspectives into courses where appropriate.
- K. Continue to include international teaching and research as a factor in the hiring and evaluation of faculty members where appropriate.
- L. Develop opportunities for multi-lingual or bi-lingual media training.

## 5. Interdisciplinary

**Goal:** To maintain and enhance interdisciplinary programs and activities.

### Strategies

- A. Develop strategies to increase awareness and understanding across campus of the role of the College and its mission, with a special emphasis on research/creative activities and accomplishments and how College of Journalism and Communications scholars contribute to interdisciplinary endeavors and other strategic priorities of the University.
- B. Maintain and enhance graduate programs in media law, political communication, international communication, new media technologies and science/health communication.
- C. Enhance and facilitate development of specific interdepartmental programs such as media management and a converged newsroom. Create a mobile newsroom in cooperation with other disciplines, including engineering and computer science (incorporate global positioning, video and audio, wireless Internet and streaming technology).
- C. Continue to develop partnerships with other disciplines in grant development and research projects. Specifically, the College should continue to partner with colleagues in the College of Medicine and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and should develop partnerships with other colleges/units, as appropriate and feasible, on journalism and communications perspectives on research in cancer and genetics, research on the brain, investigation of social and medical problems associated with aging and research in ecology and the environment, etc.
- D. Provide leadership for the University and partner with faculty members in other disciplines for research and development in new information technologies.
- E. Partner with other disciplines within the university in a series of specialized course offerings aimed at long-term public service to increase awareness of advances in the sciences, for example, environmental reporting, medical/health reporting, the arts, economics and history.
- F. Establish an interdisciplinary institute on communications and democracy, incorporating key roles of advertising, journalism, public relations and telecommunication in the democratic process both here and abroad. Pursue funding from foundations such as the Knight Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, The Fulbright Commission and the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- G. Pursue creation of an annual interdisciplinary conference on Telecommunication Policy and Regulation in conjunction with the College of Business Administration and the Levin College of Law.
- H. Participate in the University's efforts to establish the campus-wide writing program. Although strained resources tax the College's ability to cover the writing-course needs of its own students, we are available to participate in the planning and perhaps in creating Web resources for the University program.

## **6. Professional Reputation/Stature**

**Goal:** To remain a national leader and further enhance the national and international reputation of the College and University by continuing to provide cutting-edge professional undergraduate and graduate education, leadership and service.

### **Strategies**

- A. Complete development of the master's specialization in converged journalism, the converged newsroom, and creation of an advanced technology mobile newsroom. Encourage participation by students from other relevant disciplines of the University in projects involving topics related to those disciplines.
- B. Upgrade facilities for magazine and visual communications, including photojournalism curricula. Upgrade advertising facilities, including introduction of Macintosh computers.
- C. Establish a program to increase student contact with state media professionals in major media outlets, public relations companies, advertising agencies and other communications fields in the high national profile media markets of South Florida, Tampa-St Petersburg, and Orlando.
- D. Develop a process for more effective tracking of alumni to assist in job placement and in generating a diversity of internship opportunities.
- E. Continue to strengthen relationships with journalism and communications professionals, especially through department Advisory Councils, the college's Board of Advocates, the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, and programs like the Hearst Visiting Professionals and The Freedom Forum Distinguished Visiting Professor. Increase overall efforts to bring nationally and internationally known media professionals and mass communication scholars to campus.
- F. Develop a process to conduct regular, systematic evaluations of national and international reputations of the College.

## **7. New Technologies**

**Goal:** To remain a leader in the study of information acquisition and dissemination technology and in implementing that technology in mass communication education.

### **Strategies**

- A. Increase and enhance emphasis on new communication technologies at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- B. Upgrade facilities to train students better for future developments in media.
- C. Create graduate-level professional programs.
- D. Continue to improve and enhance technology infrastructure and computing facilities throughout the College to maintain our position on the cutting edge.
- E. Work to assure that students are exposed to software and technology used in professions.
- F. Increase availability of existing technology in Weimer Hall.
- G. Improve and enhance technology in all classrooms in Weimer Hall.
- H. Help faculty members identify and take advantage of opportunities to receive training in the use and implementation of new software and technology.
- I. Build a media technology center to aid the teaching and research missions of the College.
- J. Reassess regularly the specifications for the computer requirement for students.

## Summary

The College seeks to maintain its position as one of the top journalism and communications programs in the nation. As the College grows in stature over the next few years, the College will remain committed to preparing exemplary professional practitioners and scholars for the various journalism and communications fields and to generating, translating, and disseminating new knowledge about these fields. The mission of the College aligns well with new directions of the University, especially with respect to the role and functions of journalism and communications in a democratic society and advancement of the understanding and practice of journalism and communications for a diverse global community.

This plan outlines six general goals and a number of strategies the College seeks to employ to meet those goals. Some can be achieved within the existing budgetary framework, but most will require additional resources. Some additional resources must be designated for faculty. This includes funding for additional faculty lines and for current faculty to engage in teaching, research/creative activities and service of the highest quality. The University Strategic Plan places particular emphasis on hiring and retaining high-quality faculty members. We share this commitment. The College of Journalism and Communications is already ranked among the nation's best. However, *our overall goal is to continue to increase faculty productivity and national visibility in the critical areas of study.* Therefore, we must combine existing sources of funding with new allocations to accomplish the following:

- Add tenure-track faculty lines at the assistant professor level to accommodate a reasonable percentage of the high numbers of UF students seeking majors in the College and to meet demands for courses, given the large enrollment growth in previous years.
- Add tenure-track faculty lines at the assistant and associate professor levels to further enhance the national reputation of the doctoral program, to grow graduate enrollment, and to enhance curricular offerings, research/creative activities productivity and national reputation, particularly in science/health communication, media law, political communication, new media technologies, and international communication.
- Provide additional resources for faculty international activities, including teaching, research/creative activities, and international programs as discussed above.
- Provide additional faculty rewards for excellence in teaching, research and service. Specifically, institute the STAR program whereby five faculty members are recognized each year for excellence in SERVICE, TEACHING AND RESEARCH. Provide \$2,500 stipends in addition to recognition by chairs in annual evaluations.
- Maintain and expand resources for faculty to remain on the cutting edge of new communication technologies.
- Continue to provide funds for summer programs designed to facilitate research/creative activities and professional development of the faculty.
- Develop an assessment plan, consistent with the new ACEJMC accreditation standards.

These goals can be achieved through the combined efforts of the faculty, staff and administrators in the College of Journalism and Communications and in the various disciplines across the campus, as well as the administration of the University.