

Jacksonville State University
Department of Communication
Draft Mission Statement & Strategic Plan
2024-2029

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Communication is to prepare students to successfully enter the workforce by providing an industry-current education in the subfields of mass communication that is reinforced and broadened by a well-rounded liberal arts foundation.

To accomplish this mission, the Department of Communication maintains several practices. First, our faculty blend a wealth of industry experience, industry-current research, and carry the appropriate credentials to develop, offer, and sustain an industry-current curriculum. Second, our faculty utilize multiple forms of applied and experiential forms of teaching and learning across our curriculum to reinforce theory and principles taught in the classroom.. Third, our student organizations and student media present opportunities for students to network with industry professionals, to engage in consistent professional development, and to continually develop and update their professional portfolios outside of the classroom.

Our mission aligns with the new strategic plan because our mission and the means to achieve it align with the goals set forth in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

- Our commitment to applied and experiential learning enables our students to *discover* how to enter the industry sector of their choice by providing them with real-world *experiences*, industry-current learning *environments*, and by maintaining industry-current *expectations* in the classroom.
- Further, by providing experiential learning opportunities in the classroom and through our student organizations, students **engage** with classmates, industry professionals, and their community to build **mutually beneficial relationships**. In doing this, they can see the **power of their place** in several communities, and can cultivate an appreciation for the **benefit of belonging** in the process.
- Finally, our efforts to maintain a current curriculum and increase learning opportunities while working to achieve and maintain re-accreditation through the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication instill a **culture of accountability** that projects principles of best practice, while providing opportunities to increase our **reach to prospective students, donors, and community partners**.

Goals and Objectives:

The following are our goals and objectives in support of assessing our achievement of this mission during the 2022-2027 period.

Discover:

1. To offer an industry-current curriculum that prepares students for the workforce.
 - a. The department will maintain annual assessment of student learning in our three concentrations.
 - b. The department will perform an annual evaluation of our curriculum to determine necessary course updates and additions.
 - c. The department will use this evaluation to perform annual updates to the curriculum, including course and concentration updates, additions, and deletions.
 - d. The department will explore opportunities to cultivate innovative minor, micro-credential, and certification programs that enhance the professional development of students in our program and across JSU's campus.
2. To increase applied, experiential learning opportunities for students.
 - a. The department will increase experiential learning opportunities across the curriculum over the next five years.
 - b. The department will prioritize the development of portfolio-worthy projects across the curriculum over the next five years.
 - c. The department will expand our internship offerings for students in the department over the next five years.
 - d. The department will refine its assessment of internship work and intern partners to support a higher quality internship experience over the next five years.
 - e. The department will expand offerings in our Student Media Workshop courses to create additional applied learning opportunities for students in all three concentrations over the next five years.
 - f. The department will prioritize support for our student media outlets, including expanded mentorship and resources aligned with industry-current practices over the next five years.
 - g. The department will better integrate its student media outlets into our updated curriculum, enhancing the opportunity for students to generate and publish portfolio-worthy content.
 - h. The department will prioritize support for our student organizations, including their advisors, quality of programming, and opportunities for experiential learning outside of the classroom.
 - i. The department will enhance student media outlets' ability to track and evaluate their engagement with their audiences and their service to the campus community while seeking development of greater self-support through resources derived from the audience and the community.

3. To provide industry-current technology that supports work-ready skills development.
 - a. The department will update both television studios in the next five years to industry-current standards.
 - b. The department will provide industry-current tools and technology in its learning environments.
 - c. The department will increase access to industry-current technology and tools for individual students to complete project work over the next five years.
 - d. The department will actively pursue expanding resources available to our students to perform effective, industry-current media production across all three concentrations in the degree program.

Engage:

4. To recruit and retain faculty that maintain strong ties to industry and who produce industry-current research:
 - a. The department will actively support its junior faculty in their efforts to pursue promotion and tenure over the next five years.
 - b. The department will prioritize recruiting instructors and tenure-track faculty who are actively engaged in their professions and who produce research that contributes to the body of knowledge and quality of mass communication sub-fields over the next five years.
 - c. As the department grows, and the discipline evolves, the faculty will actively pursue and liaise with colleagues who exemplify current best practices in our industry, who produce relevant research, and who value active, experiential learning over the next five years.
5. To encourage our students to engage in student organizations outside of our own, and to reinforce the value of community and civic engagement in the classroom.
 - a. The department will mentor and encourage students to seek opportunities to be a part of external student organizations that suit their personal and professional interests over the next five years.
 - b. The department will integrate service-learning and other forms of experiential learning that bring students into contact with local civic, nonprofit, and small business entities with community issues and needs over the next five years.
 - c. The department will reinforce the role of mass communication in civic, political, and community life across its curriculum over the next five years.

6. To sustain, cultivate and maintain a wider body of partnerships across campus and in the community that support active student learning and create unique learning experiences:
 - a. The department will actively pursue partnerships with other academic units and centers across campus that enhance student learning over the next five years.
 - b. The department will actively pursue partnerships with academic units and centers across campus that increase collaborative scholarship over the next five years.
 - c. The department will actively pursue partnerships with academic units and centers across campus that improve campus life over the next five years.
7. To prepare culturally proficient communicators to communicate effectively in a varied professional world and sustain a learning community in which all students, faculty, and staff are treated with fairness and dignity:
 - a. The department will maintain a faculty with varied professional expertise and perspectives, ensuring rich learning communities over the next five years.
 - b. The department will recruit through broad professional and academic networks to attract the most qualified candidates for posted positions over the next five years.
 - c. The department will integrate opportunities across the curriculum to examine how differing audiences, communities, and viewpoints shape mass communication over the next five years.
 - d. The department will identify and pursue experiential learning opportunities that prepare students to work effectively with colleagues and audiences whose backgrounds and perspectives differ from their own.
 - e. The department will expose students to a range of viewpoints through coursework, student media, and guest speakers, treating fair representation of intellectual and ideological diversity as a professional skill.

Reach:

8. To sustain and increase enrollment in our program:
 - a. The faculty will cultivate and maintain a strategic recruiting plan over the next five years.
 - b. The faculty will ensure an attractive, industry-current curriculum over the next five years.
 - c. The faculty will provide opportunities for meaningful mentorships with students over the next five years.
 - d. The faculty will be proactive partners with university support programs, including central advising, over the next five years.
9. To cultivate opportunities for partnership with alumni and industry partners in the region:
 - a. The faculty will build and sustain an active advisory board for the department with representation from each profession and across several generations of JSU alumni, as well as current students.
 - b. The faculty will network with industry professionals and actively seek partnerships that increase opportunities for internships, scholarships, and innovative forms of resource support that enhance facilities and student learning over the next five years.
 - c. The faculty will actively promote our program and enhance its profile on campus and in the region to support recruiting, retention, and development initiatives.
10. To create a culture of accountability that reinforces principles of best practice that reflect the industry and disciplinary standards:
 - a. The department will successfully maintain ACEJMC accreditation standards of curricular quality, industry alignment, and scholarly inquiry over the next five years.
 - b. The department will successfully maintain SACSCOC accreditation standards aligned with instructional quality and intellectual rigor over the next five years.