THE UNIVERSITY OF **MEMPHIS**® | Department of Journalism and Strategic Media

# PLAN FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVENESS

# Table of Contents

_____

Dr. Matthew J. Haught, Chair
300 Meeman Journalism Building
mjhaught@memphis.edu

Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR, Fellow PRSA
Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies
334A Meeman Journalism Building
ksmarks@memphis.edu

Dr. Robert Byrd
Associate Chair for Graduate Studies
334B Meeman Journalism Building
rdbyrd@memphis.edu

Department of Journalism and Strategic Media
300 Meeman Journalism Building
The University of Memphis
Memphis, TN 38152-3290
www.memphis.edu/jrsm

Adopted Fall 2004. Revised December 1, 2017. Revised August 1, 2024.

# Preamble

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media is committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, as well as abiding by and aiding in the mission of the University of Memphis: Produce well-rounded, successful graduates and cutting-edge research for the enrichment of our ever-changing society.

## Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all forms and strives to create an environment where all students, staff, and faculty feel welcomed, appreciated and respected. We work to cultivate an environment where we celebrate the differences each person brings to the table and in which those differences can be discussed and examined respectfully and scholarly.  We believe our students, faculty and staff are most successful when they can authentically be themselves. We seek to eliminate success barriers by delivering the tools each learner and educator needs to thrive, while championing the learning of diverse perspectives and experiences.

## Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We recognize that a diverse and inclusive environment leads to more nimble thinking, additional success, and better ideas. As a program of higher learning, we seek to sustain and further enhance workforce development and community partnerships in an ever-changing world. This plan addresses diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in the representation, curriculum, engagement and research aspects of our program.

# Pillar 1: Curriculum

**Objective One: Students will graduate as culturally competent communicators with an understanding of issues and perspectives relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.**

**Strategy One: Facilitate opportunities for students to engage with and learn from regional, diverse professionals.**

**Tactics:**
■ Ensure student organizations include guests from historically underrepresented populations in meetings throughout the semester.
■ Ensure that classes incorporate guest speakers and lecturers from historically underrepresented populations.
■ Include diverse professionals from various backgrounds and demographics in portfolio reviews, resume /interview development activities and networking opportunities.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Track number of guests from historically underrepresented populations who participate in club meetings by monitoring promotional materials from student organizations and faculty advisor surveys.
■ Track number of guests from historically underrepresented populations who visit class through annual faculty surveys.
■ Monitor portfolio reviews and professional development events to ensure the participation of professionals from different demographics, races and experiences.

**Strategy Two: Integrate into the department's curricular instruction, course content, and discussions diverse perspectives relating to journalism and strategic media.**

**Tactics:**
■ Facilitate constructive in-class discussion among students regarding diversity and equity topics and how they relate to their specific professional field, as well as incorporate class examples and reading materials that reflect authors of diverse backgrounds.
■ Stimulate creative expression of diverse perspectives through course-projects that relate to DEI, so that students become culturally competent, global communicators.
■ Teach difference between concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion to students throughout program, along with applicable examples of how to practice each within their careers.
■ Establish and evaluate course matrixes for each major that map out when learning concepts and topics related to DEI should be introduced, reinforced and demonstrated in different classes through a student's degree program.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Conduct faculty surveys annually to ensure that diversity-related topics that relate to specific professional fields are included in classroom discussions, assignments and reading materials.
■ Conduct annual student surveys to gauge student's awareness of, participation in and experience of topics relating to DEI in course projects, discussions, and reading materials.
■ Test student's understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion through annual student survey.
■ Conduct review of course matrixes every three years to re-evaluate course concepts, make sure diversity-related PVCs are being explored and demonstrated in each identified course.

**Objective Two: Eliminate barriers to learning and success by making sure learning processes are equitable and attainable for all students.**

**Strategy One: Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) techniques into classes to best reach all students.**

**Tactics:**
■ Provide learning materials in various formats beyond print, including digital, text-to-speech and audiobooks/files.
■ Provide faculty training and tools for UDL best practices, such as text enlargement, choices for screen color and contrast, transcripts and captions for posted videos and course materials.
■ Establish and enforce a gold standard checklist for online course shells and materials that use online learning best practices for students.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Library representative to conduct annual audit of required learning materials to evaluate availability of required reading in various formats beyond print, including digital, text-to-speech and audiobook/files.
■ Conduct annual faculty survey to receive self-report of understanding of and incorporation of UDL best practices.
■ Randomly check one online course shell from each major each academic year to evaluate best practices and issue report of checklist to faculty.

**Strategy Two: Provide the tools and experiences students need for success in coursework and post-graduation.**

**Tactics:**
■ Make sure students have access to industry tools needed for success in all majors (i.e. cameras, microphones, software) and that students are aware of access of such tools.
■ Share and champion college and university tools and services that aid in professional development as well as learning success, including but not limited to college career services, free headshot booth, career fairs, free mental health services, free tutoring and on campus food banks.
■ Ensure that all students have professional experience prior to graduation through internships or practicums.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Measure students 'awareness of free equipment rental room through annual student survey.
■ Measure students' awareness of university services through annual student survey.
■ Measure internship experience and employers' opinion of student career readiness through post-internship surveys.

