

September 21, 2021


Chancellor Finis St. John
The University of Alabama System
500 University Boulevard East
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

Dear Chancellor St. John:

I am pleased to endorse the recommendations from Executive Vice President and Provost James Dalton and Deans Susan Carvalho of the Graduate School and Mark Nelson of the College of Communication and Information Sciences to submit to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) two concentrations (Sports Media and Community Journalism) as reasonable extensions of the existing Master of Arts in Journalism & Media Studies degree program and a concentration in Digital Communication as a reasonable extension of the existing Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations degree program. Formalizing the sequence of courses will allow students to receive recognition on their transcripts for their expertise in a concentration area. The formally recognized concentrations will make the M.A. programs more marketable to potential graduate students.

If you approve of these concentrations, I would appreciate you forwarding this request to the Board of Trustees at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Stuart R. Bell
President

c: Executive Vice President and Provost James Dalton
Dean Mark Nelson
Dean Susan Carvalho



September 21, 2021

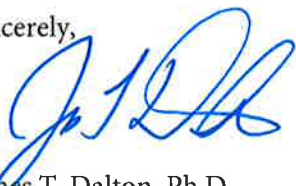
President Stuart R. Bell
The University of Alabama
203 Rose Administration
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487

Dear President Bell:

I am pleased to endorse the recommendation from Dean Susan Carvalho of the Graduate School and Dean Mark Nelson of the College of Communication and Information Sciences for the proposal of two concentrations (Community Journalism and Sports Media) in the existing Journalism & Media Studies M.A. degree program and a concentration in Digital Communication in the existing Advertising and Public Relations M.A. degree program. Formalizing the sequence of courses will allow students to receive recognition on their transcripts for their expertise in a concentration area. The formally recognized concentrations will make the M.A. programs more marketable to potential graduate students.

If you approve of these concentrations, I would appreciate you forwarding this request to Chancellor St. John for his approval.

Sincerely,



James T. Dalton, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Provost

Enclosure

c: Dean Susan Carvalho
Dean Mark Nelson

September 10, 2021

Dr. James Dalton
Provost, Office for Academic Affairs
The University of Alabama
Box 870114
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Dear Provost Dalton,

I write in support of proposals for three graduate concentrations in the College of Communication & Information Sciences: a Concentration in Sports Media and a Concentration in Community Journalism in the Master of Arts in Journalism & Media Studies (CIP 09.0499) degree and a Concentration in Digital Communication in the Master of Arts in Advertising & Public Relations (CIP 09.0903) degree.

The Sports Media and Community Journalism concentrations are anticipated to better position us to recruit top students nationally, which was an area noted as needing improvement in our last discipline specific accreditation (ACEJMC) report, and the Digital Communication concentration will attract a large, diverse group of individuals who have limited to no industry experience via in-demand online curricula in digital communication.

Each concentration builds on existing unique strengths of our college, including the Alabama Program in Sports Communication, the Digital Media Center, the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, and curricula that originated from a Knight Foundation grant focused on community journalism.

All three concentrations are fully supported by the faculty and leverage their existing expertise, thereby we are able to implement without the need for additional resources.

I recommend approval of these three concentrations without reservation.

Sincerely,



Mark D. Nelson, Ph.D.
Dean

September 8, 2021

Provost James Dalton
The University of Alabama
Office for Academic Affairs
254 Rose Administration Building
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Dear Provost Dalton:

I join Dean Mark Nelson in recommending the approval the attached proposal for concentration in the M.A. Degree in Journalism & Media Studies offered through the College of Communications & Information Sciences. The proposed concentration in Community Journalism (CIP: 09.0499) meets specific student and programmatic needs and will attract new graduate enrollments.

This concentration was recommended for approval by the Graduate Council of The University of Alabama at its meeting on September 1, 2021. We ask for timely handling of this item so that it may be considered at the November 2021 Board of Trustees meeting.

