



Stony Brook University
School of Communication
and Journalism

SHAPING FUTURES: A BOLD STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028



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INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2006, the Stony Brook School of Communication and Journalism (SoCJ) is a young school full of energy, bristling with ideas, keenly strategic, and deeply aware of the growing need for thoughtful, engaging, and accurate communication and reliable, courageous journalism.

An academic component of a major public research university and a SUNY flagship institution, SoCJ has a close partnership with the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science, the nation's leading science communication organization. Together, the SoCJ and the Center combine the best of academia—advanced education, research and scholarship, and community engagement—with specialized excellence in training professionals in science communication.

This is an unusually powerful and exceptional combination, full of remarkable possibilities. SoCJ and the Alda Center stand securely at the intersection of communication, science, technology, and health and medicine. From this position, they are uniquely able and prepared to help society address the great opportunities and challenges of this intersection.





The Importance of SoCJ

The purpose and mission of SoCJ could not be more important or timely.

The world is confronted with an array of urgent, complex, and interwoven issues that can only be addressed through groundbreaking research and collaborative public engagement. A robust and equitable democracy with a high quality of life for all depends on sound communication that reliably and accurately conveys even the most complex issues in ways that are accessible and engaging for everyone.

This dedication is particularly urgent today as emotions and politics often override truth and facts, disinformation and misinformation are increasingly rampant, and dispassionate analysis and explanation are frequently compromised. Solutions to these challenges require strong partnerships across experts in science, technology, health, policy, and communication, with an overarching commitment to equity, inclusion, and access.

SoCJ is committed to teaching, studying, and exploring communication writ large—the full array of the means and vehicles by which citizens from all backgrounds and walks of life learn about and understand the world around them. Of utmost importance is everyone having readily available, accurate, and accessible understanding of a globe that is ever growing more challenged and unpredictable.

At its heart is SoCJ's commitment to bridging research and practice in service of the creation and dissemination of knowledge that supports a more deeply connected, engaged, and equitable society.

The School is particularly well positioned to meet these challenges.

- Stony Brook University, the leading flagship institution of the State University of New York, is highly regarded for its excellence in science, medicine, social sciences, and health sciences.
- Located on Long Island, the School's proximity to New York City, only 55 miles away, is a gateway to the communications, media, financial, and business center of the U.S., if not the world. In addition, Stony Brook will spearhead a new \$700 million environmental research center, the New York Climate Exchange, on Governors Island just south of Manhattan, construction of which will run from 2025 to 2028, giving it an important physical and programmatic presence in New York City.
- Stony Brook recently received a \$500 million endowment gift from the Simons Foundation, the largest unrestricted donation to an institution of higher education in U.S. history and one expected to grow up to \$1 billion by capitalizing on New York State's 1:2 endowment match program and other philanthropic support. The Simons gift is an extraordinary expression of support for the University.
- Stony Brook and SoCJ have strong linkages with Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, both nearby, as well as a wide range of research and academic institutions across the country and around the world.
- SoCJ faculty are committed to engaged, solutions-oriented work, and its students, among the most diverse in the country, are on a campus known for its social mobility and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Through its entrepreneurial spirit, new degree programs, and commitment to innovation and diversity, the School has built an enviable reputation in under two decades, with an impact and recognition that is steadily increasing.
- The School leverages the Alda Center's prominent global recognition as a leader in science communication devoted to fostering empathic engagement with individuals and groups across all backgrounds and walks of life.



