

School of Journalism and Mass Communication 2016-2017 Highlights

College of Communication and Information

Kent State University

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The following is a list of accomplishments by our students, faculty and staff over the past academic year. This document is structured to follow Kent State University's Strategic Roadmap, but it also supports the School of Journalism and Mass Communication's (JMC) Strategic Plan.

The overarching goals of JMC and the connections to both the KSU Strategic Roadmap and KSU's Academic Affairs Plan include:

- 1. Improve student learning outcomes through a commitment to enhancing, expanding and evolving both undergraduate and graduate curricula, programs and learning environment.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 2. Enhancing academic excellence and innovation.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 3. Globally competitive; Priority 5. Organizational stewardship.

- 2. Enrich the learning experiences for students by providing co-curricular programs, career advising and counseling, and recognition of achievements.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 2. Enhancing academic excellence and innovation; Goal 6. Developing and recognizing our people.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 3. Globally competitive.

- 3. Enhance our commitment to diversity and inclusion in our faculty, staff and student body as articulated in the School's Diversity and Globalization Plan.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 4. Engaging the world beyond our campuses.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 3. Globally competitive; Priority 5. Organizational stewardship.

- 4. Increase enrollment of the most talented high school seniors and transfer students and improve the retention, persistence and graduation rates of existing students while preparing them for successful careers in media, communication, and other industries.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 2. Enhancing academic excellence and innovation; Goal 5. Ensuring our financial future.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 3. Globally competitive.

- 5. Develop an outstanding faculty and provide them with the infrastructure and support to achieve success.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 2. Enhancing academic excellence and innovation; Goal 3. Expanding breakthrough research and creative endeavors; Goal 6. Developing and recognizing our people.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 2. A nationally distinctive Kent State; Priority 5. Organizational stewardship.

- 6. Provide and promote opportunities for students, faculty and staff to enrich their lives and global awareness through international experiences.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 3. Expanding breakthrough research and creative endeavors; Goal 4. Engaging the world beyond our campuses; Goal 6. Developing and recognizing our people.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 3. Globally competitive.

- 7. Strengthen the School's relationships with alumni and friends in the media/communications industry as well as the broader business community, nonprofit and public sectors.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 5. Securing our financial future.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 4. Regional impact.

- 8. Increase financial support for the School through ongoing fundraising and endowment support to enhance current programs and fund future needs.**

2013 Academic Affairs Plan: Goal 1. Ensuring student success; Goal 5. Securing our financial future.

2015 Strategic Roadmap: Priority 1. Students first; Priority 5. Organizational stewardship.

Accomplishments (2016-2017):

Students First

(For formal student awards, see A Distinctive Kent State, below)

- Faculty approved curricular changes that resulted in a reduction of credit hours needed for graduation to 120.
- First-year retention for students enrolled in JMC increased to 73.51% (in the 2015 cohort) from 71.10% the year prior. Second-year persistence within JMC increased to 48.81% (in the aggregate 2011-2013 cohort) from 46.80% (in the aggregate 2008-2010 cohort). Our third-year persistence within JMC increased to 42.52% (in the aggregate 2011-2013 cohort) from 39.02% (in the aggregate 2008-2010 cohort). These are metrics provided by the College.
- Total credit hours taught (undergraduate and graduate) in JMC to students both within the major and across campus reached 10,013 in Fall 2016 and 10,013 in Spring 2017. As a comparison, in Fall 2014 there were 9,406 total credit hours taught; 9,210 in Spring 2015.
- Student Media developed and launched its first ever mission statement. The statement clearly puts students first by starting with: "Student Media empowers students through practical, collaborative and professional learning opportunities..."
- Student Media launched a diversity initiative to establish a baseline of understanding difference among students and an intentional plan to promote diversity and inclusiveness within Student Media. This plan includes identifying and cultivating student leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- The School continued to produce JMC Conversations, including discussions on drug use, post-Presidential election, navigating messaging on social media and out of Washington, DC, and the current status and future of Journalism. These Conversations increased in frequency in 2016-2017 primarily because of student interest. Each of the Conversations included more than 75 students, faculty, staff and community members (see more on JMC Conversations in the Regional Impact section).
- A record of \$8,650 was raised for the School's chapter of PRSSA during Homecoming Weekend. The largest gift allowed six students and two faculty to have dinner at President Warren's home.
- The JMC Student Voice Team continued to provide guidance and feedback to improve the culture of diversity and inclusion in the School. The Team assisted with Student Success Week, coordinated one of the JMC Conversations, and assisted the School in fielding a diversity and inclusion survey that will help determine our strategic planning moving forward.
- The School celebrated students during the fifth annual JMC Student Success Week. Faculty and members of the Student Voice Team provided free food to students the last week of classes, we inducted 32 students into our discipline's most prestigious honor

society (KTA) and held our annual scholarship banquet. On Friday of that week, student leaders in all of our student media and organizations spoke with our Professional Advisory Board.