If you approve of this proposal, please forward this request to President Bell at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Carvalho
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

cc.: Dr. Andre Denham, Associate Dean, Graduate School

September 8, 2021

Provost James Dalton
The University of Alabama
Office for Academic Affairs
254 Rose Administration Building
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Dear Provost Dalton:

I join Dean Mark Nelson in recommending the approval the attached proposal for concentration in the M.A. Degree in Journalism & Media Studies offered through the College of Communications & Information Sciences. The proposed concentration in Sports Media (CIP: 09.0499) meets specific student and programmatic needs and will attract new graduate enrollments.

This concentration was recommended for approval by the Graduate Council of The University of Alabama at its meeting on September 1, 2021. We ask for timely handling of this item so that it may be considered at the November 2021 Board of Trustees meeting.

If you approve of this proposal, please forward this request to President Bell at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Carvalho
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

cc.: Dr. Andre Denham, Associate Dean, Graduate School

September 8, 2021

Provost James Dalton
The University of Alabama
Office for Academic Affairs
254 Rose Administration Building
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487


Dear Provost Dalton:

I join Dean Mark Nelson in recommending the approval the attached proposal for concentration in the M.A. Degree in Advertising and Public Relations offered through the College of Communications & Information Sciences. The proposed concentration in Digital Communication (CIP: 09.0903) meets specific student and programmatic needs and will attract new graduate enrollments.

This concentration was recommended for approval by the Graduate Council of The University of Alabama at its meeting on September 1, 2021. We ask for timely handling of this item so that it may be considered at the November 2021 Board of Trustees meeting.

If you approve of this proposal, please forward this request to President Bell at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Carvalho
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

cc.: Dr. Andre Denham, Associate Dean, Graduate School

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTRUCTION**

**Proposal Form for the Addition of an Option, Track, Specialization, or
Concentration, etc., to an Existing Program**

1. Institution: **The University of Alabama**
2. CIP Code, Program Title, and Degree Nomenclature of the existing program [see instructions below]:

CIP Code: 09.0499
Program Title: Journalism & Media Studies
Degree Nomenclature: M.A.

3. Name of the proposed extension: **Community Journalism**
4. **Fill in the table provided** with the following information:

Semester Hours in the General Education Curriculum (Certificate, Associate, and Baccalaureate Programs Only)	N/A
Semester Hours in the Program Core	16
Semester Hours in the Option, Concentration, Etc.	12
Semester Hours in other coursework (electives, supporting courses, etc.)	3
Total Semester Hours in the Program with the Proposed Extension/Alteration	31

5. List the courses in the **program core** with the number of semester hours for each:

JCM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
JCM 552: Journalism Theory and Research (3 credits)
 or MC 550 Research Methods
JCM 553 Making Media Innovation (3 credits)
 or MC 551 Seminar in Communication Theory
 or JCM 555 Entrepreneurial Journalism
JCM 563 History of Journalism and Media (3 credits)
JCM 562 Contemporary Issues (3 credits)
 or JCM 522 Science and Environment in Popular Media and Culture
 or JCM 520 Media Effects
 or MC 526 Race and Gender in Media
 or MC 546 Contemporary Issues in Sports Media
JCM 597 Comprehensive exams/master's project (3 hours)

Examples of elective classes could be any of the courses not taken above (e.g., JCM 522, JCM 520, MC 526, or any other JCM electives offered at the 500-level or above). Classes outside JCM/MC would need to be approved by the student's graduate advisor.

Community Journalism Concentration

6. List the courses in the proposed option, **concentration**, specialization, or track, etc., with the credit hours for each:

Students in this concentration must select JCM 552, JCM 553 or JCM 555 and JCM 562 in their program core and then complete the following 12 hours of coursework:

JCM 501: Media Production Tools (3 credits)

JCM 511: Depth Reporting (3 credits)

JCM 502: Producing Community Journalism (3 credits)

JCM 572: Seminar in Professional Journalism (3 credits)

