

**Cathy Hughes School of Communications**  
**Assessment Plan**  
**2019-2024**

The assessment process is a tool for program planning, policy development, quality improvement and accountability reporting. Assessment involves setting appropriate expectations for learning quality, systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting data to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards. Assessment findings are explicit and made public.

**Strategic Plan 2020-2024**

For more than 50 years, the Cathy Hughes School of Communications has served as a leader producing the largest number of African American graduates in communications and media. Since our founding in 1971, we have promoted excellence in teaching, learning, research and cultural activities. The school is the third largest of the university's 14 schools and colleges and has trained communication and media professionals in premier programs such as public relations, journalism, film, audio production, organizational communication, speech-language pathology and graduate programs. The goals and priorities set in the five-year strategic plan lay the foundation for our future.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Cathy Hughes School of Communications is to prepare graduates to exercise global leadership within and across diverse communities, locally, nationally and globally through communication research, professional practice, innovation, job creation, social justice and service via cutting-edge knowledge, skills and technology.

The mission is aligned with the mission of Howard University. It is a mission founded and grounded in ethics, academic freedom, the disciplined and rigorous pursuit of knowledge, a commitment to social advocacy and social justice, and a responsibility for leadership in the complex and multifaceted field of communications, as both academicians and professional practitioners.

**Vision Statement**

The School is multidisciplinary, committed to being an academic, applied professional and research program of the first rank. We prepare students for leadership in a changing, technology-driven and communication-focused society. We seek to establish and maintain institutional linkages both nationally and internationally which extend and strengthen the visibility and impact of the School across the professional and academic community. Consistent with the historical and steadfast mission of Howard University, the School acts to promote liberation from social justice, including systemic racism in the United States and abroad.

**Core Values**

In addition to the core values embraced by the University, the Cathy Hughes School of Communications is committed to excellence in all aspects of our professional and academic life. Both in principle and in practice, we are committed to respect for and elevation of the inherent dignity of all human beings. In this regard, we value and commit ourselves to a life of human service and to maintenance of the highest ideals of ethical integrity.

## Goals

The committee aligned CHSOC goals and strategic plans with Howard Forward (2019-2024) Strategic Plan and five Strategic Pillars

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Teaching Engagement:</b> Increase the focus on faculty-on-faculty development in teaching. Identify and collect information on CETLA and other professional development at yearly evaluations. Pillar 1, Enhance Academic Excellence
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention:</b> Create a dynamic environment of learning and growing, internships, field study and experiential learning to support student involvement and matriculation. Provide academic advising and programs to support enrollment growth and retention.
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Social Justice/Advocacy:</b> Encourages students and faculty to lead in ensuring social justice and in advocating for our communities; from gentrification and policy research to voter registration, and juvenile justice with communication disorders we remain supportive of community outreach. This goal aligns with Howard Forward’s Pillar 3, Serve The Community
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Faculty Research and Extramural Funding:</b> Increase the focus on faculty research through intramural and extramural grants and foundation funding. Promote efforts to seek new revenue streams by pursuit of grant, foundation funding, and contracts to support research and program needs. Pillar 2, Inspire New Knowledge
<b>Goal 5</b>	<b>Grants and Fundraising:</b> School adopted the university’s Strategic Pillar 5, Achieve Financial Sustainability in the <i>Howard Forward 2019-2024 Strategic Plan</i> . Its formal adoption serves as a sustaining commitment for the School in general as well as all four departments. Its adoption will ensure continuing efforts of the school and the departments to initiate and sustain fundraising activities that benefit the school, departmental programs, and students.
<b>Goal 6</b>	<b>CHSOC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:</b> The school’s 50 <sup>th</sup> “Golden” Anniversary will be in 2021. Develop a core Dean’s Anniversary Committee to coordinate efforts to reach alumni to become Alumni Ambassadors as well as engage them in joining efforts to plan, fundraise, and promote the school for years to come.
<b>Goal 7</b>	<b>New Building.</b> Continue work with senior administration for plans to relocate the school in a different facility in conjunction with the long-term plan to formalize a process for a new building for the school, which may include partnership or alliance with other schools, colleges or units. Support CHSOC Board of Visitors, outreach to all internal and external constituents, and fundraising initiatives for the building. Pillar 4, Improve Efficiency & Effectiveness

## CHSOC 16 Core Learning Outcomes

The School of Communications adopted 16 learning outcomes which reflect the University’s learning outcomes for General Education (HUGE) and are aligned with the values and competencies of the ACEJMC accrediting council. The goal is to graduate students with mastery of the values and competencies and be able to:

1. Understand and apply the First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice;

2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity of groups in a global society in relation to communications;
4. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use of presentations of images and information;
5. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
6. Think critically, creatively and independently;
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by method appropriate to the communications profession in which they will work;
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communication professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate styles and grammatical correctness;
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work;
12. Understand and demonstrate the ethical use of digital communication;
13. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship;
14. Demonstrate an awareness of hearing, language and speech disorders, and other physical abilities and disabilities & their accommodations;
15. Apply the principles of effective oral /interpersonal communications in a variety of professional contexts;
16. Demonstrate media literacy with a critical understanding of messages in mediated communication.

These core values and competencies reside at three levels: **awareness**, familiarity with specific information and concepts; **understanding**, assimilation and comprehension of information and concepts; and **application**, competency in applying information, concepts and skills to the accomplishment of tasks.