- JMC awarded scholarships to more than 110 students at a total of more than \$300,000. These scholarships are focused on helping tuition, textbooks, providing experiential learning opportunities, enabled students to travel globally and to reduce the overall cost of their degree.
- JMC awarded two additional Promising Scholar awards to incoming freshmen. As of Fall 2017, we will have 20 Promising Scholars.
- JMC provided approximately \$45,000 in scholarships to students to study photography in Florence.
- JMC faculty continue to work with VCD faculty to enhance our Photography and Photojournalism options for students. This is part of a College initiative.
- The School launched multiple courses that increase our focus on current technologies and channels that are relevant to the industries we serve in preparing students. Our Digital Advertising course was first offered in spring 2017. The class covers topics and projects related to digital branding, creative digital execution, paid digital media and measurement for HTML, Facebook, Instagram, Google, VR and other platforms. We also launched Storytelling with Sound, which focused on telling stories in a podcast format, which is highly desirable in our professions.
- The School gained momentum in creating a common undergraduate curriculum core for our students and more flexibility in their degree path. This is critically important as we focus on maintaining rigor, providing a strong professional undergraduate program that includes both skills and critical thinking and flexibility for the student to create their own educational path.
- The School's faculty approved moving forward with a new graduate curriculum that will allow students more flexibility in their degree while creating a common graduate curriculum core.
- Flash Communications, led by JMC Assistant Professor Luke Armour, continues to provide experiences for eight JMC students each semester by allowing them to work in a professional environment at University Communications and Marketing with industry professionals while building an impressive portfolio of quality, real-world work.

[A Distinctive Kent State](#)

- The Poynter Kent State Media Ethics Workshop continues to be one of the few nationally-prominent day-long media ethics workshops in the nation. Supported by the Poynter Institute and the Knight Foundation, the one-day training program examines critical issues and perspectives in media ethics. In 2016, we hosted our 12th annual workshop that brought together professionals, educators and students.
- Student Media had more than 700 students working across 10 different media partners producing journalism, information and entertainment in print, digital, and social media

channels across newspapers, magazines, radio stations, film and websites making us one of the largest Student Media operations in the country.

- The School earned Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) status in October 2016. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the world's largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals, granted the certification upon the recommendation of two accredited PRSA site inspectors after a two-day visit. Our public relations program is one of 40 to earn CEPR certification in the world and is the only public relations program in Ohio with certification from both PRSA and ACEJMC.
- The JMC director served as the Vice President of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and will move up to President-Elect in Fall 2017.
- Associate Professor Jan Leach received a Distinguished Teaching Award, the University's highest teaching honor.

National Rankings

- Based on the prestigious Hearst Journalism Awards Program (considered the collegiate Pulitzer Prizes), the School finished 16th in the nation in the overall competition. Journalism programs are not formally ranked nationally by *U.S. News and World Report* or others, so award programs like Hearst are the primary metric by which programs are ranked (only ACEJMC accredited schools are eligible to participate in the Hearst competition).
- Based on the Hearst Awards, JMC finished 10th in the nation in Intercollegiate Photojournalism.
- Based on the Hearst Awards, JMC finished 13th in the nation in Intercollegiate Broadcasting.
- Based on the Hearst Awards, JMC finished 13th in the nation in Intercollegiate Multimedia.
- Based on the Hearst Awards, JMC finished 20th in the nation in Intercollegiate Writing.
- The Teahan Chapter Award is the highest national honor for a Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter. PRSSA Kent, a student organization in JMC, received the Diversity Award for the first time in 2017. Only five chapters out of more than 300 chapters in the nation are awarded the Teahan Chapter Award (JMC received this award in 2014), and only *one* receives the Diversity Award.

National/International Awards

- National awards in Student Media in 2016-2017 include six awards at the College Media Business and Advertising Managers convention and 11 awards from SPJ and AEJMC journalism contests.
- JMC students won three AEJMC Student Magazine Awards, including one first-place award. Two JMC students were selected to participate in the American Society of Magazine Editors internship program in New York City during the summer of 2017. Only 10 percent of applicants nationally are chosen for the program.