7. What is the scope or effect of the proposed extension?
- a. How many of the major courses to be offered by the proposed extension are offered in the existing program?
- All of these courses are currently taught in a scheduled rotation.
- b. How will the proposed extension impact other public institutions?
- The concentration will not impact other public institutions given The University of Alabama is the only institution in the state offering a M.A. in Journalism & Media Studies. Further, we have been offering the program without a concentration designation for several years. Auburn University has an undergraduate journalism program and Troy has a communication undergraduate program. Students from both programs have been participants in our M.A. program, and we anticipate more students being recruited with the official concentration.**
- c. Will the proposed extension move the program listing to a new two-digit CIP category in the Commission's academic program inventory? **No**

8. What is the impact of the proposed change on the existing program or unit?
- a. What will be the budgetary impact of the proposed extension?
- No impact is expected.
- b. What changes in faculty and staff will be required to implement the proposed extension/alteration?
- No changes are anticipated.

9. If the extension will require additional resources, please provide a list of sources of funds available for the extension.

Community Journalism Concentration

No additional resources are necessary.

10. Please state the rationale for the extension/alteration.

This program was developed in 2006 as part of a grant with the Knight Foundation. After 14 years, the program, which is the only one in the nation, continues to prosper. It is an application-only program. This designation merely formally recognizes the program as a concentration.

The program has become sought after in recent years. Among the 20-21 cohort, only 50 percent were accepted. This designation will allow graduates to designate on their transcripts that they were accepted into this elite program.

In addition, this recognized concentration would allow JCM to recruit nationally for top students, which was an area noted as needing improvement in the ACEJMC re-accrediting report from 2015-16.

Signature of Institution's Authorized Representative

Date

Executive Vice President and Provost

Title

The University of Alabama

Institution

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTRUCTION**

**Proposal Form for the Addition of an Option, Track, Specialization, or
Concentration, etc., to an Existing Program**

1. Institution: **The University of Alabama**
2. CIP Code, Program Title, and Degree Nomenclature of the existing program [see instructions below]:

CIP Code: 09.0499
Program Title: Journalism & Media Studies
Degree Nomenclature: M.A.

3. Name of the proposed extension: **Sports Media**

4. **Fill in the table provided** with the following information:

Semester Hours in the General Education Curriculum (Certificate, Associate, and Baccalaureate Programs Only)	N/A
Semester Hours in the Program Core	16
Semester Hours in the Option, Concentration, Etc.	12
Semester Hours in other coursework (electives, supporting courses, etc.)	3
Total Semester Hours in the Program with the Proposed Extension/Alteration	31

5. List the courses in the program core with the number of semester hours for each:

JCM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
JCM 552: Journalism Theory and Research (3 credits)
or MC 550 Research Methods
JCM 553 Making Media Innovation (3 credits)
or MC 551 Seminar in Communication Theory
or JCM 555 Entrepreneurial Journalism
JCM 563 History of Journalism and Media (3 credits)
JCM 562 Contemporary Issues (3 credits)
or JCM 522 Science and Environment in Popular Media and Culture
or JCM 520 Media Effects
or MC 526 Race and Gender in Media
or MC 546 Contemporary Issues in Sports Media
JCM 597 Comprehensive exams/master's project (3 hours)

Examples of elective classes could be any of the courses not taken above (e.g., JCM 522, JCM 520, MC 526, or any other JCM electives offered at the 500-level or above). Classes outside JCM/MC would need to be approved by the student's graduate advisor.

6. List the courses in the proposed option, concentration, specialization, or track, etc., with the credit hours for each:

Sports Media Concentration

Students in this concentration must select MC 550, 551 and MC 546 in their program core and then complete the following 12 hours of coursework:

JCM 517 Advanced Sports Reporting (3)

MC 531 Sport communication and social media (to create with MC 431) (3)

MC 564 Sports media research (to create) (3)

JCM 535 Sports Documentary (to create with JCM 435) (3)

7. What is the scope or effect of the proposed extension?

- a. How many of the major courses to be offered by the proposed extension are offered in the existing program?

