

***Strengths, Opportunities  
and Aspirations  
Sept. 4, 2020***



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## Analysis of Open-ended Questions

- Analysis was conducted by the dean, who did not complete the survey but has a vested interest in understanding the college.
- Each set of themes was drawn from individual questions (e.g. only strengths are included in the sections on strength).
- Descriptions emerged from the data.
- All responses to each question were pulled as one text without identification tags to the participant classification.
- All responses were analyzed and categorized. The more comments an individual provided, the more that person's perspective is reflected in the summary.



## Analysis of Open-ended Questions

- Comments were categorized by fit with task forces
- If a response fit more than one area, it was divided or noted
- Comments were paraphrased and words were removed for brevity
- Most typos were fixed for clarity
- After initial categorization, themes and comments were repeatedly reviewed and recategorized to ensure representation, fit, and inclusion of all comments.



# *Mission, Vision and Values*



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## **Strengths: Our Characteristics**

- Creative minds, ambition, flexibility, commitment
- Adherence to the fundamental values of fair and accurate communications
- Willingness to innovate and change with the times and with technology
- We prepare the next generation
- Our history
- Only ACEJMC accredited program in Nebraska
- Midwestern values
- Industry recognition



## **Strengths: CoJMC Family**

- Small-school feel in a big-university community
- Small college/family feel on a big campus
- Small, family atmosphere
- Family atmosphere
- Family like environment
- Small, family feel
- Our size - we can move faster than most other units on campus
- Small-college atmosphere
- Cohesiveness and camaraderie within the college



## **Opportunities: Characteristics**

- Big 10 environment & support
- Clean slate with new dean; new leadership in an exciting time
- Positive reflections of a pandemic

## **Opportunities: Find our Niche**

- We could do a better job of finding a niche and claiming the market in that specific area
- Define our value to the broader campus community - carve out our distinct area/niche to the campus



## Opportunities: Lead

- Become leaders in journalism by helping the industry reimagine itself in a changing environment
- Becoming a leader in creating statewide initiatives to address underserved audiences, news literacy and news deserts
- Faculty, staff and students who can be leaders in the fast-changing demographic landscape of the US
- Faculty have strong pedagogical skills for online learning; we can lead in online teaching
- Our stakeholders want us to help them figure out the business of news. We should at least do something to try.







## Aspirations: Reputation

- Reputation for innovation and contributions to the professions
- Reputation in Nebraska as a valuable resource for communities
- Reputation on campus as the leader in experiential education, taking risks, and a sought-after partner in new endeavors
- Expand national recognition for our college
- Become a respected program among our peers in the Big 10
- Have a national reputation as the place to study advertising, broadcasting, journalism, and sports media



## Aspirations: Reputation

- Be considered the top journalism college in the nation
- Research and creative work that is nationally recognized and groundbreaking in all areas that makes UNL a go-to powerhouse for industry know-how.
- National recognition as a center for innovative public affairs journalism
- National recognition as a center for developing excellent non-fiction writers
- National reputation for research into media literacy



## Aspirations: Culture

- Create a culture of media creativity and innovation
- Be a place where everyone feels empowered
- Build a culture of kindness and respect for all
- Camaraderie and respect among faculty
- I would genuinely like to see more civility and an end to the infighting among certain members of the faculty
- I would like to see us strengthen our Diversity & Inclusiveness efforts. We have made great strides this summer, but current events tell us there is much more to be done.



## Aspirations: Cohesive Vision Forward

- A faculty and staff that is all on the same page in promoting our shared goals
- Better communication among faculty and administration
- An environment where colleagues work together towards a common goal instead of focusing on protecting their territory
- We are leading in many areas, we need to stake that claim, highlight it, build on it and stop being Humble! We do big things, let's brag a little bit, but stay focused!
- See "Opportunities"
- We need to be more innovative and forward thinking



## Aspirations: Cohesive Vision Forward

- Be "more than"-- more than a state school, more than an easy place to get into. To in-state talent, we can look too familiar; to out-of-staters, too "Nebraska"-- too rural.
- We are a small JMC college, unique among our peers, and that gives us space to be nimble and innovative.
- We're a place where you can come from anywhere and turn hard work into transformative opportunities and experiences, made possible because of our strategic partnerships with industry, alumni, and institutions around the world.