- Two teams of JMC public relations students earned honorable mentions in the Public Relations Student Society of America's (PRSSA) 2017 Bateman Case Study Competition. The two Kent State teams were among 15 selected for the honor out of 67 teams that entered the national competition. This is the first time that two JMC teams have earned recognition in the same year (one JMC team placed second nationally in 2013).
- Two public relations majors received the Presidential Citation award, and our student PRSSA president was awarded the National PRSSA Gold Key award. These are the highest individual National PRSSA awards recognizing academic excellence and leadership.
- The School's PRSSA Kent chapter earned first place in the national Betsy Plank celebration. The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, an international resource for public relations practitioners, educators and students, hosts a competition for PRSSA chapters to honor Betsy Plank in remembrance of her leadership in the public relations field.
- The School's PRSSA Kent chapter was honored with the *2016-17 Organization Excellence Award*. This award is given to registered student organizations for outstanding contributions to its members and the student body as a whole.
- A JMC Photojournalism student won a Gold Medal, the highest award, in the General News category for the national College Photographer of the Year competition.
- A JMC Photojournalism student finished as a national finalist in the General News Photography category of the National Mark of Excellence Awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.
- *The Burr*, the general-interest magazine produced by students in JMC and Student Media, was the national winner in the Best Student Magazine category of the National Mark of Excellence Awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.
- *The Kent Stater*, Student Media's newspaper, was a national finalist in the Breaking News Reporting category of the National Mark of Excellence Awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.
- Students in JMC competed well in the Region 4 Mark of Excellence Awards by the Society of Professional Journalists, winning seven categories (General News Photography, Photo Illustration, Sports Photography, Best Student Magazine, Non-Fiction Magazine Article, Breaking News Reporting, and Best Affiliated Web Site), and finishing as a finalist seven times in six categories (Feature Photography, Sports Photography, Best Student Magazine, Non-Fiction Magazine Article, Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper, and Online Opinion & Commentary).
- Two JMC students who participated in the prestigious, national News21 program in 2016 received national recognition from IRE (Investigative Reporters & Editors) for their contributions to the program's investigative report into voting laws around the country. Another JMC student is participating in News21 in 2017.
- JMC joined the National Millennial Community. Founded in 2015 by Bill Imada, Chairman and Chief Connectivity Officer of IW Group, Inc., the National Millennial Community hosts Executive Conversations and Think Tanks for millennials across the nation. By partnering with academic institutions across the country, the Community has

developed a wide network of professions and industry influencers to engage with millennials. One academic institution from each state is joining the community. Kent State, representing Ohio, has joined the ranks of universities like Penn State, University of Florida and University of Hawaii.

- JMC students received eight of the nine scholarships awarded by the Akron Press Club. These are competitive scholarships.

Global Competitiveness

- JMC students traveled to Ghana as part of the School's International Storytelling course. Students from journalism, public relations and across the College spent part of the spring semester learning about the people, customs, politics and issues in Ghana before spending almost two weeks in-country. Their stories are here: <http://internationalstorytelling.org/ghana/>
- JMC students traveled to London to examine similarities and differences and relative satisfaction of work experiences of the young AD/PR professional in the United States compared with those in United Kingdom. Throughout the spring semester, students conducted qualitative and quantitative research in the states and abroad to understand millennials in public relations and advertising, in digital and entertainment agencies and working in public affairs or on political campaigns. They analyzed characteristics of young pros such as communication, gender, use of technology and social media, levels of autonomy, motivation, power gaps, obstacles, ethics, and cultural and political climates in working in U.S. vs. London.
- Student Media began a global initiative this spring to encourage students to think globally in their local coverage and to look for opportunities to leverage global travel opportunities, both as individuals and as organizations. The initiative aims to recognize, support and market current efforts such as a BSR show about the international student experience on campus and *A Magazine's* use of a blogger who was reporting from Florence during her study abroad experience. In addition, the initiative will encourage students to take advantage of study abroad efforts and make sure that they know such a trip will be considered a positive and not a negative in their personal path within Student Media.
- Student Media's new mission statement ends with "... as students become innovative, ethical and skilled media producers within a diverse and **global society.**"
- The School's Global Ad & PR class partnered with the Magnet Network of global ad agencies and Cleveland's Marcus Thomas to investigate cultural differences between US and UK young professionals in the ad & PR agency sector. The research aims to help agencies attract, retain and inspire millennial workers. The findings will be published on the class website in early June. <http://kentstateinlondon.weebly.com/>
- The School is leading the way on Kent State's new partnership with Anglo-American University (AAU) in Prague. All four of the students who are planning to attend AAU in the 2017-2018 academic year are from JMC. The faculty worked together to make sure that all courses taken at AAU will transfer into their Kent State roadmaps.

