

Proposal to Form a New Department of Journalism School of Communication & Journalism

The journalism faculty in the School of Communication and Journalism respectfully submit this proposal to establish a new Department of Journalism within the School. All tenure-stream faculty members and the SoCJ's two IDEA fellows who will transition to tenure-track next academic year voted in support of the establishment of two departments within the School: a Department of Journalism and a Department of Communication, both to remain housed in the School of Communication and Journalism. There is a separate proposal to support the establishment of a Department of Communication.

Developing departments with dedicated chairs enables a more focused, specialized approach to education, research, and community engagement, better preparing students and supporting faculty in achieving excellence in their respective fields.

1. The need for the new unit, identification of the clients that it will serve, the way it will augment the University's offerings, and the way it will interact with existing academic units and programs.

The School of Communication and Journalism (SoCJ) has experienced significant growth in academic programs, enrollment, and research funding. This growth necessitates the creation of distinct departments to better serve the needs of students and faculty. We propose establishing a new Department of Journalism within the School of Communication and Journalism, which was renamed with Senate and SBU leadership approval in 2021 to reflect the growth of new communication and mass communication curriculum in the School. As was the case in 2021, the SoCJ remains deeply committed to supporting communication and journalism. Journalism was originally the only discipline in the SoCJ. This proposal builds on the groundwork we have established over the past years to build a full-fledged, dynamic SoCJ, which has since taken significant strides toward building a stronger research enterprise, growing five new academic degree programs, and drawing competitive students and faculty to the institution.

Serving students effectively: Its high-quality degree programs include the B.A. in Journalism and the M.S. in Journalism. A hallmark of the M.S. is its focus on solutions journalism, a type of reporting that focuses on responses to social issues rather than solely highlighting the problems. Solutions journalism involves investigating and reporting on how people, communities, or organizations are addressing challenges, analyzing the effectiveness of their efforts, and exploring the lessons learned. Faculty are committed to this focus, with some already gaining special accreditation to teach this framework under the Solutions Journalism Network. All undergraduate students receive exposure to solutions journalism in the curriculum. Founded in 2006, the journalism program has served students and paved the pathway for their success both working in journalism and other media careers and moving into a wide range of graduate degree programs.

The B.A. in Journalism is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) and the M.S. in Journalism was designed for accreditation and will undergo review when the School is next considered for reaccreditation. The department also offers a minor in journalism and shares in offering courses in the B.S. in Mass Communication, which would be managed by the Department of Communication.

The SoCJ was granted re-accreditation in 2021. Hallmarks of excellence for the journalism programs include our hands-on learning and digital media focus that is paired with an emphasis on writing and reporting grounded in journalistic ethics and credibility. Our students gain practical skills in video, audio, and online journalism, preparing them for the rapidly evolving media landscape. They also engage in interdisciplinary learning, which allows them to combine journalism with areas such as science, health, or public policy. This flexibility enables them to develop expertise in specific fields, which is especially

valuable in specialized reporting. For example, the journalism programs currently train meteorology students enrolled in SoMAS programs, preparing them for careers as on-air weathercasters. Given the SoCJ's relationship with the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science, our curriculum includes courses in science and health reporting. Addressing the challenges of misinformation, credibility, and transparency are central to what students learn in classrooms and internships. Our proximity to NYC enables students access to internships, networking opportunities, and connections in one of the largest media markets in the world. This proximity offers valuable professional experiences and exposure to industry leaders.

The Journalism degree programs benefit from two additional centers housed in the SoCJ: The Center for News Literacy, which was founded in 2007, is dedicated to educating the public, students, and future journalists on how to critically evaluate news and information. All undergraduate journalism and mass communication majors are required to take a course in News Literacy. Over 11,000 students from a variety of disciplines across the university have completed the course. The Marie Colvin Center for International Reporting advances the field of international journalism and honors the legacy of Marie Colvin, a renowned war correspondent and journalist. With its focus on equipping students with the skills and insights needed to report on global issues and conflicts, the Colvin Center emphasizes the importance of covering underreported stories and brings attention to human rights issues, social justice, and humanitarian crises around the world. The Colvin Center collaborates with media organizations, NGOs, and universities to foster a network of resources and opportunities for students interested in global reporting. This network provides students with a pathway to careers in international journalism. Students can also participate in a unique international reporting program, Journalism Without Walls, that brings them to different locations across the globe.