*People*



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## Strengths: Our Students

- Creative, flexible and social students
- Engaged students
- Award winning student work
- Quality students
- Passionate students
- Fresh-thinkers, technology driven students
- Global thinkers
- Student enthusiasm
- Students who are self-starters and driven to help manage and create the new media world



## **Strengths: Our Faculty**

### **Knowledgeable**

- Many faculty with great, untapped expertise and keen interest in working together and building a better college
- Variety of professors with different interests and skillsets
- Knowledge of the media business
- A wide range of skills in writing and media
- Experience of the faculty and staff; Faculty expertise
- Quality (most) faculty
- Faculty research/grants
- Faculty who continue to produce the kind of work done by their professions





## Strengths: Our Faculty

### Professional Experience

- Professional experience, training; strong professional industry background; faculty possesses abundant professional experience; faculty with professional experience; professional expertise; Professional background and industry connections of the faculty
- Community of professionals with a dedication to the college
- We have lots of industry experience to draw on
- Faculty and students who are working in the global media landscape

### Open to change

- Majority of faculty are new and not bound to the way things always were - open to change
- A core group of people interested in innovating and putting in the energy to modernize our curriculum



## **Strengths: Student Focus**

### **Supportive Environment**

- Accessible faculty; faculty are responsive to student needs and supportive; the majority of professors really care about students
- Relationships with students; students seem to feel welcomed
- Our communication design program is infused with the idea that students have a safe place to fail

### **Dedication to Student Success**

- Passionate about student success; dedicated to student success
- Deep commitment and care for students
- Our faculty want to produce graduates who can think critically, who can do work that reflects well on their training and whose professional successes redound to our credit.
- Graduates are pleased with their experience and find jobs



## **Opportunities: Hiring**

- New hires
- Opportunity for tenure track professors to retire so new professors can come in

## **Opportunities: Professional Development**

- Focus on professional development; professional development for faculty; build a professional development program
- Enhance clarity in promotion and tenure for professors of practice
- We could do a better job of supporting new faculty
- Establish diversity & inclusion initiatives to promote equity and serve society



## **Aspirations: Hiring**

- Attracting and retaining more diverse faculty and students

## **Aspirations: Student Support**

- Making sure our students truly FEEL we are vested in their progress and success





## Aspirations: Professional Development

- Professional development for faculty and staff
- Professional development and achievement individually and as a team
- To keep our faculty current on trends in our industries
- To have a faculty that builds a distinguished body of creative and research work, putting us on par with peers
- Nurturing and maximizing talent

# *Internal Operations*



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## Strengths

- We do a great job using the technology we already have
- Great facilities



### Opportunities

- We are understaffed so we don't have the manpower to seek out additional opportunities
- Collaboration with each other
- We could do a better job of keeping the high-level trend data in front of us
- We could do a better job of regularly benchmarking with the competition
- Internal education, about why scholarly research matters, about the process, about what each of us does or can/could do
- Enhance clarity in promotion and tenure for professors of practice
- Possibly dropping accreditation so students can take more credits in their major, therefore helping us with the new budget model







## Aspirations

- Ethical behavior
- Equity
- Enough faculty to balance workloads
- Aligning people (and allocations/appportionments) with their strengths



# *External Operations*



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## Strengths: Our Alumni Network

- Impressive professional network of alums and contacts
- Strong alumni network with a positive affinity towards college
- Connection with industry professionals
- Successful alumni and programs that continue to graduate students who innovate, excel and do big things, no matter what they are interested in doing.
- Active and helpful alums in an amazing array of jobs
- Tradition of placing students in prestigious internships and jobs
- We're one of the most accomplished mass communication schools in the country with amazing alumni. Let's highlight our alumni who work "unconventional" jobs and found passion for their career outside what's typical



