

SJMC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Statement of the SJMC Diversity Committee's goals

Based on our survey of best practices at other peer institutions—and particularly journalism programs that have won AEJMC's annual award for diversity over the past ten years—we have developed a strategic plan to accomplish a range of goals intended to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for SJMC students, faculty, and staff. This plan emphasizes our dedication to ongoing self-assessment in the service of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the SJMC. It acknowledges that the faculty, students and staff deserve the enriching benefits of diverse intellectual engagement. And it shows we understand that diversity produce better thinking, richer learning, and stronger outcomes at all levels. We also recognize that efforts to diversify our culture and curriculum will be incomplete or ineffective without equivalent efforts to promote equity and inclusion. In this spirit, we have proposed a concerted, strategic approach to making sure that all students find their home and their best professional selves within the School's walls, and that leave SJMC ready to engage with a work world that increasingly demands cultural competence and comfort with diversity.

This document is organized to present a working definition of “diversity” and related terms, a discussion of the various publics we intend to engage, and a set of goals and related objectives to define our actions from this point onward.

Definition of Diversity

Diversity reflects the synthesis of social identities, formed in cultures of both privilege and discrimination, that intersect to create a richer whole. In order to cultivate the benefits diversity, we acknowledge legacies of historically embedded biases of cultural visibility and power, and endeavor to correct them in our SJMC community and throughout our curriculum.

We recognize that diversity must be accompanied by inclusion, that is, by acceptance and respect so that all members of the SJMC community, particularly members of marginalized or underrepresented groups, feel included and valued. Equity requires that all members of a community have access to the same opportunities, along with an awareness of the barriers and disadvantages that limit access for marginalized groups. Valuing diversity, therefore, is an active process that demands our continuous dedication to inclusion and equity for present and future generations of students, faculty, and staff.

Enriching societ through diversity is an essential focus for those entrusted to communicate news, information, insight, and entertainment to diverse audiences. A program that that does not focus on issues of diversity falls short of the bare minimum of training our future communicators need to be productive members of society. Thus, we are committed to a diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects a global society. Moreover, we intend to deepen and widen the ways in which our community is diverse and to cultivate a curriculum that encourages our students to think critically about our differences and our commonalities.

Participating in a meaningful discourse regarding diversity will require all members of the community to be active listeners and to exchange ideas with compassion toward those with whom we disagree. In order for us to create a School climate that is inclusive and safe, we will need to practice such virtues as reflexivity, respect, honesty, transparency, and civility. To that end, we outline the following diversity goals for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa:

- Goal 1: To foster a supportive and inclusive environment
- Goal 2: To increase faculty, staff and administrative diversity
- Goal 3: To increase student diversity
- Goal 4: To build a more diverse and inclusive curriculum

We find this plan to be in line with the University of Iowa’s commitment to diversity as inextricably linked to excellence in education.

Target Publics

The SJMC Diversity Plan identifies several key groups essential to achieving the five goals described above. We define target publics as groups that are or should be made aware of the plan and who are more actively involved in the plan’s evolution, execution, or outcomes. The goal of identifying target publics and stakeholders is to ensure clear, transparent, and effective communication with all those invested in or essential to the plan and its success.

In addition, we divide target publics into two groups: Tier 1 Publics and Tier 2 Publics. Tier 1 Publics are those with whom SJMC has an existing relationship, including current SJMC students, staff, and faculty; student and journalism professional groups; and accrediting organizations. Tier 2 Publics are those whose relationships with SJMC are not yet fully established, or those with whom a goal of the SJMC plan is to develop relationship, including prospective students, community colleges, and job candidates. While we consider both Tier 1 and Tier 2 publics essential to the plan’s success, we recognize that attracting diverse faculty and developing relationships with community or journalism groups (Tier 2 publics) depend on the equitable and inclusive climate and culture developed by Tier 1 publics.

Tier 1 Publics	How to Reach Them
Full-time faculty	Email announcements, Faculty meetings
Adjuncts	Email announcements, Meetings/workshops
Staff	Email announcements, Meetings/workshops
Graduate Students	Email announcements, Grad student association, PhD Seminar, Graduate courses
Undergraduate Majors	Email announcements, Meetings/workshops, Lower division courses, Student organizations
Prospective Students	Gen ed courses, Academic advising, Paul Jensen/student ambassadors, Student organizations
CLAS/University Administration	Annual reports, Meetings, Faculty on committees
Service Learning Organizations & Partners	Interpersonal communication, Meetings, Events

Existing SJMC Professional Groups	Interpersonal communication
Existing SJMC Connected Professionals	Interpersonal communication, Conferences
Student Groups	Interpersonal communication, Organizational advisors
AEJMC	Faculty Representatives, Conference, Accreditation

Tier 2 Publics	How to Reach Them
Prospective Students	Alumni networks, Recruitment events
Other Journalism Schools & Scholars	Conferences, Association publications
Potential Journalism Professional Groups	Conferences, Interpersonal contact, Alumni networks
Community Organizations	Service learning, Meetings, Events, Interpersonal contact
Potential Journalism Professionals	Conferences, Faculty networks, Interpersonal communication
Community Colleges	Interpersonal contact, Faculty networks, Meetings, Presentations
Schools Serving a Higher Proportion of Underrepresented Groups (HBUCs, tribal colleges)	Interpersonal contact, Faculty networks, Meetings, Presentations
Job candidates	Conferences, Interpersonal contact, Through schools serving a higher proportion of underrepresented groups (HBUCs, tribal colleges)
News media	Press releases, Email/phone pitches

Goals and Objectives

Each goal is divided into First-Tier and Second-Tier Objectives. This does not reflect our assessment of the importance of the objectives. Rather, it reflects our assessment of a combination of commitments required, resources needed, and which objectives need to be met in order to facilitate the development of others.

