Director
School of Journalism
College of Communication Arts and Sciences

Position Summary

The Director serves as the chief executive officer for the School, providing strategic, financial, and operational leadership in support of excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, student success, and professional and community engagement. The Director advances the School's role and visibility within a leading Research 1 public university, alongside worldclass journalism and digital storytelling faculty and exceptionally dedicated staff.

Central to this role is working in partnership with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external stakeholders to provide transparent and future-focused leadership that supports academic excellence, shared governance, and interdisciplinary collaboration, student success, and community impact. The Director is responsible for consistent communication, sound decision-making, equitable resource management, and responsiveness to the evolving journalism and media landscape.

The Director holds a tenured faculty appointment and reports to the Dean of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences.

This role offers the opportunity to direct a research and grant-active School of Journalism program that offers undergraduate degrees in both Journalism and Digital Storytelling, along with a cross-department Ph.D. degree in Information & Media.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership, Administration

- Provide strategic direction and vision for the School in alignment with MSU and College priorities, collaborating with faculty, staff, students, and college leadership to advance collective goals.
- Manage the School's budget and resources responsibly and strategically, including financial planning, personnel allocations, facilities, technology, and external funding oversight.
- Ensure compliance with university and college bylaws, policies, and accreditation standards.
- Foster a consistently respectful, inclusive, and safe environment that values differing perspectives, constructive dialogue, and shared governance.

- Foster consistent and open communication channels within the School to support informed decision-making and timely resolution of issues and concerns. Demonstrate willingness to listen, understand varying perspectives, and build consensus.

- Represent the School within the College, University, professional organizations, alumni communities, and external industry and community partnerships.

Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs

- Support the recruitment, retention, mentoring, and professional development of faculty and staff across all appointment types.
- Oversee personnel processes including reappointment, promotion, tenure, and advancement reviews in collaboration with college leadership and according to university policies and procedures.
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration and opportunities that advance emerging areas of journalism and professional practice.
- Encourage and recognize excellence and innovation in teaching, research, creative activity, professional practice, and service.
- Work proactively with the College's Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs and Human Resources leadership to address personnel matters thoughtfully, confidentially, and effectively.
- Model constructive conflict management and ensure workplace concerns are addressed in a timely, professional, and respectful manner.
- Conduct annual written performance reviews for direct reports that provide meaningful feedback, recognize accomplishments, and support professional growth.

Academic Affairs

- Provide leadership and oversight for undergraduate and graduate programs in journalism, media, and related fields.
- Collaborate with faculty to advance innovative, future-focused curricula responsive to changes in journalism, technology, media industries, and audience engagement.
- Promote academic rigor, experiential learning, cross-platform storytelling, community-engaged learning, and professional preparation.
- Support assessment, accreditation, and continuous improvement efforts to maintain high standards of academic quality and relevance of programs, centers, and student-facing initiatives.

Research and Creative Activity

- Support and advocate for high-quality research, creative scholarship, and professional journalism practice.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship across the college and university.
- Advocate for infrastructure, technology, and resources supporting scholarly productivity, innovation and professional dissemination.
- Encourage opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research, creative activity, and innovation initiatives.

Student Success and Engagement

- Foster a student-centered learning environment that promotes belonging, engagement, access, and academic success.
- Support equitable access to advising, mentoring, experiential learning opportunities, and career development resources.
- Partner with college and university offices to enhance recruitment, retention, and student success initiatives for a diverse student body.

Community and Professional Engagement

- Strengthen partnerships with media organizations, alumni, professional associations, and community stakeholders to advance the School's mission and strategic priorities.
- Support outreach and engagement activities consistent with the School's mission and the University's land-grant commitment, in collaboration with college advancement and external relations partners.
- Enhance the visibility, reputation and impact of the School's faculty, staff, students, and programs through strategic relationship-building, stewardship and external engagement.

Access, Opportunity, and Excellence

- Advance inclusive excellence in recruitment, teaching, research, and engagement.
- Partner with college and university units to foster equitable, respectful, and accessible learning and work environments.
- Ensure School's policies and practices reflect ethical journalism, integrity, social responsibility, and commitment to belonging.

Qualifications:

Required:

- Terminal degree (Ph.D.) in Journalism, Mass Communication, Media Studies, or a closely related field.
- Record of achievement commensurate with appointment as a tenured faculty member.
- Three years or more of demonstrated administrative or leadership experience in higher education.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in financial and operational management, including budget oversight, personnel management, and accreditation or program review processes. (e.g., ACEJMC).
- Strong interpersonal, organizational, and communication skills with demonstrated ability to build trust and work collaboratively across constituencies.
- Demonstrated understanding of contemporary journalism, storytelling, media production, media ethics, emerging technologies, and the evolving digital media environment as to elevate and support the School's research, teaching, outreach and service missions.
- Commitment to inclusive, transparent, and collaborative leadership.

Preferred:

- Experience leading organizational change and managing complex personnel or operational challenges.
- Experience developing relationships with industry, alumni, donors, and other external partners.
- Understanding of the mission of land-grant and R1 institutions and the public role of journalism in civic life.
- Professional experience in journalism or media industries.