

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2029



**Department of  
Communication Arts**

University of Wisconsin-Madison





### VISION:

We prepare our students for the future by engaging them in an expanding, interdisciplinary program of communication research and practice while showing them how to make a positive difference in the world through leadership in effective communication.

### GOALS:

By 2030, Communication Arts will **modernize its undergraduate curriculum** and **empower graduate students** as researchers, teachers, and practitioners. We will **strengthen connections** between our existing research areas and develop ways to **sustain growth** in that interdisciplinary work. To make a positive difference in the world, we will **invest in public impact** and **cultivate a community** of belonging that unifies students, staff, faculty, and alumni for a lifetime. Finally, we will **revitalize our infrastructure** and **tell our story** to demonstrate leadership in communication to the many communities we serve.



PREPARING STUDENTS  
FOR THE FUTURE

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #1**

# **Modernize the undergraduate curriculum to promote career success**

- We will enhance our existing programs through high-impact experiences, cohesive course planning, and requirements geared towards students' needs after graduation.
- We will create new courses, pathways, and programs in Communication Arts while expanding efforts to teach essential media and communication skills to students across campus.
- We will offer professional development seminars, mentorship matches, internship support, "study away" programs, and research opportunities—all while reducing barriers that can put these experiences out of reach.

## **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                            |                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Approved curricular changes and updates  | ↑ Student enrollment                               |
| ↑ Positive feedback in student evaluations | ↑ Modality options for students                    |
| ↑ Course content that addresses DEI issues | ↑ Alumni satisfaction and post-grad job placements |





PREPARING STUDENTS  
FOR THE FUTURE

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #2**

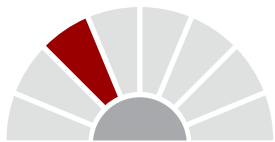
# **Empower graduate students as researchers, teachers, and practitioners**

- We will assess requirements and advising policies to ensure that students across our four Ph.D. programs enjoy a consistent graduate student experience.
- We will hone essential career skills through a professional seminar focused on navigating coursework, publishing, teaching, and inclusive excellence.
- We will develop curricular partnerships with other graduate programs, with industry, and with non-profits to help Ph.D. students make the greatest possible impact after graduation.

## **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Approval of new courses                    | ↑ Faculty participation in new courses   |
| ↑ Student enrollment in new courses          | ↑ Student job placement after graduation |
| ↑ Positive feedback from student evaluations | ↑ Awards for graduate instruction        |





INTERDISCIPLINARY  
COMMUNICATION

### **STRATEGIC GOAL #3**

## **Strengthen connections between disciplines to lead the future of communication research at UW-Madison**

- We will encourage faculty collaboration across our four existing areas of research, envision new areas of inquiry, and recruit researchers who span these disciplines.
- We will provide leadership in campus initiatives focused on artificial intelligence, sustainability, and well-being while convening new partnerships that explore urgent issues of creativity and citizenship.
- We will partner with other units on campus to hire cutting-edge faculty while preventing loss of our existing expertise.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                                    |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Hiring Proposals, approvals, and accepted offers | ↑ New areas of communication research                 |
| ↑ Faculty with multiple area affiliations          | ↑ Affiliations and interdisciplinary research outputs |
| ↑ Admission of interdisciplinary graduate students | ↑ Team taught courses                                 |





### **STRATEGIC GOAL #4**

## **Sustain growth by diversifying department funding sources**

- We will maximize our access to campus resources by attracting new students to Communication Arts courses, working with other units on campus to identify efficiencies and increase impact.
- We will increase support from partners outside UW-Madison through increased applications to external granting agencies, collaborative research with partners in the media and communication industries, and stronger engagement with alumni.
- We will reinvest in our department and allocate new resources in support of strategic goals.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                            |                                               |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Grant applications submitted and awarded | ↑ External recognition of our funding success |
| ↑ Total external funding                   | ↑ Faculty involvement in fundraising efforts  |
| ↑ Student enrollment                       | ↑ Relationships with external partners        |





MAKE A POSITIVE  
DIFFERENCE

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #5**

### **Invest in public impact**

- We will provide support for students whose ideas can harness the power of media and communication to create change for local communities.
- We will provide direct service to the people of Wisconsin through our media preservation services, the Wisconsin Film Festival, and media literacy partnerships with local high school students and community groups.
- We will more actively engage the public in our research discoveries through webinars and public presentations to non-academic audiences throughout the state and the nation.

#### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                            |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Public awareness of our department       | ↑ Contacts with non-academic audiences         |
| ↑ Public awareness of our faculty research | ↑ Donations from alumni and friends            |
| ↑ Creation of new initiatives              | ↑ Positive feedback from other units on campus |



Photo: Ruthie Hauge, Cap Times



MAKE A POSITIVE  
DIFFERENCE

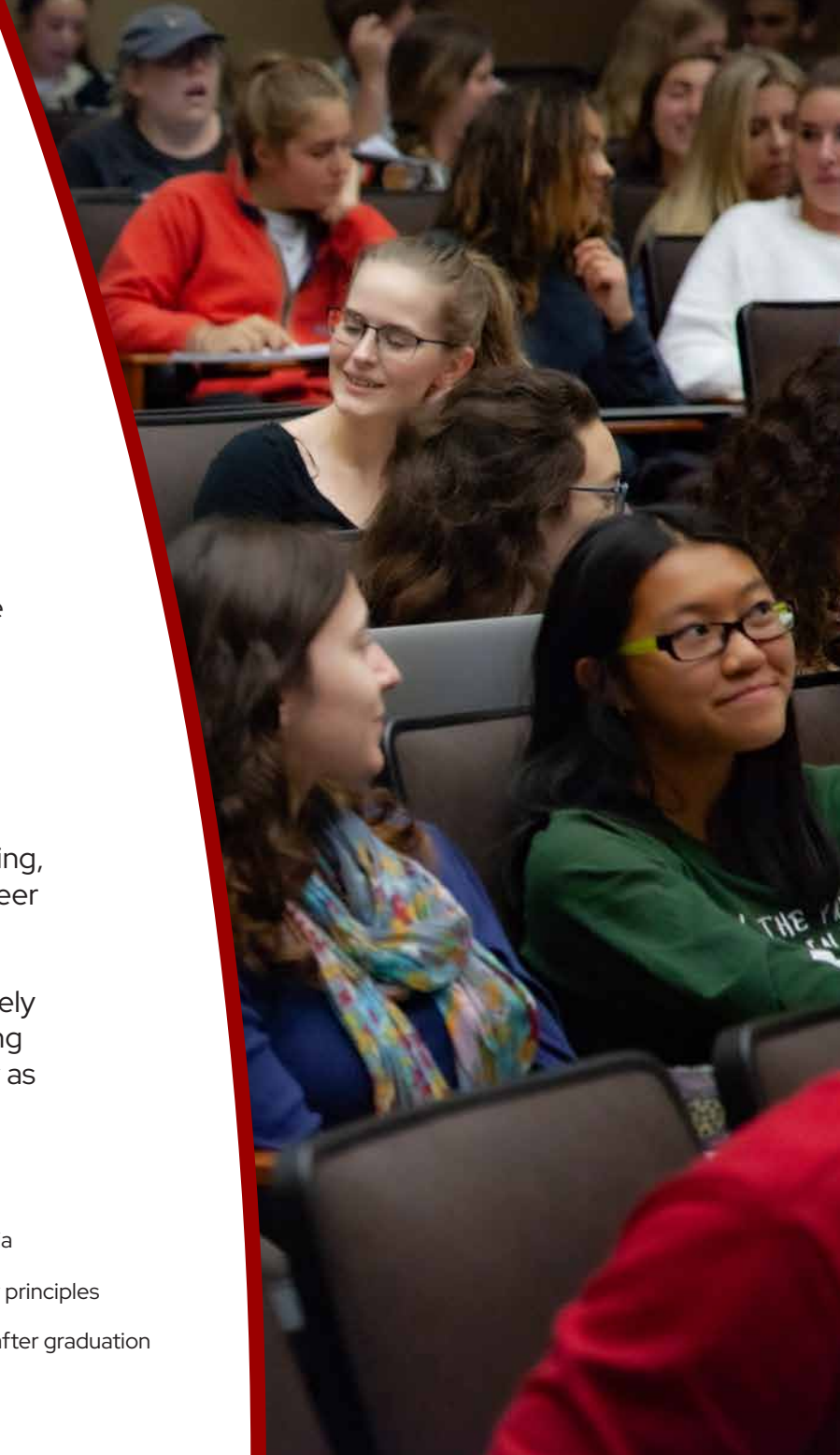
## **STRATEGIC GOAL #6**

# **Cultivate a community of belonging that unites students, staff, faculty, and alumni for a lifetime**

- We will increase support for student organizations, host student welcome events, sponsor alumni meetings on- and off-campus, recognize alumni achievements, and facilitate networking between alumni and students.
- We will open doors in our intellectual community by creating new scholarships for students who have family circumstances that have impacted educational opportunities, providing support for graduate students who demonstrate inclusive excellence in their research or teaching, and committing to inclusive excellence across our curriculum and our career support programming.
- We will recruit, hire, and retain students, faculty, and staff by working closely with campus partners, seeking resources where they are available, creating resources when they are not, and sharing strategies for success as widely as possible.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                                       |                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Resources to support students                       | ↑ Speakers invited to department colloquia             |
| ↑ Positive feedback from students, staff, and faculty | ↑ Courses taught with inclusive pedagogy principles    |
| ↑ Participation in inclusive excellence initiatives   | ↑ Alumni who feel continued community after graduation |





LEADERSHIP IN EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #7**

# **Revitalize our infrastructure to support stronger communication research and learning**

- We will improve the existing facilities of Vilas Hall by studying current uses and collaborating with other units to create a vision for transforming the building—including more effective use of the exterior terrace space and addressing accessibility needs.
- We will prioritize remodeling projects that improve student experience in the classroom, increase student access to essential workspaces, and create common areas for supporting our learning community.