Supporting faculty growth: Faculty in the Department of Journalism come from a range of backgrounds, some holding PhDs and others coming to the School with extensive years of experience working in journalism. The formation of a Department of Journalism will enable us to better attract and support top talent, both faculty and students, strengthening SBU's academic reputation. Having a stand-alone Department of Journalism will give journalism faculty a clearer identity and focus within the broader School of Communication and Journalism. This distinction could attract more prospective students interested specifically in journalism to work with these faculty, helping to grow the program. The establishment of a Department would also help faculty secure resources specific to their work as journalism scholars and practitioners, especially with regard to philanthropic funding.

Establishing departments with chairs within the SoCJ is important in a number of ways. The chair will provide essential leadership, advocacy, and administrative support to ensure the success of faculty and students alike. As a School that has been run by a dean, the lack of a chair has created challenges for governance, putting the dean and faculty in the challenging position of navigating decision-making with a key layer of governance missing. On a regular basis the SoCJ experiences numerous challenges in how it manages issues such as resource allocation, oversight of curriculum and academic standards, conflict resolution, and operational and administrative management. The introduction of departments with chairs is a critical next step for this growing School. Of particular concern is the lack of leadership at the chair level to oversee faculty development, hiring, tenure, and promotion processes. The mentoring of junior faculty, and facilitation of their professional growth is critical to a positive, productive environment that encourages faculty success, collaboration, and retention. In particular, the Department of Journalism requires a chair who shares the journalism faculty's background, experience and needs to help them grow and expand their offerings and enrich their work.

The broader university community will benefit from the establishment of this department. As a large and growing AAU public institution, creating a stand-alone Department of Journalism is important to SBU in the following ways:

- **Journalism is critical to democracy:** At a time when mis- and disinformation threaten the very tenets of democracy, having a strong, focused Department of Journalism committed to advancing excellence in journalistic scholarship and practice is of paramount importance. As an institution and an industry, journalism is under considerable stress and facing significant challenges. It is more important than ever to bring scholarship to the table as we reimagine and rebuild the field. By educating students in ethical, accurate, and impactful reporting, the Department of Journalism contributes to building public trust in media and equips graduates to provide fair and reliable information, becoming ambassadors for high-quality journalism and reflecting positively on Stony Brook.
- **Enhancing Stony Brook's reputation:** Forming a Department of Journalism would sharpen Stony Brook's identity as a place for serious journalism education. This focused structure would help attract high-quality students, faculty, and external partners, distinguishing Stony Brook as a leader in journalism, especially with strengths in science and solutions journalism. Our innovative journalism approach that tackles societal challenges and communicates complex topics clearly positions Stony Brook as a model for journalism programs focused on social impact.
- **Increased Community Engagement and Public Impact:** A Journalism Department could lead initiatives in news literacy, public education, and community journalism. This would strengthen Stony Brook's relationship with the surrounding community and fulfill a public service mission by promoting media literacy, civic engagement, and reliable journalism.
- **Better Student Preparedness and Career Support:** In a dedicated department, journalism students would benefit from more tailored resources, internships, and industry connections, leading to better career preparedness. Faculty would have more flexibility to integrate emerging topics, such as digital storytelling, AI in media, and social media reporting, giving students skills that are relevant in today's media landscape. This will also strengthen our partnerships with media organizations, offering students access to internships, mentorships, and professional networks.

The department will maintain intellectual exchange and collaboration with the Department of Communication. It will contribute core coursework to the shared mass communication degree and other curricular overlaps.

The department will actively participate in University-wide committees and initiatives, contributing to the overall academic mission.

2. The curriculum or mission of the new unit.

The Department of Journalism at Stony Brook University will advance the broader mission of the School of Communication and Journalism, which aims to create a fairer, more just, more rational world through engaging, ethical communication and media. The SoCJ educates the next generations of communication, journalism and media leaders, practitioners, scholars and professionals.

The Department of Journalism is dedicated to advancing the field of journalism through excellence in teaching and scholarship in the field of journalism. Our academic programs equip students with the investigative, analytical, and production skills – refining both their critical and affirmative capacities – along with a strong ethical foundation, necessary to excel in today's rapidly evolving media landscape. We prepare our graduates to navigate and shape complex information environments, empowering them to report truthfully, foster public understanding, and inspire positive change at both local and global levels. The Department of Journalism helps students build capacity in investigative journalism, science and health reporting, digital media, solutions journalism, and international reporting, with a focus on equipping students to meet the demands of contemporary, impactful storytelling.