### **Opportunities: Alumni Outreach and Community Partners**

- Build alumni networks
- Alumni reinvigorated
- Partnerships with alumni/companies
- Form more community partnerships both with community organizations and with professional organizations/companies
- More partnerships and collaborations with existing news organizations and companies
- Professional Industry Partnerships (i.e. Grad Program "Feeder" Program, Industry funded experiential Lab or building/space, Pro Bono work for LNK community)



### **Opportunities: Industry Training and Development**

- Monetizing development training for industry professionals
- Professional development for industry
- Credentialing for continue education/executive/professional Ed.
- A data science Industry collaboration- Nebraska is a small state, many are UNL alums, and there's great potential for partnerships
- Exploiting our knowledge base, teaching prowess and research to partner with various industry sectors and even colleges
- Online professional development



### **Opportunities: Serve Nebraska News**

- Helping Nebraska
- Disseminate data-driven reporting projects to all state media
- Forming partnerships to provide news to communities that need it and work more collaboratively with local news providers.
- Expand the Nebraska News Service to provide more content to small and mid-sized news organizations in the state and provide more opportunities for students.



### **Opportunities: Collaborate Across Campus**

- Collaboration with other colleges
- Build connections across campus
- Collaboration with other departments/colleges
- More outreach for collaboration with other programs on campus
- We could be doing more to partner with other entities on campus
- Our communication skills could make us very good collaborators to fulfill the university N 2025 goals
- Encourage and support work in areas aligned with the grand challenges and university vision
- More cross-campus collaborations





## **Aspirations: Engage On and Off Campus**

- I want us to be leaders on campus
- To become a truly valued contributor on campus
- Engage with alumni
- Strengthen industry partnerships

## **Aspirations: Industry Training and Development**

- Professional Development Programs (targeting middle managers locally and nationally to generate revenue for the college while elevating visibility)
- Professional development time partnering with alumni network/companies,





## **Aspirations: Fundraising**

- Named college and more successful fundraising
- Long term funding - named rooms/building addition/labs/professorships/scholarships from the foundation
- I believe the college needs to strengthen its fundraising efforts to brace against continued dwindling state support and other budget challenges; a named college would certainly help, though I know that's a difficult ask.

## **Aspirations: Serve Nebraska News**

- To launch a community-based model of journalism and AD/PR that provides outreach to bolster community/local journalism across Nebraska and perhaps the Midwest.

*Scholarship and  
Creativity*



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## Strengths

- Established creative and research activities, publications, and programs of national and award-winning merit
- Faculty research/grants
- Faculty who continue to produce the kind of work done by their professions
- Innovative research in emerging media
- Researchers in media and new media



## Opportunities

- Faculty that produce good research and creative
- Research projects and grant funding
- Continued enhancement in scholarship and creative activity
- Overarching research interests that we could cluster around
- The University is asking colleges for more research and creative activity, more grants, etc. Education in that space, and supporting collaborations and "learning on the job," will be key.
- Enhanced research support and productivity.
- Encourage and support work in areas aligned with the grand challenges and university vision





## Aspirations

- Creative activity and research
- Better support for grant writing and campus connections
- Research to help solve some of the problems in our industries
- Distinguished body of creative/research, on par with peers
- Research and creative activity that matters to Nebraskans and the industries we serve.
- A business of journalism research agenda.
- Leadership in research and grant funded projects
- Do more experimentation -- what do the industries want us to be researching?

