



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

*School of Communication and Journalism*

## **Pathway to Premier 2030**

**A strategic plan for the School of Communication and Journalism**

Endorsed May 1, 2024

**Mission:** The School of Communication and Journalism fosters the development of exemplary communicators as industry leaders, scholars, professionals, entrepreneurs, and educators through innovative curricula, research, practice, and opportunities.

**Vision:** To be a leader in the fields represented by the School of Communication and Journalism.

## **Introduction:**

The goals and strategies identified below were selected from the university's strategic plan. Through a series of reflective conversations, the faculty and staff in the School of Communication and Journalism selected particular strategies that aligned with the school's mission, vision, and values. The faculty developed specific objectives for those strategies as well as initial tactics/action items that will enable us to meet the objectives.

As a unit, we recognize that our strategic plan is a dynamic document and that our tactics and objectives will evolve during the duration of the strategic plan. We are committed to the routine discussion of our progress related to each of the strategies and objectives below and to the revision of the plan based on rapid changes in instruction, technology, and the academic landscape.

As part of our execution of the strategic plan outlined below, COJO leadership, faculty, and staff members will engage with campus and industry partners through listening tours and campus visits to learn more about their needs and to discover potential areas for collaboration in teaching, research, and outreach/service. This process will begin in the fall of 2024 and will continue as necessary throughout the strategic plan timeframe.

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

### **Strategies**

1. Develop and invest in innovative undergraduate, graduate, and professional academic programs and continuing education opportunities emphasizing workforce and economic development.

#### Objectives:

- Establish a coordinated student multimedia communication center (*The Collegian*, KSDJ, *The Collegian Report*, Ad/PR Agency) within COJO to offer a comprehensive and nationally recognized student media experience by 2030.
  - Explore the viability of a 12-month Associate Director of Student Media. (Ongoing)
  - Identify peer programs and successful organizational models. (2027)
  - Visit two or three programs with successful centralized student media models. (2027)
  - Develop strategic and operational plans for the center. (2028)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Student Media Advisor, Student Media Committee
- Develop new academic programs that meet the evolving needs of the communication and media industry.
  - Implement a data-driven approach that supports curriculum modification and program development (e.g., industry and alum surveys, industry forums, etc.). (Fall 2024-Spring 2025)

- Identify COJO priorities, capacities, unique skills/strengths, and limitations. (Spring 2025-Fall 2025)
  - 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 connections and interdisciplinary connections. (Beginning Fall 2025 and then ongoing)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Faculty, Associate Director, Assessment Committee
  - Implement a career competency workforce development initiative within COJO, including enhanced professional development opportunities for students and additional opportunities to connect with alumni and industry partners.
    - Talk with the administration at Illinois State University's School of Communication about their career competency initiatives and explore other similar programs. (Summer 2024)
    - Seek feedback from the advisory board, community partners, and SDSU's Office of Career Development. (Summer-Fall 2024)
    - Develop program objectives and create learning management system content. (Spring-Summer 2025)
    - Launch program. (Fall 2025)
    - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Professional Academic Advisor, Program Assistant, Advisory Board
2. Maintain student success as a foundational school 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 Trio, Wokini, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Accessibility, and the Office of International Affairs to better support students from historically underrepresented communities.
  - Identify and implement specific strategies to strengthen and promote partnerships. (Fall 2025 – Spring 2026)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: campus committees
- Explore opportunities within COJO and across campus to provide additional assistantships and new scholarships for graduate students, particularly those pursuing the MMC degree, for which we currently have zero graduate assistantships.
  - Meet with the Graduate School (Vice Provost, Graduate School Director, and Associate Director) to discuss needs and opportunities. (Fall 2024)
  - 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. (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
- Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Graduate Program Coordinators

3. Increase utilization of high-impact practices across the school, including experiential learning, undergraduate research, international experiences, and service learning, to prepare graduates to become global citizens in an ever-changing and interconnected world.