As described above, the Department will serve as the primary administrative home for the following curriculum:

One undergraduate Bachelor's degree program, one minor, and one Master's degree program:

1. B.A. in Journalism (current enrollment: 124)
2. Minor in Journalism (current enrollment: 52)
3. M.S. in Journalism (current enrollment: 11)

3. The resources needed for the unit personnel, budget, special equipment, space, etc.

We intend to grow the capacity for this new department gradually over the coming years in sync with the size and scope of the department. As the new degree programs we have initiated mature, they will attract more students, and we will generate more credit hours. Already, the programs are producing more student credit hours and enrollments in degree programs, while research productivity has also increased. Dean Lindenfeld is working with the Provost's office to identify funds to support an internal interim chair until resources are available to conduct an external chair search.

Over the coming years as it grows, the department will require new staff positions. The department will initially draw on staff from the Dean's office until sufficient resources are available to support new staff. The department is also willing to cost-share staff with the Department of Communication. Current staff capacity is able to serve the needs of this new department. and Dean Lindenfeld has voiced her support for dedicating existing staff time to support some of the specific needs of the two new departments and leveraging the School's growth to invest in new staff as needs emerge.

Office and production space are sufficient for the Department of Journalism. Space is generally an issue for the SoCJ, and Dean Lindenfeld is working with Provost Lejuez to create new office space on the 4th floor of the library to accommodate our current needs. Because Journalism is the older unit in the SoCJ, tenure stream faculty currently all have appropriate offices. We regularly make updates to our studio and newsroom, which are primarily used by the Journalism faculty and students. We have been successful in fundraising to support updates to the production space and equipment and are committed to maintaining this as a priority.

4. The resources available or anticipated for support of the unit.

The School is generating a significantly higher amount of student credit hours than it has in the past, and our master's programs have grown and will continue to grow. These revenues will support the unit's growth and it will make investments sequentially according to its growth. The Dean actively fundraises with her Director of Development and has prioritized procuring support for faculty and students in her fundraising efforts.

5. An assessment of existing library resources and a statement verifying the adequacy of these resources for the proposed unit.

Dept. of Journalism Support:

The Stony Brook University Libraries' holdings include more than 2 million items across six library locations. The University Libraries employ a team-based collection development and instruction model whereby a team of librarians work with academic departments to identify resources to support research and teaching as well as providing instruction and reference service. The libraries Social Sciences Team considers interdisciplinary and meta-level collection strategy decisions and practices. This affords the Libraries opportunities to understand and accommodate changing collection needs. The Social Sciences team also has dedicated librarians assigned to the Department who support the faculty in their teaching and research. The Libraries provide research consultations both in-person and online and instruction sessions in information literacy, data literacy and critical research skills. Additionally, workshops and other specialized sessions tailored to assignments and/or particular research databases are offered throughout the semester. Asynchronous learning objects such as Libguides are created to support students and faculty providing curated lists of resources and research tips at the point of need. An institutional repository, Academic Commons, and a data repository, Dryad, are also provided to support the research needs of the Department.

Collections – Databases: The Library currently subscribes to over 500 electronic databases across a variety of disciplines which are available 24/7 to anyone with a NetID and password. Subscriptions are maintained for Interdisciplinary databases with broad coverage such as Academic Search Complete, Proquest Basic, and Gale OneFile. A wide range of specialized databases cover all the disciplinary areas of the University including those that support journalism research such as AP Stylebook, Nexis Uni, U.S. Major Dailies, 60 Minutes and, an institutional subscription to the New York Times app. Additional individual journal subscriptions are held with core titles such as, *Journalism Practice*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, and *Media Culture and Society*. The University Libraries are part of several consortia to expand access and provides interlibrary loan services to obtain articles which may not be immediately accessible through the library's holdings.

6. Schedule for phasing-in of the unit, a description of the unit's ultimate order of magnitude, and the information specified in section IIA above.

We anticipate launching the new Department of Journalism in fall 2025. We believe that the Department of Journalism is likely to grow modestly. The demand for communication degree programs and coursework will be higher. The SoCJ community is committed to ensuring that our journalism degree programs and scholarship remains strong. As with many communication and journalism schools across the country, the student credit hours and enrollments generated by communication programs can help to underwrite and support our enduring commitment to journalism as a field. Supporting excellence in journalism while growing our new communication degree programs and research is a core value for the SoCJ.