

# Pathway to Premier 2030

## A strategic plan for the Master of Mass Communication Program of the School of Communication and Journalism

Endorsed by the graduate faculty on August 22, 2024

**Mission:** The online Master of Mass Communication program provides communicators with a professional pathway to career growth and advancement through innovative, accessible, and customizable curricula to enhance their knowledge, skills, and competencies.

**Vision:** To lead the education and development of the professionals, leaders, and entrepreneurs who will shape the future of mass communication.

### Core Values:

#### People-Centered

- Improve the quality of life and wellbeing of citizens, communities, and tribal nations in South Dakota, the nation, and the world through professional, scholarly, and creative activities, and democratic dialogue.
- Demonstrate empathy for one another.

#### Creativity

- Encourage success in scholarship, artistic growth, and the desire for lifelong learning and creativity through reflective practice.
- Creatively use tools and technologies appropriate for our fields.

#### Integrity

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity, as well as the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press.
- Represent oneself honestly through critical, creative, and independent thinking.

#### Diversity

- Demonstrate respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of communication in a global society.
- Recognize the diversity of all learners.

#### Excellence

- Embrace and champion endeavors that challenge boundaries, reframe definitions, and push the limits of our academic programs and disciplinary understanding.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the disciplines in which we work.

To align the MMC strategic plan with the University's strategic plan, we have developed tactics that extend from the goals and strategies created as part of the University's strategic planning

process as well as the School of Communication and Journalism's strategic planning process. The tactics identified below apply to the Master of Mass Communication program. They were developed by graduate faculty in the School of Communication and Journalism who teach in the MMC program to align with the School's mission, vision, values, goals, strategies, and objectives. We recognize that the MMC strategic plan is a dynamic document and that our tactics will evolve during its duration. We are committed to ongoing discussion of our progress related to these tactics, and to the revision of the plan based on rapid changes in instruction, technology and the academic landscape.

## **Goal: Achieve Excellence Through Transformative Education**

### **Strategies**

1. Develop and invest in innovative graduate and professional academic programs and continuing education opportunities with an emphasis on workforce and economic development.

### **Objectives:**

- Maximize remote multimedia communication opportunities for MMC students.
  - Explore the feasibility of students earning academic credit through in-house practicum experiences associated with student media, the South Dakota High School Press Association, and other unit entities. (2024-2025)
  - Implement remote practicum experiences. (2025-2026)
  - Relevant Internal Stakeholders: Graduate Program Coordinator, Student Media Advisor, South Dakota High School Press Coordinator, MMC Faculty, Director.
- Maintain curriculum relevancy and explore the development of new academic programs that meet evolving industry needs.
  - Leverage regular feedback from MMC alumni and industry leaders to inform curriculum development and new academic programs. (ongoing)
  - Explore the feasibility of graduate certificates that enhance students' workforce and economic development in the industry, such as mass communication teaching methods and data communication. (2025-2026)
  - Focus on cutting-edge curriculum and programs that drive new students to the university and COJO's academic programs (e.g., AI, influencing, etc.). (ongoing)
  - Engage with other academic units and the broader university with a focus on curricular and interdisciplinary connections. (Beginning Fall 2025 and then ongoing)
  - Relevant Internal Stakeholders: MMC Faculty, Associate Director, Assessment Committee.
- Grow program enrollment to 25 annually enrolled students.
  - Increase recruitment efforts through additional social and digital marketing engagement.
  - Continue to collaborate with the Graduate School on targeted recruitment initiatives (e.g., paid campaigns, workforce readiness, etc.).

- Exercise people-centered tactics through communication with prospective students.
2. Maintain student success as a foundational priority by advancing innovative strategies and initiatives that meet the needs of all students, enhance student belonging and wellbeing, and support expanded access to higher education.

**Objectives:**

- Strengthen partnerships with campus organizations such as Continuing and Distance Education, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Accessibility, Wokini, and the Office of International Affairs to better support online graduate students.
  - Partner with Continuing and Distance Education, the Graduate School and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Accessibility to ensure that online university resources are available and actively promoted.
  - Build partnerships with other graduate programs on campus that could support collaborative academic programs and engagement opportunities (e.g., Ness School of Management and Economics).
  - Relevant Internal Stakeholders: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, MMC Faculty, noted campus partners
- Explore opportunities within COJO and across campus to provide additional assistantships and new scholarships for MMC students.
  - Meet with the Graduate School (Vice Provost, Graduate School Director, and Associate Director) to discuss needs and opportunities. (Fall 2024)
  - Connect with industry professionals and explore tuition support for employees interested in the MMC program (e.g., Larson, 3M, Daktronics, City of Brookings, etc.).
  - Connect with support services areas across campus to discuss opportunities for assistantship collaboration (e.g., University Marketing and Communications, SDSU Athletics, SDSU Foundation, CAHSS, CAFES). (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
  - Work with the SDSU Foundation to create a strategy for graduate program scholarship generation, particularly for historically underrepresented groups. (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Graduate Program Coordinators, Graduate School

**Goal: Cultivate and Strengthen Community Engagement**

**Strategy**

1. Develop and enhance opportunities to highlight the SDSU brand, our economic impact, research and scholarly activity, as well as collaborations between the university and the communities we serve, with particular emphasis on external-facing areas.

**Objective:**

- Leverage MMC students' final professional projects to cultivate and strengthen community engagement.
  - Regularly evaluate MMC curricula to identify opportunities for implementing coursework that reflects engagement with the diverse communities we serve.
  - Continue collaborating with industry partners to support the development and evaluation of student professional projects.
  - Develop strategies for broader dissemination and celebration of student professional projects (e.g., department webpage, social media, university press releases, mini-conference)
  - Relevant Internal Stakeholders: Director, Associate Director, MMC Faculty, Advisory Board

### **Goal: Foster Innovation and Increase Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity**

#### **Strategies**

1. Expand research, scholarship, and creative activity success by continuously evolving, improving, and leveraging infrastructure, technology, resources, policies, and processes.

#### **Objective:**

- Explore strategies for new graduate assistantships (research or administrative) that support current instructional demands while supporting faculty research and instruction.
    - Work with the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and the Graduate School to secure funding for additional teaching assistantships and research assistantships. (Ongoing)
    - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Graduate Program Coordinators, Graduate Faculty, Director
2. Increase undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral student research and employment opportunities to increase impactful research, scholarship and creative activity and develop the knowledge-based workforce.

#### **Objective:**

- Increase and promote graduate student RSCA (e.g., conference presentations and publications from class projects, theses, and professional projects).
  - Engage in fundraising to support MMC students' RSCA.
  - Include workshop, conference, and/or workplace-ready projects as outputs in all skills-based courses.
  - Invest and support graduate student professional development focused on career-readiness and workforce engagement.
  - Relevant Internal Stakeholders: Director, MMC Faculty