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## Annual Report, 2021-2022

University of Mississippi. School of Journalism and New Media

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THE UNIVERSITY of  
**MISSISSIPPI**

School of Journalism  
and New Media

2021-2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

**Goals**    **Key Highlights**    **Accomplishments**  
**Personnel Changes**    **Student Awards**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Founded as a department in 1947, the School of Journalism and New Media was established July 1, 2009. Originally offering a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism only, the school added a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in 2011.

The school is now the fourth largest educational entity on campus. With well over 1,200 undergraduates and approximately 100 graduate students, the school continues to thrive. More than 30 faculty with a mix of practitioner and scholarly credentials, as well as more than a dozen highly-skilled professional staff provide experiential learning and academic support that allows hundreds of graduates to embark upon successful careers each year.

## Vision, Mission and Goals

*The mission of the School of Journalism and New Media is to lead and excel in the education of a diverse body of students in journalism and integrated marketing communications. Grounded in truth, freedom of expression, responsibility and integrity, the faculty and staff will:*

- 1.** Prepare students to succeed in an ever-changing, integrated and global media landscape.
- 2.** Encourage research and creative work to add to the body of knowledge and to serve the journalism and communication professions.

In support of that mission, the school has a series of related goals →

# GOALS

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## 1

**Reimagining  
the school's role  
as a *thought leader***

This year we hope to begin answering some key questions about the best way for our programs to serve the citizens of the state and beyond; how we might better prepare students for careers in our disciplines and how to raise the national and international profile of our elite community of teaching, professional and research problem-solvers.

## 2

***Increased* focus on  
recruitment and  
retention of a diverse  
student population**

While the school reached a record high enrollment for diverse students in 2021-2022 (14.2%), we must seek continuous improvement in this area. We must do more in-state recruitment, a challenge exacerbated by the lack of face-to-face recruiting opportunities this past year. We will develop new strategies for the coming year.

## *Key Highlights*

### THE SCHOOL MADE STRIDES IN A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS THIS YEAR:

- The School of Journalism and New Media is delighted to have hired a new dean, Dr. Andrea Hickerson, from the University of South Carolina's College of Information and Communications.
- The school hosted its inaugural IMC Connect! event, which brought to campus top integrated marketing communications professionals and scholars from across the country to explore key issues in IMC.
- Former White House reporter and war correspondent Randall Pinkston served as a visiting professor, Overby Fellow and student media adviser.
- Six of our students earned national awards for their journalistic work, our student newscast was one of seven national Pacemaker finalists and our climate change depth report took second place honors in AEJMC's Best of the Web/Best of Digital Competition 2021.
- We launched the national scholastic Integrated Marketing Communication Association (IMCA) for high school media/marketing students.
- We hired a new director for the S. Gale Denley Student Media Center. Larz Roberts takes over the role from long-time director and assistant dean Pat Thompson.
- Our first cohort of international integrated marketing communications students from Ethiopian Airlines completed their graduate degrees and discussions about expanded educational partnerships with the airline have begun.

# IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Some of the School's most *important* accomplishments for 2021-2022 include:



IMC CONNECT! CONFERENCE

- Our ongoing commitment to promoting a diverse, equitable and inclusive climate resulted in some important hiring for the school (see Key Personnel Changes). Entering the 2021-2022 academic year, approximately 19% of our faculty represented the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population. In 2022-2023 we are proud to say that percentage will have increased to just under 22%. In addition, we have expanded the number of BIPOC adjunct faculty from three to six.
- For the 2021-22 academic year graduate program enrollment remained steady with 139 students attending classes during the Fall term. This year, we are excited to report that 25.9% of the graduate students enrolled in the School of Journalism and New Media were ethnic minorities, just above the University of Mississippi's 24.34%. To help continue our efforts to be more

inclusive and to better reflect the diversity of the state, our programs are participating in the inaugural recruiting initiative called the "UM Graduate School-Departmental MSI Partnership Recruiting Initiative." The goal is to help encourage applications and matriculation from students at our regional minority-serving colleges and universities (MSIs).

- IMC Connect! occurred on March 31-April 1, 2022. The event involved 10 IMC professionals -- six practitioners and four leading researchers in the field. Organizations represented included Chick-fil-A, FedEx, The Home Depot, Carnival Cruise Line, and KQ Communications, in addition to four peer institutions. Of our 10 invited guests, three were alumni of the University of Mississippi -- Jenny Robertson (FedEx), Steve Holmes (The Home Depot), and Reade Tidwell (Chick-fil-A).

Additionally, Chris Chiames (Carnival Cruise Line) and Renee Malone and Amy Rosenberg (KQ Communications) attended. Approximately 150 students in the School of Journalism and New Media at both the graduate and undergraduate levels attended this event, and 25 master's students in the IMC 580 Event Planning and Management Course were heavily involved in planning and executing IMC Connect!, as well.

- The launch of the first national scholastic Integrated Marketing Communication Association (IMCA) for high school media/marketing students was accompanied by the creation of a media marketing contest. We received more than 50 entries from students enrolled in journalism and business/marketing courses across four different states – an impressive beginning for a nascent organization.

- Faculty took part in a broad range of scholarly and activity over the past year. From participation on a multi-institution team awarded an NSF grant to promote Dyadic Dynamic Methods for the Study of Conversations, to creating a detailed 3D model of UM's National Center for Physical Acoustics' wind tunnel to publishing an in-depth article in the New York Times Magazine on unique challenges for Black neighborhoods to placing in the open paper competition in the Broadcast Education Association Interactive Media & Emerging Technologies division.

- Fundraising is getting back on track with more than \$173,000 in donations this past year – a 37% increase from the previous year. This is of particular note as the school has been without a development officer since August.



## *Key Personnel Changes*

- One of the most important accomplishments of the year involved making multiple important hiring decisions, not the least of which was the hiring of Dr. Andrea Hickerson. Hickerson has impressive credentials as a researcher, educator and administrator – she earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and international relations at Syracuse University, master's degrees in journalism and Middle Eastern studies at the University of Texas, and a Ph.D. in communication at the University of Washington. She most recently served as director of the University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications.
- We had a number of retirements this past year,

including Assistant Dean Pat Thompson, Dr. Samir Husni and Associate Professor Scott Fiene. In addition, Assistant Dean Jennifer Simmons has been promoted to an assistant provost role for the university.

- New hires include Student Media Director Larz Roberts and three new faculty members: Assistant Professors Vanessa Charlot and Dr. Chang Won Choi, as well as Visiting Professor Dr. Bitt Moon. Paula Hurdle and Whitney Jackson are new academic advisers, Michelle Martin joined the school as an administrative assistant and Mackenzie Ross is the school's graphic artist.



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