- We will upgrade tools and equipment that students and researchers need to stay on the cutting edge of media and communication practice.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                                  |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Documentation of space uses                    | ↑ Collaborations with Vilas neighbors          |
| ↑ Proposals and grants for facility improvements | ↑ Diversity in Communication Arts student body |
| ↑ Usage and functionality of spaces              | ↑ Frequency of space improvements              |





LEADERSHIP IN EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #8**

### **Tell our story to the many communities we serve**

- We will produce a comprehensive communication plan to make the department's many achievements visible on local, national, and global platforms.
- We will increase public outreach and translate the accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni for non-academic audiences through social media, videos, press releases, and infographics.
- We will coordinate with other campus communicators to amplify our efforts, contribute to the most important stories being told about UW-Madison, and provide leadership in effective department communication at the college and university level.

#### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

- |                                             |                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| ↑ Public awareness of our department        | ↑ Visits to our department website                        |
| ↑ Student awareness of our course offerings | ↑ Inclusive images and stories about the department       |
| ↑ Followers and engagement on social media  | ↑ Coverage in local, national, and global media platforms |





## HOW CAN I HELP?

*There are many ways your assistance makes a direct impact on Communication Arts. We thank you for your continued support of our program.*

### ENGAGE

- **Follow** on social @UWCOMMARTS
- **Participate** in our student-alumni networking events
- **Share** your story (email us at [info@commarts.wisc.edu](mailto:info@commarts.wisc.edu))
- **Advocate** for UW-Madison and Communication Arts to your elected representatives

### GIVE

- Give online here: [commarts.wisc.edu/giving](https://commarts.wisc.edu/giving)
- Giving priorities that advance our strategic plan:
  - Undergraduate scholarships
  - Internship support
  - Faculty support
  - Public outreach
  - Community and belonging
  - Facilities and equipment

**Contact Marit Barkve, Senior Director of Development at UW Foundation, for more information:**

Phone: 608-515-3052

Email: [marit.barkve@supportuw.org](mailto:marit.barkve@supportuw.org)

### DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Derek Johnson

### CONTACT US

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