STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

KEY STRENGTHS

- A top university newspaper, the Daily Egyptian. The paper provides students with practical experience and opportunities for leadership. It is student-run, assisted by a professional staff of five, including the faculty managing editor. A redesigned website, siuDE.com, enhances the paper.
- A highly successful, award-winning photojournalism program with a Weekend Workshop. Photo students are mentored at the weekend workshop and a book published on a Southern Illinois community.
- The presence in one college of print, audio, visual, web and public broadcasting facilities and expertise, opening the way for cross-disciplinary cooperation important to the multi-media future.
- Faculty members with deep professional experience in newspapers and advertising. These former professionals are highly effective in mentoring students and training them for the professions.
- A faculty with strong research abilities and an international focus, including expertise on Africa and Asia.
- A faculty with strong teaching abilities in theory, methods, visual communication, international advertising, international and development communication and new media. The faculty includes strong mentors, some of whom guide master’s and doctoral students in research.
- A tradition of integrating theoretical instruction in the classroom with hands-on practical experience, which leads to a strong placement record in newsrooms, ad agencies and in client advertising departments. Major national newspapers and advertising agencies view our graduates as highly trained in newsgathering, design and advertising skills.
- The presence within the College and the university of important partners, such as the Global Media Research Center and the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.
- A strong internship program, including the studies programs in Hollywood, New York, Nashville, Chicago and Washington, D.C.
- Increasing diversity of faculty and students
- Modernized curriculum with new media and sports specializations.
- New online journalism certificate
• New media news group of scholars and graduate students producing publishable research on new media.
• Gateway Journalism Review, a quarterly publication focusing on journalistic ethics in the Midwest.
• Public service journalism on Southern Illinois, resulting in seven books in seven years.
• Outside advisory board to provide advice.
• Participation in the Campus Consortium with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.
• Leadership in creating the Investigative Journalism Education Consortium of Midwest journalism school, providing student-written investigative projects that can be published and broadcast.
• Improved assessment plan, including portfolio review.
• Summer journalism camp.

KEY WEAKNESSES

• Deteriorating Daily Egyptian plant (brought on by financial problems) and limited classroom space.
• A lack of basic writing skills among some students, including those nearing graduation. There is a need to improve research and writing skills.
• Limited funding for faculty research and professional development and limited allotment of research assistants.
• Declining enrollment.
• Lack of hiring and replacement of advertising faculty.
• No public relations element to the advertising program.
• No faculty member adept at teaching computer assisted reporting.
• Limited success in obtaining grants
• Lack of technological support of computers and other equipment.

EXTERNAL THREATS

• A declining metropolitan newspaper industry, which is part of a changing media environment.
• Changing business models that support less reporting and result in a diminished marketplace of ideas.
• Erosion of important journalistic values in the face of rapid technological change; values such as fairness and accuracy sometimes suffer in the cacophonous blogosphere.
• Industry cutbacks in public policy reporting that requires expertise, such as reporting on international affairs, public health, science and law.
• A higher education funding model that does not provide enough revenue to permit the School to upgrade hardware and software or meet other pressing needs of the School.
• Decrease in DE advertising revenues and financial position.
• Decreased state funding for higher education.

INTERNAL THREATS

• Uncertainty about university funding at a time of reduced enrollment.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Building on the expertise and interest in international affairs both on the news and advertising faculty. In this interconnected world, many countries are adopting increasingly liberal economic and media policies. The faculty’s knowledge of these developments could help equip students with skills in global marketing communications, communication for social change and reporting news on international affairs and foreign policy.
• Creating a converged newsroom that combines print, audio, visual and web presentations of news and advertising as part of building renovation.
• Expanding the recruitment of high school journalists.
• Online program for international outreach
• Pursuing possible collaboration or merger with broadcast journalism, now in the RTVD department.
• Expand cause advertising, recently embodied by the public education project funded by the CDC on global warming in Palau.

VISION STATEMENT

Over the next half decade, the SIU School of Journalism will endeavor to transform students’ lives, prepare them to be global citizens and teach them the skills of modern journalism. To provide this kind of education, the School of Journalism will make common cause with its sister departments in a College that emphasizes interdisciplinarity. Journalism graduates will be proficient not only in writing and reporting, but also in the broader skills needed to manipulate audio and video on the Web, including social media. Just as it is important for our journalism graduates to acquire the new skills required for this technology, it also is important that they understand the way technology is changing the law, values and ethics of journalism. Advertising students also need to adapt their
skills and planning strategies to new technologies to meet the challenges of the new marketing environment

UNIT VALUES

Recognizing that openness is essential to democracy and a free press, the faculty should govern itself according to rules that guarantee robust discussion in a climate of mutual respect and decorum. Open dialogue should guide our relationships with all those who have an interest in our program: students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the journalism and advertising professions.

To instill the values in those who will one day lead the profession in service to society, the School of Journalism maintains that all graduates, regardless of specialization, should be aware of the following core values and competencies. These are the same values the ACEJMC, the accrediting organization for journalism schools, stipulates as essential.