*Graduate  
Academic  
Operations*



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## Strengths

- Faculty are student centered, knowledgeable, and professionally oriented (see People)
- Depth of teaching
- Range of educational focuses, opportunities, and experiences in undergraduate and graduate education
- Relative lack of dogma



### Opportunities

- Existing relationship with marketing and comm studies at the grad level; could build on it for a Ph.D. program
- Expanding and growing the master's degree program
- Grow professional graduate programs, master's degrees and certificates
- Certificates, micro-degrees, and degrees
- Create stackable degree programs.
- A certificate for grad students/ professionals in data analytics, which has been pushed to the back burner for years, could help generate revenue and serve needs as well; huge opportunity for undergrad, grad, and profession in data







## Aspirations

- Ph.D.; Ph.D. research program
- Building a graduate program that can attract students focused on research as well, and collaborating with faculty on meaningful work
- A graduate program that would rival that of any of our peers, meaning it will offer a broad array of courses that will attract more students for certificates and master's degrees. If supportable, the program would also include a Ph.D.



## Aspirations

- Graduate certificates for professionals
- More emphasis on application at the graduate level
- A world class graduate program that extends our undergrad offerings - especially in areas of growth such as sports media and content and strategic management, user experience
- I'd like to see more students who graduate with their bachelors immediately transition into graduate school

*Undergraduate  
Academic  
Operations*



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### **Strengths: Our Programs**

- Strength in focused majors/programs: Journalism, Broadcasting, Advertising/Public Relations, Sports
- Top 5 Undergrad Major with ADPR and quickly expanding SPMC; we have a top-five major on campus (ADPR); Large major in ADPR;
- Ability to connect majors with career paths
- Incredibly cool majors that are critical for society; current, contemporary subject matter; we have great, fun, fascinating, future-facing, innovative, interesting, modern subject matter
- Range of educational focuses, opportunities, and experiences
- Relative lack of dogma
- More flexible and innovative curriculum delivery



## Strengths

- Faculty are student centered, knowledgeable, and professionally oriented (see People)
- Depth of teaching
- Small class sizes: this could be something we work on being flexible to adding that 1-5 more student to make a class of 25 is
- Smaller skills classes give students solid grounding in the basics and opportunities to work individually with faculty
- Great graduation and placement rates across the college (I think?)



## **Opportunities: New Programs**

### **Certificates and Minors**

- Expand certificates, micro-degrees, and degrees
- micro-credentials/badging opportunities; stackable degrees
- Create minors or certificates for students outside the CoJMC

### **Online**

- Online degree completion for those who walked away from school and now can't find the time to return to complete their degrees
- Online programing; do more with web-based curriculum.

### **Data Analytics**

- Huge opportunity for undergrad, grad, and profession in data. Digital analytics/ Media Lab-- how to analyze, make meaning and take action on data; Develop major data-driven reporting projects



## **Opportunities: New Programs**

### **Media literacy**

- We are leaving a gigantic opening for media literacy education; opportunities to develop ACE campus-wide media literacy training or courses to counteract "Fake News" claims; Staking a claim to teaching news literacy on campus

### **New Media and Content Experience**

- New Media and Social Media focused curriculum (i.e. partnering with units across campus to develop joint-opportunities in specific areas like data science, political science, health comm, crisis PR).
- We need a more robust program around creating content experiences, from ground up, including design, across the college; more diversified cross-platform training



### **Opportunities: New Programs**

- Develop programs in business journalism and science journalism
- Honors is interested in greater collaboration. It would be wonderful to be able to attract and challenge more high achievers.
- Entrepreneurial instruction and focus
- Growth, but not at the expense of our "small college" feel





### **Opportunities: Repackaging Existing Programs**

- Repackage our existing courses for different audiences
- SPMC Major - expanding to include branding, more digital-focused; jobs aren't just broadcasting and reporting-- it's marketing, statistics, social media and more. Should we collaborate with the college of business for a more marketing-focused course opportunity?
- Marketing the JOUR major in a new and exciting way that will appeal to those who want a writing career, but not in news
- Flexibility in curriculum
- We need to create clearer pathways and curriculum ladders



## **Opportunities: Preparing Work-ready Graduates**

- Producing students who can hit the ground running either in internships or in the workforce
- Internships: Our students and their parents want training and connections that will get them good jobs.
- Curriculum innovation to match skills for entry-level positions

## **Opportunities: Quality Control**

- Employers want employees who can write, produce well-executed stories, audios and videos and advertising efforts.
- Lack of journalistic training for students, seniors don't know basic journalism lingo, lack of engaged professors (students complain about professors "mailing it in" and not actually teaching).