# Pillar 2: Engagement

**Objective One: Establish Department of Journalism and Strategic Media as a department that welcomes, celebrates and champions success for people of all backgrounds.**

**Strategy One: Offer consistent engagement of Journalism & Strategic Media faculty, staff, students and administrators in training events, courses, workshops, forums and events that highlight the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.**

**Tactics:**
■ Encourage faculty and staff to participate in diversity, equity, and inclusion programming and professional development opportunities available through the university, college and department and online through LinkedIn Learning and other training sources.
■ Encourage students to attend department, college and university events that highlight diversity, equity and/or inclusion.
■ Host one event each school year that has diversity, equity and/or inclusion as a foundational value or learning opportunity of the event.
■ Promote study abroad opportunities for all students to enhance engagement and an understanding of globalization.
■ Enhance department as a beacon of higher learning, workforce development, and community partnerships in an ever-changing, increasingly diverse world.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Track faculty and staff participation in events related to DEI and completed professional development through annual survey.
■ Measure student awareness of department events related to diversity, equity and inclusion through annual student survey.
■ Track number of department events the feature values of diversity, equity, and/or inclusion as well as student attendance.
■ Measure awareness of study abroad opportunities through annual student survey.
■ Measure employer perceptions of department education and community engagement in DEI issues or learning, workforce development and community partnerships through internship surveys, surveys of participants in Pro Day and other professional development workshops.

**Strategy Two: Enhance academic outcomes for historically marginalized and underrepresented students annually.**

**Tactics:**
■ Encourage and remind faculty to report students struggling with academic work or with behavioral performance to various university support systems, including early alerts and midterm grade.
■ Make sure opportunities exist for students to come to students outside of class by making sure office hours are available and posted in syllabi and online course shells.
■ Encourage faculty to participate in professional development regarding mentorship, how to teach all learners as well as trainings, such as SafeZone.
■ Encourage nomination of students and student work to internal and external programs and awards.
■ Encourage faculty and staff to contribute to the Ida B. Wells scholarship fund, which serves

underrepresented student groups.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Measure success rates for students from marginalized and underrepresented populations.
■ Check all course syllabi for office hours and ways to contact faculty outside of class.
■ Measure faculty professional development in mentorship and teaching styles through annual faculty survey.
■ Measure awards for students and student work from external and internal programs and awards
Annually track donations to Ida B. Wells scholarship fund.

**Strategy Three: Maintain and enrich a harassment-free environment that welcomes all people.**

**Tactics:**
■ Stress the importance of an inclusive community among students and faculty, working to make sure students and faculty of all backgrounds feel welcome.
■ Stress the importance of inclusiveness and civility in the classroom space at the beginning of each term.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Collect benchmark data via student survey annually, looking for an upward trajectory henceforth in year over year survey results.
■ Inclusion of syllabi statements and class expectations regarding appropriate language and class atmosphere.

# Pillar 3: Representation

**Objective One: Reflect different perspectives and backgrounds among faculty, staff, and students to enhance education and intellectual discourse.**

**Strategy One: Recruit a diverse student body and amplify the voices of all students.**

**Tactics:**
■ Recruit, retain and graduate a student body reflective of the university's service area.
■ Recruit international students to our programs, with a focus in the graduate degree program.
■ Make sure that students of all backgrounds are included in and encouraged to participate with various student media, including The Helmsman, Meeman 901, The ROAR, and Tiger News.
■ Encourage students to share their unique perspectives and passions through student media and course projects.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Annually compare the demographics of Journalism & Strategic Media students to the broader service area.
■ Annually compare numbers of international students enrolled in our graduate program.
■ Evaluate student awareness of and participation in student media opportunities through annual student survey.
■ Evaluate student's opinions on opportunities to cover topics important to them through student media or course projects through annual student survey.

**Strategy Two: Recruit and retain diverse faculty who intentionally promote values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

**Tactics:**
■ Employ a faculty who delivers a culturally competent curriculum.
■ Take measures to ensure a diverse candidate pool applies to job openings by diversifying job posting sources.
■ Ensure that faculty feel comfortable and accepted as well as have what they need to succeed.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Measure cultural competency of students through external evaluation.
■ Track job postings and the demographics of finalists for each open position in the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media.
■ Give annual faculty climate survey to monitor feelings, sentiments and needs of faculty.

# Pillar 4: Research

**Objective One: Annually present a robust portfolio of scholarly activity through research and creative projects each year that include projects by faculty and students related to diversity, equity and inclusion.**

**Strategy One: Encourage faculty and students to research topics that explore interdisciplinary and social issues.**

**Tactics:**
■ Introduce graduate students to diverse theories, course work and examples in introductory graduate courses such as in media theory, qualitative and quantitative research.
■ Encourage faculty to pursue research interests and professional projects that give voice to different social injustices, lived experiences or cultural differences.

**Performance Targets and Metrics-Measurement:**
■ Monitor syllabi and learning outcomes for introductory graduate courses (i.e. media theory, qualitative and quantitative research) to make sure that students are becoming aware of different theories and styles of research.
■ Track faculty research topics and studies annually and compare numbers of research that explore topics of race, sexual identity, social justice, cultural differences and gender.