Goal 1: To foster a supportive and inclusive environment

First Tier Objectives

1. Clearly define and publicize the School's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Action steps

1. Create a strategic diversity plan
2. Develop a communication plan to highlight diversity-related research, professional activities, observances, and individual efforts at diversity/equity/inclusion in all SJMC communication
3. Develop a "best practices" checklist for syllabi that shows our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
4. Revise and update our website to include a diversity page

5. Work with HR to revise text in our job calls and ways we solicit applications from job candidates (see Goal 2)
2. Provide diversity training opportunities for faculty and staff
Action Steps
 1. Work with every faculty member to complete the UI BUILD program within 2 years of hire date/development of diversity plan
 2. Focus faculty meetings on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues once every semester (either presenters or webinars through NFCDD)
3. Restructure faculty and staff committee appointments
Action steps
 1. Reorganize faculty committee structure
 2. Disband diversity steering committee
 3. Appoint a diversity representative to serve on every committee

Second Tier Objectives

4. Develop a plan for more diversity-oriented celebratory events
Action steps
 1. Evaluate the success of current event programming
 2. Identify opportunities for additional cultural events
5. Train students in issues related to diversity and cultural competence
Action steps
 1. Develop a research plan to identify diversity-related issues most problematic for SJMC
 2. Develop a diversity training program for SJMC students
 3. Develop discussion events for students to learn about topics like implicit bias, micro-aggressions, etc.

Goal 2: To increase faculty, staff and administrative diversity

First Tier Objectives

1. Hire more diverse faculty, staff, and administrators
Action Steps
 1. Adding a field for a diversity statement to online job applications, along with the standard fields for the CV and cover letter.
 2. Require every search committee to include a “diversity consultant” who has been through the BUILD program or an equivalent training.
 3. Require everyone on search committees to take an implicit bias training
2. Retain diverse faculty, staff, and administrators
Action Steps
 1. Conduct a biennial climate survey of faculty and staff
 2. Establish a mentorship program for junior faculty

Second Tier Objectives

3. Create networks across the college to ensure faculty advancement beyond tenure and into positions of leadership.

Action Steps

1. Communicate with our faculty and staff to identify these connections.
2. Work with faculty mentors to develop list of potential awards, committees and opportunities for faculty.

Goal 3: To increase student diversity

First Tier Objectives

1. Improve our recruitment process

Action Steps

1. Actively seek more resources for students of color in the form of specially dedicated scholarships.
2. Connect with minority student groups at UI

2. Improve retention of students from underrepresented groups

Action Steps

1. Conduct a biennial climate survey of SJMC majors
2. Conduct biennial focus groups with students from underrepresented groups
3. Establish a voluntary mentorship program for students from underrepresented groups

Goal 4: To build a more inclusive curriculum

First Tier Objectives

1. Enhance service learning throughout the curriculum and tie it to the School's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals

Action Steps

1. Develop and maintain a database of organizations for service learning that have partnered with SJMC before
2. Require a service-learning component in all workshop courses

2. Develop a "diversity, equity, and inclusion" curriculum within the curriculum

Action Steps

1. Identify key concepts, arguments, and practices central to diversity, equity, and inclusion in journalism education
2. Review syllabi, assess existing efforts in SJMC classes and train instructors to include more explicit engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion in all instructional materials, including assignments, information classroom activities, texts and lecture slides.
3. Ensure that these concepts, arguments, and practices are introduced and reinforced by courses in the SJMC curriculum
4. Assess student proficiency in these concepts, arguments, and practices in a terminal course or courses [most likely JMC 3181: Ethics and Diversity]

3. Develop writing and media production courses that specifically focus on diversity or minority themes (like Writing Across Cultures, Community Media, or a hypothetical course in a language like Spanish or Chinese)

Action Steps

1. Assess current curriculum to identify courses that lend themselves to diversity themes
2. Determine needs to develop new diversity-related courses that fit into current curriculum requirements

Second Tier Objectives

4. Develop a 'theme' semester where most of our classes are centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion issues
5. Partner with other departments at the University of Iowa to develop cross-listed courses that would incorporate diversity-related issues

Action Steps

1. Develop a Spanish-language journalism course

Evaluation

To make this plan effective, an annual review will be conducted to assess the school's progress in achieving our goals. This will include an initial assessment and evaluation of the school's efforts based on the ACEJMC review in 2016 and the department review in 2018. A review process will be developed to be conducted annually. All past, current, and future efforts will be documented for these reviews. This evaluation could be conducted by existing committees or by an ad-hoc steering committee.