## Aspirations: New/Repackaged Programs

- Online undergraduate degree
- Data science for communicators program that is seen as a center of excellence at the university; we have a critical mass of data interested people
- The college being the place for media literacy education
- An entrepreneurial journalism/content program
- Program in user/audience design and development
- The future of media, the role of media in society ("the press" and new and emerging media)
- Innovative storytelling (which also means innovative application and analysis of data)



## Aspirations: Innovative Curriculum

- Interdisciplinary Curriculum (within CoJMC established majors and across campus)
- Development of courses that challenge students to think about the why of communication and not just the how
- Ability to be flexible, pivot and pop up experiences
- Improving curriculum (more focused on industries)
- Curriculum that feels innovative and forward thinking



## Aspirations: Quality Control

- Not to be known as the "easy" college at UNL, but rather as a place where students love to find their voice and passions
- Build on fundamentals so none leave without essential skills
- Provide well-rounded training that acquaints them with academic disciplines beyond our college, helping develop them as good well-rounding citizens.
- We value truth, honest research and fairness of coverage in all our majors. We must be sure our curriculum and our products (student and faculty alike) reflect those principles.



## Aspirations: Quality Control

- Our students cannot write. They struggle telling stories that are compelling. Their creative ideas are lacking. They don't take the journalism profession seriously. Did I mention they can't write? They don't even know the name of their major.
- Our pop-up courses earned some attention around campus, but they are scattershot. More organized series would help manage expectations and mean something.
- Quality undergrad teaching and learning
- Great story-telling

## Aspirations: Student Success

- Student-focused learning
- Increase four-year graduation rates
- Providing for our students in the best possible way to keep them here



# *Experiential Learning*



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### Strengths

- We are good at the hands-on instruction; hands-on, experiential learning; hands-on learning; hands-on, real-world learning; ability to provide hands-on experiences on day one
- Deep commitment to students and hands on learning
- Experiential & hands-on learning (i.e. Jacht Agency, Bateman, NSAC, RSO's)
- Special programs (Jacht, OWH, NSAC, Global Eyewitness, Roper Lab, News Lab, Campaigns, Comm Design, Depth reports, etc.)
- Curriculum gives students practical experience
- Engagement in practical learning from day one
- We're doing a lot with experiential learning.



### **Opportunities: Do More**

- Build more hands on opportunities for students.
- Collaborate with professionals in the area to provide opportunities for experiential learning
- Take more advantage of being located in the state capital and the opportunities that gives us for developing public affairs reporting
- Expand the Nebraska News Service to provide more content to small and mid-sized news organizations in the state and provide more opportunities for students
- Jacht; student clubs; student media opportunities
- The Roper Lab is a great example -- but we can do more by involving more faculty and students



### Opportunities: Do More

- More real-world experiences -- such as our summer internship program. Why not expand it in the academic year?
- An analytics lab or collaboration with Jacht could help generate revenue and provide hands-on opportunities for students.
- Opportunity for students to produce journalism that is not being reported locally for fear of retribution or revoking access (sports)
- Industry-focused opportunities (paid partnerships with local and global industry to provide hands-on experiences for our students)
- Job placement, that we help students see how their skills can be transferred into careers beyond what the typical routes look like





## Aspirations: Do More

- Students have hands-on industry specific opportunities  
Students doing real work and building a strong foundation
- More real-world experiences within the college for our students, like the news service this summer
- Resurrection of the college's former media production firm
- Provide the space (personally and physically) for students to have the on-campus and off-campus (world wide) experience
- We could expand our experiential learning into other areas
- Improve internship experiences
- Every student has an internship experience

*Thank you!*



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