### **Curriculum Mapping**

Faculty select one class they teach each semester to report on how their class assignment achieved one of 16 core learning outcomes. The school wide assessment committee have collecting data for 16 core learning outcomes for the academic years of fall 2017 through spring 2022. The preliminary findings show that CHSOC has done excellent job in meeting the core principle #8 (Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communication professions, audiences and purposes they serve), #15 (Apply the principles of effective oral /interpersonal communications in a variety of professional contexts), #6 (Think critically, creatively and independently), and #11 (Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work).

Departmental assessment committee also write preliminary reports. The reports include analyses on curriculum, instruction and student learning. Findings from the reports will be used to improve future student learning, instruction, co-curricular activities and curricula.

Syllabus template was revised to facilitate curriculum mapping and the reporting of 16 core learning outcomes. Core 16 data collection portal will be revamped based on the feedback received from faculty and the lessons learned from 2022 ACEJMC accreditation.

### **Assessment Tools/Measures**

Indirect and direct measures are used to assess student learning as defined by the 16 learning outcomes and competencies. The following School-wide measures include:

#### **I. Indirect Measures**

- Howard University Graduating Senior Survey (Annual)
- Student Competitions and Awards (Annual)
- Student Course Evaluations (Bi-annual)

#### **II. Direct Measures**

- Course assessments by all faculty (Bi-annual)
- Capstone Courses (Annual)
- Supervised Internship/Practicum Employer Survey (Annual)

### **Closing the Loop**

Other areas we review for assessing and examining curriculum include e-portfolio, course syllabi review, and departmental curriculum reviews.

### **Assessment Processes**

The student learning outcomes assessment is the means by which we determine the degree to which the stated objectives are achieved, and how effective we have been in achieving the same. The assessment plan establishes a process by which at regular periods, there would be a formal review of academic programs and support units. During the intervening years, a process of collecting, analyzing and publishing data will ensue with the goal of having departments and units review the data to identify progress, strengths, challenges, areas of improvement, recommendations and plans for enhancement of the services and delivery systems.

#### **I. Indirect Measures**

*Measure:* Howard University Graduating Student Exit Survey

*Outcomes Assessed:* This is an assessment of the University's General Education core values well as the overall experience of matriculation at the University.

*Target Population:* All undergraduates and graduate/professional students

*Process:* The Howard University Undergraduate Graduating Student Exit Survey is administered annually to prospective candidates for graduation enrolled in all undergraduate and graduate/professional programs. The University's Institutional Research and Assessment office (IRA) administers the survey in a web-based format.

The primary purpose of the survey is to obtain information about students' satisfaction with a range of academic and co-academic experiences during their matriculation and to inquire about their plans for the future. The results are disaggregated by school or college

and the information is used to determine levels of institutional effectiveness.

Timeline: Annual

Measure: Student Competitions and Awards

Outcome Assessed: CHSOC's competencies: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9

Target Population: All levels

Process: Faculty members encourage students to enter awards, conferences, and competitions. These awards are documented in the School's annual reports. This measure considers work submitted by students to film festivals, PRSSA, AAF, Emmy, Hearst, BEA, SPJ, NABJ Paul Robeson Awards, student showcases, graduation awards ceremonies, and other competitions.

Timeline: Annual

Measure: Student Course Evaluations

Outcomes Assessed: 1-16 and pedagogical effectiveness

Target Population: Students in CHSOC courses

Process: Starting in AY2019-2020, CHSOC partnered with the University's IRA office to conduct student evaluations each semester through a web-based format. The IRA send's several reminders to students until the evaluation period ends. The online survey measures Course Organization and Planning, Instruction and Technology, Faculty and Student Interaction, and Student Effort and Involvement, In addition, data on engagement with CHSOC 16 core competencies are collected in the survey. Responses are reported to departments for programmatic improvement and development. Prior to the current students' course evaluations system, the evaluations were conducted by the Dean's Office via a web-based portal.

Timeline: Bi-annual

## **II. Direct Measures**

Measure: Course Assessment Each Semester

Outcomes Assessed: 16 Core Competencies and their alignment with ACEJMC professional values and competencies

Target Population: CHSOC faculty

Process: CHSOC tracks course assessment of the 16 Core Competencies and their alignment with ACEJMC professional values and competencies through a digital platform in which faculty enter student learning outcomes data. Each semester, all faculty are required to select an assignment that will be used to assess one of the 16 core competencies. At the end of the semester faculty use the school's web portal to log the number of students who scored within the A-F grade categories. The web portal also allows faculty to enter additional course details.

Timeline: Bi-annual

Measure: Capstone Courses

Outcomes Assessed: 1-16, variable according to semester and course

Target Population: Graduating seniors

Process: Graduating seniors complete a capstone course typically during their senior year. The courses have been identified by the concentrations. There are six capstone courses that include: CapComm Lab (advertising/PR), News Lab (print/online), News Vision (broadcast journalism), Management Practicum (media management), Advanced TV Production (film/TV), and Audio Production (audio). The students are

required to complete a capstone project or assignment that is evaluated by the faculty using a rubric. The measure assesses awareness, understanding, and application of the School's core competencies such as outcomes 1, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 12 and alignment with ACEJMC values and competencies. Students must receive a grade of "C" or higher. A summary of the Capstone experience is submitted to the assessment committee.

Timeline: Annual

Measure: Internship Employer Survey

Outcomes Assessed: 3, 5, 6, 9, and 11

Target Population: Internship/Practicum Employers of Cathy Hughes School of Communications students

Process: An online survey is administered through the Office of Career Services to determine the level of student engagement of five of the 16 values and competencies of the School of Communications.

Timeline: Annually

(Adopted 2019; updated 2022)