

Southern University and A&M College
Department of Mass Communication
Five-Year Strategic Plan
2024-2029

Introduction

The Five-Year Strategic Plan of the Department of Mass Communication at Southern University and A&M College is developed to guide the department towards the path of success and continuous improvement as we seek to nourish and foster attitudes and skills of excellence in the area of mass communication specifically in the area of journalism and public relations. In our previous strategic plan, we focused on building technological resources and upgrading the curriculum. However, the department looks ahead to make even greater gains exploring additional curriculum revisions, expansion of concentration choices, increasing program collaborations, more inter and cross collegiate collaborations, improvement in faculty and student development and support services.

Mission

The Faculty's goal is to impact the skills, knowledge, and attitudes most needed and highly valued in journalism and mass communication today. In the process, students are expected to develop the disciplines of deadlines, proper use of the English language, and knowledge of current events. In all their teaching, Faculty members will put special emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of professional journalists and public relations practitioners.

Vision

The role and scope of our journalism and mass communication programs is to attract students by offering them a vision of fulfilling careers in print and broadcast journalism and public relations that provide unique opportunities to serve their community, their profession and their culture through teaching them the ideals of a free press and instructing them in the public serve responsibilities that all American journalists bear.

Values

The Department of Mass Communication as well as Southern University and A&M College hold and actively demonstrate commitment to the following values:

- Student Centered: Students are the focus of institutional priorities, resource decisions, and planning. As stewards of student needs, we are advocates for student access, success, completion, placement in the workforce and/or in graduate or professional programs.
- Academic Excellence: Academic excellence is the provision of the highest quality educational and learning experiences made possible by academically and

professionally qualified faculty and staff, opportunities for contextual learning, state-of-the-art facilities, safe and aesthetically pleasing surroundings, and resources necessary to support teaching and learning.

- Access: Access fosters the opportunity and possibility for anyone associated with Southern University and A&M College to acquire a quality educational experience at an affordable price.
- Integrity: Integrity involves honesty and fairness, consistency in instruction, ethics of scholarship, freedom of inquiry, and open and truthful engagement with the community through effective communication, policies, and practices.
- Diversity: Differences in views, interpretations and reactions derived from diversity are important. Diversity enriches a learning environment focused on preparing individuals to live and work in a global society.
- Community: Southern University and A&M College is a community of faculty staff, students and alumni that share a common identity and purpose that engages with the university's external community through diverse services and programs.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Only HBCU University System in America
- Continuous accreditation since 1992
- Collaborative partnership with the Louisiana State University Manship School of Mass Communication and six other HBCUs on a Louisiana Community News initiative for student reporters
- Availability of local internship opportunities
- Excellent student-faculty ratio where skill courses are mostly limited to 15 students or less
- Commitment to diversity of students, faculty and staff in the department and university
- SUBR Retention Plan
- SUBR Strategic Plan
- Expanded Research Resources for Faculty
- Dedicated Faculty and Staff
- Adequate number of faculty with terminal degrees
- Inter-campus course offerings
- Successful and popular Athletic Program
- Student mentoring programs on campus
- Student tutoring programs on campus
- Good campus wide Alumni Network
- Community service requirement for all students
- Adequate departmental computer laboratories/classroom software
- Availability of newly renovated television studio
- Strong industry connections (internships, alumni)
- Diverse range of programs (journalism, public relations, broadcasting)

- Future partnership/collaboration with the newly created Digital Media Arts program for course offerings and equipment access
- Increase in academic scholarships within the department
- Improved customer service campus wide
- User friendly website for recruiting students
- Improved relations with department alumni
- Increase in student activities

Weaknesses

- Limited resources for research and professional development within the department
- Limited resources for student activity support within the department
- Gaps in industry-relevant curriculum updates
- Limited academic scholarship within the department
- Limited funds for maintenance and upgrades of equipment and software
- Low retention and graduation rates at the university level
- Limited ability to attract and retain quality students
- Gaps in communication with alumni
- Limited amount of program scholarship funding for incoming freshman and/or upper classmen