MISSION

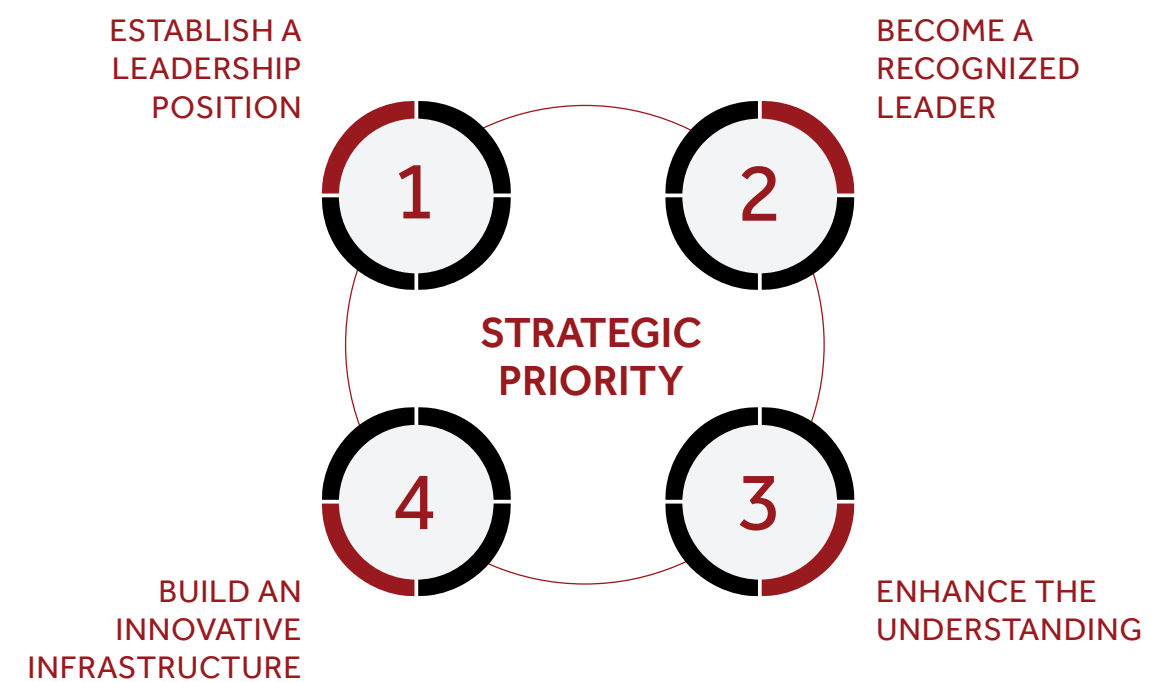
The School of Communication and Journalism at Stony Brook University educates the next generations of communication, journalism, and media leaders, practitioners, scholars, and professionals. It supports and integrates effective science and health communication research and practice and explores, clarifies, and strengthens the role of engaged communication in society.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This Strategic Framework delineates a set of transformative aspirations of the School of Communication and Journalism in partnership with the Alda Center for the next five years. It will guide their growth, development, and impact as they sharpen their programs and initiatives, extend their networks and affiliates, grow their influence and regard, and strengthen their foundations.

SoCJ and Alda Center will operationalize this Strategic Framework by preparing and implementing annual tactical plans. These tactical plans will delineate specific initiatives to deepen excellence, expand impact, advance financial stability, and enhance organizational capacities.

This Strategic Framework has four overriding Strategic Priorities:





ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP POSITION AS A FOREMOST SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

SoCJ has unparalleled strategic opportunities and demonstrated commitment to become a global leader in science and health communication education and research. It will grow in scale, influence, and regard by expanding its academic strengths and deepening its connections with other Stony Brook academic units. It will appoint outstanding faculty; develop new programs, degrees, and certificates; explore new modes of pedagogical delivery; and enlarge the Alda Center's public facing professional development programs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Couple communication and science within and throughout Stony Brook—in teaching, research, community outreach/service, and innovation—so that the University is increasingly known for its distinctive capabilities, impact, and excellence as a science and health communication institution and uses this distinction to strengthen its brand, reputation, and strategic positioning.
- Examine the character, need, challenges, and opportunities of communication and societal issues of importance, with particular emphasis on science communication, undergirded with an unshakeable commitment to equity and inclusion. It will seek to inform and shape research and communication that serve individuals, communities, and society as a whole in ways that are enriching, empowering, and culturally responsive.
- Grow strategically by attracting and retaining gifted faculty, practitioners, and staff and developing and refining degrees, certificates, programs designed to meet changing student needs and evolving research opportunities, thereby deepening its capabilities, growing its presence, and increasing its impact.
- Attract, support, and educate a diverse student body; help every student learn, thrive, and grow; and increase SoCJ's student retention and graduation rates so that the School is widely recognized for the quality, energy, and health of its entire community.
- Embrace and integrate the Alda Center's entrepreneurial approach to catalyze innovation, accelerate expansion into new arenas of communication research and education, and increase empathic public engagement and outreach.



ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP POSITION



BECOME A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN LINKING COMMUNICATION RESEARCH WITH PRACTICE

As communication modes and audiences continue to evolve, it is critically important to better understand how communication and journalism operate in increasingly complex and challenging contexts. Given changes in how people produce and consume media, combined with existential problems facing the globe—in science and health, in preventing and adapting to a changing climate, in democracy and leadership—linking communication with research is of particular importance.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Build significant research capabilities focused on science and health communication that link education and professional practice to better illuminate, understand, and disseminate the best approaches and most successful innovations designed to have the greatest impact.
- Significantly build faculty strength and excellence by recruiting and retaining leading senior and junior tenure track faculty members. Enhance the professional development and growth of all faculty in the School and Center. Increase the number of distinguished adjunct faculty with extensive professional experience in communication and journalism and other relevant fields.
- Couple communication with science and health across, within, and throughout Stony Brook—in teaching, research, community outreach/service, and innovation—so that the SoCJ and Alda Center become an integral component of SBU research initiatives. Doing so will expand federally funded research and the impact of that research, so that Stony Brook becomes the recognized leader in engaged and impactful research through its unique approach to science and health communication.
- Strengthen and expand the Center for News Literacy and the Marie Colvin Center for International Reporting and establish other centers and institutes that focus on significant issues of contemporary communication and journalism.
- Become a widely recognized center of and model for advancing communication about science and health through innovative pedagogy, sustained research and scholarship, and multi-channel outreach.



BECOME A RECOGNIZED LEADER

ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION, AND IMPORTANCE OF SOUND SCIENCE AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION WORLDWIDE

Recognition of the importance of engaging with public audiences through accurate and effective science and health communication is growing as is awareness of the relevance and impact of science and health research. At the same time, miscommunication and disinformation about science and health are on the rise. Enhanced capacity in science and health communication education, research, training, and outreach is essential to meet these needs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Ensure consistent and deliberate commitment to best practices in communication and engagement through direct and mediated communication grounded in empathy, humility, and listening.
- Expand the Alda Center's reach and impact through strategic growth and innovation, continuing assessment and evaluation, and market-driven expansion of programs and approaches.
- Broaden and deepen SoCJ's affiliations with Federal and other scientific institutions/agencies, leading scientific research organizations and laboratories, and other universities and academic societies—thereby enhancing the quality and impact of thoughtful engagement designed to build bridges between science and society.
- Develop and build innovative approaches to teach, research, and disseminate reliable and thoughtful communication about science and health as these evolve and increasingly impact the world.
- Become a recognized leader in the area of ethical communication that effectively addresses such pressing issues as disinformation, propaganda, and misrepresentation and thereby significantly helps to enhance trust of and respect for communication and journalism.



ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING



BUILD AN INNOVATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND A ROBUST FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE THAT ENABLES STRATEGIC GROWTH AND POWERFUL SOCIETAL IMPACT

SoCJ is deeply committed to thoughtful, strategic, and entrepreneurial growth, buttressed by exceptional academic leadership; an outstanding, collegial, and diverse community of faculty, students, and staff; and a sound financial foundation. The pace of its growth and impact will be limited only by its imagination, energy, and focus. And its achievements and influence will only be enhanced and stimulated by its successes and new opportunities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Carefully build a contemporary leadership and administrative organization structure that anticipates evolving changes in higher education *and* empowers strategic growth and thoughtful innovation.
- Reconceive the present SoCJ business model to enable strategic growth, better explore important opportunities, enhance pedagogical and research excellence, and achieve greater societal impact.
- Build a strong financial foundation and grow a significant endowment to fund new faculty chairs, attract outstanding scholars and teachers; increase financial aid and enhance student well-being; support and sustain organizational capacity; ensure cutting-edge facilities and technologies; and stimulate continuing innovation.
- Ensure a strong technological infrastructure that takes advantage of the rapid advances in AI, fully supports pedagogy and scholarship, and encourages even deeper and more significant networking around the globe.
- Nurture and sustain a culture that promotes equity and inclusion, fosters a sense of belonging, and ensures respect for all members of the SoCJ community.
- Explore and develop ways of building meaningful new entrepreneurial revenue streams that will strengthen SoCJ's financial position while expanding its reach and impact.



BUILD AN INNOVATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

CONCLUSION

Stony Brook University has never been more essential or its future brighter. As the world becomes ever more complicated and connected, thoughtful and innovative education of the next generations of communication and journalism leaders—and the professional training of professionals in the field—have never been more important.

SoCJ will continue to seek to ensure that communication and journalism prosper and serve the public good by being a visionary thought leader, educator, advocate, and community builder; a robustly impactful voice about the role of communication and research in society; and a forceful advocate for the advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in communication, journalism, and media.





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