#### Objectives:

- Increase undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity; service learning; and domestic and international experiences (e.g., study away) across COJO, including offering a COJO study away experience every even year.
  - Survey students to gather insight on their perspectives of undergraduate RSCA, service/experiential learning, and travel abroad/international experiences. (Spring 2026)
  - Work more collaboratively with the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences to promote and celebrate undergraduate RSCA, service learning, and international experiences. (Ongoing)
  - Commit to a formalized study abroad experience every other year. In opposite years, promote and support national and international experiences for student clubs, organizations, and co-curricular activities (e.g., International Forensics Association Tournament). (Ongoing)
  - Seek additional funding to support RSCA, service learning, and travel abroad. (Ongoing)
  - Examine opportunities for a shared research-focused course across all COJO academic majors. (Fall 2025)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Associate Director, Internship Coordinator, Faculty, and Student Organization Advisors
- Maintain Jackrabbit Forensics as a nationally recognized, top-twenty program.
  - Explore financial resources to support a permanently funded Assistant Director of Forensics/Instructor. (Ongoing)
  - Collaborate with SDSU Foundation to endow the Director of Forensics Position and expand scholarships to support team members. (Ongoing)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director of Forensics, Director

### **Goal Two: Cultivate and Strengthen Community Engagement**

#### **Strategies**

1. Expand outreach and educational opportunities throughout South Dakota to address community needs through collaborative partnerships utilizing the talents and resources of SDSU Extension, the university faculty, staff, and students, and the communities we serve.

Objectives:

- Revitalize the South Dakota High School Press Association (SDHSPA) to enhance outreach efforts for middle and high school students, educators, and community partners.
    - Establish strategic priorities and short-term/long-term goals for the SDHSPA. (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
    - Create an SDHSPA advisory council with key industry collaborators. (Spring 2025 – Summer 2025)
    - Develop a sustainable support model that provides sufficient funding to support SDHSPA outreach and engagement. (Ongoing)
    - Relevant Internal Collaborators: South Dakota High School Press Coordinator, Director
  - Collaborate and build relationships with SDSU Extension, the COJO Advisory Board, other campus units, industry partners, and community partners to address emerging community needs related to communication and media.
    - Identify strategic and impactful partnership opportunities and develop a plan to implement these throughout teaching, research, and service/outreach. (Fall 2026 – Spring 2027).
    - Promote and encourage faculty and staff participation in School of Communication and Journalism Advisory Board Meetings. (Ongoing)
    - Encourage and support faculty and staff to participate in regional professional association events (e.g., American Advertising Federation – South Dakota, Speech Communication Association of South Dakota, South Dakota Broadcasters Association, South Dakota News Media Association). (Ongoing)
    - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Associate Director, Faculty and Staff, Advisory Board
2. Invest in SDSU Connect efforts and initiatives to engage the Sioux Falls metropolitan area and expand SDSU Connect into additional locations.

Objective:

- Invest in specific outreach efforts to host workshops and professional development series that engage middle and high school students, educators, and community partners.
  - Inventory current outreach efforts that connect with this goal (e.g., MCOM 119 industry cultivation event, Pulitzer Center outreach in Sioux Falls, alumni receptions, course collaborations). (Fall 2025).
  - Create a culture where COJO faculty and staff commit to serving in recruitment and/or retention-focused service at least once every semester (e.g., classroom recruitment visits, Middle School Connect visits, prospective student visits, Junior/Senior day, etc.). (Ongoing)

- Seek collaborations with SDHSPA, the South Dakota News Media Association, and the South Dakota Broadcasters Association to disseminate our areas of expertise that support these targeted audiences. (Fall 2026 – Spring 2027)
- Explore opportunities and feasibility of hosting day camps for students in the Sioux Falls area (oral interpretation/debate, creators, media/journalism, etc.). (Spring 2025)
- Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Associate Director, South Dakota High School Press Coordinator, Director of Forensics, Student Media Advisor, Faculty and Staff, Advisory Board