- The School is working with the College to use scholarships to help support student who, otherwise, would not be able to afford to study abroad/away. In 2016-2017, JMC funded more than \$50,000 in scholarships for students to travel to Ghana and Florence.

Regional Impact

- JMC created a relationship with Daniel E. Morgan Elementary School in Cleveland that resulted in a visit by the JMC director to Daniel E. Morgan, a visit of 44 6th, 7th, and 8th graders to JMC to spend a day with our faculty and students (fall semester), a voluntary after-school journalism program taught by one of our JMC faculty (spring semester), and an invitation from the school for the JMC director to sit on the stage during the 8th grade promotion ceremony. Some of the students have reported that, based on this relationship, they can see themselves attending college. We intend for this program to continue (see Goals section).
- Student Media began working with Associate Dean of Students Dr. Timeka Rashid to see how Student Media and the regional campuses could better connect. Our five meetings resulted in a KentTalks program on jobs at the Trumbull campus in April that was co-sponsored by Student Media. In addition, plans to distributed Student Media magazines on regional campuses are under way with the goal of implementing a test program by August 15.
- The School's Research & Measurement Class partnered with the Akron Symphony Orchestra (ASO) to research ASO member preferences, as well as new strategies to recruit donors and season ticket buyers. The findings were presented to ASO leadership in May.
- The School's PR Campaigns course partnered with the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. during Spring 2017 and the Kent State Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion during Fall 2016 to develop strategic communications campaigns to benefit our communities. These partnerships provide opportunities for students to learn about diversity and inclusiveness and global communication, as well as experience the practice of strategic public relations. More than 30 public relations practitioners served as client contacts, professional advisers, and judges for this course during the past year.
- JMC created a five-week course (to be offered in Fall 2017) to critically analyze the influence of *Rolling Stone* magazine on "music, media and movements" of the past 50 years. JMC has created a partnership with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland to hold one of our classes there. This course has generated regional news coverage.
- Four JMC students served as fact checkers for TEGNA television stations nationwide during the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.
- JMC's Knight Center for Scholastic Journalism continued its commitment to scholastic journalism in the State of Ohio with three fall regional workshops and one, two-day spring state convention of the Ohio Scholastic Media Association. More than 1,000 students and their advisers attended one or more of the events.
- The School continued to produce JMC Conversations, including discussions on drug use, post-Presidential election, navigating messaging on social media and out of Washington,

DC, and the present status and future of journalism. These Conversations increased in frequency in 2016-2017 primarily because of student interest. Each of the Conversations included more than 75 students, faculty, staff and community members. During the JMC Conversation on drug use (primarily heroin and the overall opioid epidemic in Northeast Ohio), we had members of various K-12 school districts and media who cover rural areas in the audience. These Conversations have generated regional media coverage.

- Discussions are underway to replicate the format of A JMC Conversation and implement a community version in Hudson, Ohio.
- Journalism's Way Forward, one of the JMC Conversations, was moderated by WKYC-TV Anchor and Managing Editor, Russ Mitchell, and featured Henry Gomez, then a political reporter for *The Plain Dealer*.

Organizational Stewardship

- JMC's current FY17 expenses (as of May 2017) total \$928,607.74, a decrease of \$253,546.54 (21.5%) from the same time period in FY16. This includes Student Media and PR online expenses. It does not include personnel.
- The School's Research & Measurement class partnered with WKSU in the fall of 2017 to undertake research related to programming preferences of the stations various audiences.
- The School's PR Campaigns course partnered with Kent State's Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to increase community awareness of the Division's strategic initiatives.
- Student Media budget projects a 7.5% reduction in expenses for FY18.
- With traditional revenue sources such as print advertising continuing to decline, Student Media has explored and has begun to build new revenue streams in digital advertising and services. Digital revenue is up 30% since FY16. New digital products include sponsored Tweets, sponsored content and the ability to accept online donations and purchases. Improved services include digital media production work for campus clients as well as off-campus clients such as Goodyear, Youngstown Phantoms, University Hospitals and Portage Community Bank.
- Continued to improve assessment efforts in JMC through direct and indirect measures that resulted in a report faculty have used to improve curriculum and learning outcomes.
- Transitioned *Jargon*, the JMC outreach magazine, to once a year with a heavier emphasis on social media and other communication channels to our alumni and students.