Opportunities:

- Growing demand for full degree programs that are 100% online
- Inter institutional program collaboration
- Cross collegiate collaboration
- Community outreach and economic development
- Increase diversity
- Increase scholarship funding
- Increase recruitment efforts
- Expansion of facility renovations
- Secure more grant funding
- Expand curriculum concentrations to cover areas like data journalism, AI in media, social media management, and/or multimedia production
- Increase collaborations with industry for internships and job placement

Threats:

- Rapid technological advancements and their impact on traditional media (e.g., print)
 - Budget constraints or reduced funding
 - Competition from other academic institutions and online platforms
 - Increased competition for quality faculty and staff
 - High Louisiana poverty rate
 - Increase in out-of-state tuition
 - Increase in tuition costs
 - Limited on campus housing
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Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Enhance Educational Excellence

- **Objective 1.1:** Review and update the curriculum to reflect emerging trends
- **Objective 1.2:** Integrate experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, real-world case studies, and hands-on projects, into all programs.
- **Objective 1.3:** Establish partnerships with leading media companies for guest lectures, internships, and collaborative projects.
- **Objective 1.4:** Launch community outreach programs that allow students to apply their skills in local projects (documentaries, media campaigns for non-profits)
 - **Responsibility:** Department Chair and appointed faculty
 - **Timeline:** End of academic year check-in

Performance Indicators:

Output: New Curriculum, projects, partnerships
Outcome: Percentage change in projects, partnerships, change in curriculum
Source: Departmental records

Goal 2: Strengthen Industry Connections

- **Objective 2.1:** Develop a formal network of media professionals (alumni, industry partners) to provide mentorship, internships, and job placements for students.
- **Objective 2.2:** Organize workshops, conferences, and webinars with industry experts to keep students and faculty up to date with the latest industry developments.
- **Objective 2.3:** Establish staff position(s) dedicated to securing recruitment and fundraising opportunities
 - **Responsibility:** Department Chair and appointed faculty
 - **Timeline:** End of academic year check-in

Performance Indicators:

Output: Network, workshops, conferences, webinars, additional staff
Outcome: Percentage change in number of mentorships, internships, job placements and number of staff
Source: Departmental records

Goal 3: Expand Infrastructure and Technological Resources

- **Objective 3.1:** Invest in state-of-the-art media production facilities like video editing suites, podcast studios, on-air radio studio and virtual sets
- **Objective 3.2:** Enhance digital tools and platforms to support both in-person and online learning environments (learning management and virtual classroom)
- **Objective 3.3:** Upgrade equipment such as computers, cameras, microphones, etc.
 - **Responsibility:** Department Chair and appointed faculty
 - **Timeline:** End of academic year check-in

Performance Indicators:

Output: New Facilities, equipment, digital tools
Outcome: Percentage increase in amount of new infrastructure, equipment and digital tools
Source: Department Inventory List

Goal 4: Foster Faculty and Student Development

- **Objective 4.1:** Increase the amount of funding generated by the Department to support faculty research, faculty and student conference attendance, and paper presentation
- **Objective 4.2:** Increase the quantity of faculty research within and with other departments within the COHIS as well as with the School of Business
 - **Responsibility:** Department Chair and appointed faculty
 - **Timeline:** End of academic year check-in

Performance Indicators:

Output: Funding for faculty and students
Outcome: Percentage increase in funding, research, conference attendance
Source: Department Budget Records

Goal 5: Annual Review of Strategic Plan

- **Objective 5.1:** Annual review of the strategic plan to maintain its efficiency and dynamic nature while preserving its goals and objectives
 - **Responsibility:** Department Chair and appointed faculty
 - **Timeline:** End of academic year check-in

Performance Indicators:

Output: Faculty and staff participation in reviewing the strategic plan
Outcome: A revised strategic plan each year
Source: Departmental Records