

Executive Summary

Blueprint for Quality Enhancement at USC College of Mass Communications & Information Studies April 23, 2008

The College of Mass Communications and Information Studies is experiencing important changes in the current year that are affecting its programs and its personnel. Ultimately, we believe these will result in stronger components of the college and its two constituent schools.

The School of Library and Information Science has its first doctoral candidates on campus, supported by an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. The school will enroll its first undergraduate students in Fall of 2008. Together, these are the wings on the solid foundation of the school's well-respected and ranked master's program which remains the core professional degree for librarians and school media specialists. We envision growing enrollment largely in the undergraduate program which will prepare graduates for the burgeoning field of knowledge management, as well as create a direct channel for students going on to the master's program.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications is engaged in a search for its new director. We expect new leadership to build on the current strengths of the long-established program and reinvigorate the program and its faculty. Enrollment in the school stabilized after a decline in the previous year, though we continue to watch this closely and are stepping up recruiting efforts.

Both schools are also conducting searches for new faculty members. Each has experienced the loss of several faculty members due to retirement, death or resignation. To date, the recruiting season has been good, and each school should have several new members of the faculty on board at the start of the fall semester.

Each school is fully accredited. Renewals lie ahead for the School of Library and Information Science in 2009 and the School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 2011.

The hopes and expectations that the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the college's administration would soon move from the Coliseum to new quarters suffered a setback in 2007. The state legislature backed away from an anticipated bond authorization that would have provided the additional funds to start reconstruction of LeConte College. As a result, our college has had to revamp its fund-raising goals. Extensive discussions with university administrators have resulted in a revised building plan and the assurance that the school and college are a top priority in the overall allocation of space on campus.

The college's leadership in multimedia convergence through the Ifra Newsplex continues to develop collaborative partnerships that bring students and professionals together to explore the effectiveness of new media. Curricula are under continuous review and revision to

address the technological changes in the ways we collect, store, analyze and disseminate information. The 2008 presidential election campaign has afforded students multiple opportunities to observe and participate in the political process. Many have played reporting, production and public relations roles in commercial and student media coverage of the campaigns in South Carolina.

Cocky's Reading Express, the community outreach aspect of our Children, Libraries and Literacy Initiative, continues to attract attention and have an impact. Student government volunteers and staff from our Center for Children's Books and Literacy spent a week in January in the state's I-95 corridor, reading with elementary school children and providing nearly 2000 books. Over the three years of the program, some 10,000 books have been distributed across the state. As part of the larger literacy initiative, SLIS is currently searching for the first holder of the endowed Augusta Baker Chair in Childhood Literacy. This will be the academic and research component of the initiative.

Vision Statement

In a world of mega-information and instant communication, we prepare professionals to better inform and educate a citizenry that is equipped with the level of literacy needed to process communication at all levels effectively.

Our vision, mission and goals remain constant. Information and communication literacy is a keystone of a capable society, all the more so as technology increases the information at our fingertips.

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies, comprising the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the School of Library and Information Science, is to educate the state's diverse citizens and to position South Carolina as a leader among states in an information-oriented society through teaching, research and creative activity, and service.

Teaching:

The College is committed to the integration of information literacy skills into the education of the University's diverse student population and to the preparation of leaders and professionals in the fields of journalism and mass communications and library and information science through excellence in teaching and curricular development.

Research:

The College seeks to create unique centers of inquiry and research that will broaden society's knowledge of our disciplines, raise our profile, and attract the finest teachers, the keenest researchers, and the brightest students to the College, thus improving the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

Service:

The College is committed to using its expertise to aid in the development of the state and its citizens by increasing the ability to find, transmit, analyze, and create the information services and products that will encourage economic growth and improve the quality of life.

We are encouraged through the placement of our graduates, the enthusiasm of community and professional organizations as our partners, and the breadth of interest in our academic programs that our mission and vision are on target. We are active in teaching and research collaboration across campus. We are attracting faculty from leading programs who are eager to participate in our growth.