Here, verbatim, are the values emphasized by ACEJMC:
• understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
• demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
• demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
• understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
• demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
• think critically, creatively and independently;
• conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
• write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
• critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
• apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
• apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

MISSION

Faced with the most rapid technological revolution in half a millennium, the School of Journalism will aspire through enhanced scholarship and improved teaching:

- To embrace the opportunities of the information age to employ the multiple tools of the media to better inform its readers, listeners and viewers;
- To think and write clearly and guard traditional values of fairness, openness and honesty.
- To exercise the intellectual freedom promised by the First Amendment, without surrendering to the easy answers of orthodoxy.
- To explain the news that lies beneath the surface of the day’s events, realizing that democracy depends on an informed citizenry;
- To be mindful of ethical dilemmas created by the crafts of journalism and advertising, recognizing that many ethical questions do not have right or wrong answers.
- To appreciate the power of advertising to influence the buying decisions of consumers, the election choices of voters and the social decisions of societies;
- To build bridges of understanding across the divides of culture, class, nationality, distance, race and religion.
- To recognize that the interest in celebrity and sport must not distract a people from news vital to self-governance.
- To realize that events on the opposite side of the world can hit home with the devastation of a bomb or a market’s collapse.

GOALS

The long-term (five-year) goals of the school are summarized as follows:

1) Improving written and technological literacy of students.
2) Strengthening public policy reporting specialties at undergraduate and graduate level, including sports reporting specialty.
3) Developing research and courses that take advantage of faculty’s international expertise on advertising and news.
4) Creating a converged newsroom and building up-to-date school facilities.
5) Enhancing research and professional development opportunities for faculty.
6) Providing cutting-edge scholarship on the changing ethical and legal environment brought about by rapid technological change that poses new challenges to journalistic values.
7) Encouraging growth in student enrollment.
8) Increasing international recruitment
9) Teaching computer assisted reporting.
10) Expanding online teaching.
11) Enhancing new sports specialization
12) Improving DE financial future.
13) Creating a converged, multi-platform newsroom along with new collaborations with broadcast journalism.
KEY STRATEGIES

1) Improve the teaching of grammar and writing skills by regularly administering writing and grammar assessment tests in introductory courses and providing remedial instruction; implement additional instruction to obtain greater improvement.

2) Work with RTVD, the Dean’s office and other parts of the College and University to enhance a sports specialty.

3) Build on faculty expertise to develop courses in global marketing communications and communication for social change.

4) Work with other parts of the College to help create a converged newsroom incorporating campus-based media outlets including the Daily Egyptian, WSIU, River Region Evening Edition, and alt.news; in addition, continue exploring other collaborations with broadcast journalism.

5) Support grant writing activities for enhancing undergraduate and graduate education, for sustaining and expanding research and for providing international training.

6) Continue to stress a capstone course for advanced news students that draws together students with different skills and specializations to work together in a multi-platform environment. This course will produce a multi-media news presentation each year, on the model of the Cairo, Shawnee, Palau, Harrisburg and DE projects. This will provide news students with the same kind of capstone experience that all advertising students have enjoyed for three decades.

7) Sustain and build enrollment by retaining existing majors, steering undecided majors toward journalism, devising incentives to recruit transfers, increasing faculty and student outreach to recruit high school students, and growing the New Media specialization.

8) Revamp curriculum to include computer assisted reporting

9) Seek greater computer technical support for the School.

10) Promote and market online courses

11) Create a Second Century endowment fund for the DE and DE

12) Redouble efforts to obtain grants for the Gateway Journalism Review and other activities.

13) Explore with the Law School the possibility of joint media law degrees, including Ph.D, JD.
STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMS

1) Continue to administer and assess competency tests on writing and grammar; seek faculty input on ways to record greater gains in writing and grammar improvement.

2) Closely monitor and participate in the building renovation process to ensure that the converged newsroom is built, to advocate for improved instruction facilities as well as facilities and technology for researchers; bring expert in creation of multi-platform newsrooms to campus for consultation.

3) Teach a capstone, multi-media course for top news and photojournalism students to produce a signature project of the Journalism School.

4) Charge the faculty adviser with updating the strategy for retaining majors, steering undecided majors into journalism, providing incentives for recruiters and involving both faculty and students in recruiting visits to high schools with good student newspapers.

5) Propose to the Dean that the College’s fulltime micro-computer specialist report directly to the director of the School to ensure greater accountability and a more prompt response to the School’s technology needs.

6) Revamp curriculum to include computer assisted reporting and either hire of train faculty member able to deliver it.

7) Open discussions with the Dean over ways to obtain greater computer technical support for the School during a low-budget era.

8) Promote and market online courses to teachers, military personnel and to NGOs around the world.

9) Build the Second Century Fund in a $1 million endowment for future operations of the Daily Egyptian; this requires building a table of committed alums to raise large donations; it also requires continuing annual fundraisers and sale of the book on the history of the DE.

10) Rewrite grant proposals for the Gateway Journalism Review to build a network of media critics in the Midwest.

11) Open talks with the Law School about the possibility of joint media law degrees, including Ph.D, JD.

12) Continue talks with the RTVD department over collaborations in broadcast journalism.