### **Goal Three: 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.

#### **Objectives:**

- Explore strategies for new or modified graduate assistantships 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
- Collaborate on, increase, and promote the number of submitted internal and external grant-funded research proposals over the next seven years.
  - Explore options for and employ mechanisms to provide faculty incentives for grant submissions (e.g., additional travel funding, resources, etc.). (Ongoing)
  - Encourage and support TT faculty to participate in CAHSS Grant Camp and other grant-related professional development opportunities. (Ongoing)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Tenure Track Faculty, Director
- Increase and promote RSCA dissemination over the next seven years.
  - Strongly encourage a culture of COJO faculty engagement in university RSCA dissemination opportunities (e.g., Celebration of Faculty Excellence events). (Ongoing)
  - Use the revised COJO Standards for Tenure & Promotion document to mentor all unit faculty toward promotion and success in their roles. (Ongoing)
  - Promote RSCA through the Coffee with COJO Podcast, social media, and other unit-level and university-level promotional efforts. (Ongoing)
  - Each Fall and Spring semester, hold an RSCA colloquium or brown bag for faculty and graduate students to present in progress-RSCA work in an informal and supportive setting. (Beginning in Fall 2024)

- Relevant Internal Collaborators: Graduate Committee, Director, Associate Director
- Increase and promote undergraduate and graduate student RSCA (e.g., conference presentations and publications from class projects, theses, and professional projects).
  - Include conference and/or workplace-ready projects as an output in selected upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses. (Ongoing)
  - Encourage and support student participation in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity day (URSCAD), graduate research, scholarship, and creative activity day (GRSCAD), and other similar events held on campus. (Ongoing)
  - Seek additional funding to support dissemination of undergraduate and graduate student research and travel (Ongoing)
  - Explore resources for a faculty member to serve as an undergraduate/graduate RSCA liaison. (Beginning Summer 2025)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Faculty, Director, Professional Academic Advisor
- Seek and promote faculty, staff, and student awards surrounding research, scholarship, and creative activity.
  - Create an ad-hoc committee of faculty and staff to propose recommendations for faculty and student awards surrounding research, scholarship, and creative activity. (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Faculty and Staff, Associate Director

#### **Goal Four: Be a Growing, High Performing and Healthy University**

##### **Strategy**

1. Become a preferred employer holistically focused on employee wellbeing, professional development, career progression, and workplace enhancements to support employee success.

##### **Objectives:**

- Clearly define and prioritize a COJO-specific understanding of wellbeing across all aspects of professional responsibility.
  - Develop a COJO Wellness Committee. The committee will be responsible for defining wellbeing for the unit and identifying the area(s) for specific focus during the academic year. (Begin Fall 2024 and ongoing)
  - Engage faculty in one-on-one and group conversations about workload and workload distribution. (Spring 2025 – Fall 2025)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Faculty and Staff, Director
- Pursue the renovation of Yeager Hall or the construction of a new facility to ensure that COJO has the physical infrastructure necessary to become a preferred employer and support employees in preparing our students for industry success.

- Work with the college and university administration to identify a firm timeline for the co-location of our academic and co-curricular operations (e.g., *The Collegian* and KSDJ). (Ongoing)
- Ensure that faculty/staff have access to unit-level spaces that are needed to execute assigned responsibilities. (Ongoing)
- Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director
- Strengthen our team through ongoing professional development and growth in leadership opportunities.
  - Engage in a new StrengthsFinder retreat to reflect our current team and utilize these results to help advance the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. (Spring 2025 – Fall 2025)
  - Invest and support faculty professional development focused on leadership development, including asking faculty with assigned professional service responsibilities within COJO to commit to one leadership development-focused conference, seminar, webinar, or other activity each academic year. (Ongoing)
  - Relevant Internal Collaborators: Director, Associate Director, Director of Forensics, Student Media Advisor, Graduate Program Coordinators, Internship Coordinator, Director of the Introductory Course, South Dakota High School Press Coordinator, Faculty