We have created four new graduate courses in support of the concentration. Two of them are new graduate versions of existing undergraduate courses – MC 546 (existing MC 446) and JCM 535 (existing JCM 435) that we plan to slash list, one is a new course at both the undergraduate and graduate levels – MC 431/MC 531 that we plan to slash list, and one is standalone new graduate course – MC 564. The new courses will provide a well-rounded look at sports media and its connection to social media and personal branding, along with scholarship in sports media and video documentary creation of sports-related media. With our recent hires in sports production and sports communication, the faculty expertise in the department is sufficient enough to support these courses with existing resources. All slash-listed classes will be taught by graduate faculty members and will have materials/assignments appropriate for the rigor of graduate work. AMP students will be advised as to complete the UG or GR versions as appropriate given they may not retake a 500-level version.

- b. How will the proposed extension impact other public institutions?

The concentration will not impact other public institutions given The University of Alabama is the only institution in the state offering a M.A. in Journalism & Media Studies. Both Auburn and the University of West Alabama have undergraduate programs in sports journalism/communication. We plan to recruit from those schools as well as from our own undergraduate program, which includes a sports media concentration.

- c. Will the proposed extension move the program listing to a new two-digit CIP category in the Commission's academic program inventory? No

8. What is the impact of the proposed change on the existing program or unit?

- a. What will be the budgetary impact of the proposed extension?

No impact is expected.

Sports Media Concentration

- b. What changes in faculty and staff will be required to implement the proposed extension/alteration?

No changes are anticipated.

- 9. If the extension will require additional resources, please provide a list of sources of funds available for the extension.

No additional resources are necessary.

- 10. Please state the rationale for the extension/alteration.

Our graduate program enrollment has increased significantly, with roughly 50 percent of our current Plan II students on campus expressing interest in sports media/journalism. JCM has roughly six faculty who teach in sports media and the unit houses the Alabama Program on Sport Communication. Further, our Endowed Professor Andrew Billings (the Reagan Chair of Broadcasting) is a top researcher in sports communication. Similarly, we have a top industry professional in Lars Anderson on the JCM faculty. Both have significant industry and research-based connections. JCM has also hired a sports media instructor to begin in Fall 2021.

Students currently interested in pursuing academic research in sports media will be able to take a prescribed sequence of courses that will (a) give them the training to work within the sports media field and (b) prepare them to make connections and find their niche within this field. Graduates with this concentration will be more marketable when pursuing positions after completing a formal, University-recognized course of study. The only academic competition among R1 schools would be Texas Tech University, which has a sports media M.A. degree.

Finally, this recognized concentration would allow JCM to recruit nationally for top students, which was an area noted as needing improvement in the ACEJMC re-accrediting report from 2015-16.

Signature of Institution's Authorized Representative Date

Executive Vice President and Provost

Title

The University of Alabama

Institution

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTRUCTION**

**Proposal Form for the Addition of an Option, Track, Specialization, or
Concentration, etc., to an Existing Program**

1. Institution: **The University of Alabama**
2. CIP Code, Program Title, and Degree Nomenclature of the existing program [see instructions below]:

CIP Code: 09.0903
 Program Title: Advertising and Public Relations
 Degree Nomenclature: M.A.

3. Name of the proposed extension: **Digital Communication**

4. **Fill in the table provided** with the following information:

Semester Hours in the General Education Curriculum (Certificate, Associate, and Baccalaureate Programs Only)	N/A
Semester Hours in the Program Core	15-18
Semester Hours in the Option, Concentration, Etc.	15
Semester Hours in other coursework (electives, supporting courses, etc.)	0
Total Semester Hours in the Program with the Proposed Extension/Alteration	30-33

5. List the courses in the **program core** with the number of semester hours for each:

APR 550: Analysis and Insights – 3 credit hours
 APR 551: Foundations of Integrated Communication – 3 credit hours
 APR 570: Ethics and Professional Responsibility – 3 credit hours
 APR 593: Global Communication Management – 3 credit hours
 APR 598: Industry Project – 3-6 credit hours

6. List the courses in the proposed option, **concentration**, specialization, or track, etc., with the credit hours for each:

Concentration in Digital Communication

APR 522	Media Strategy and Analytics	3
APR 541	Digital Communication Strategy	3
APR 542	Writing for Digital Comm	3
APR 543	Advanced Digital Marketing	3
APR 524 or	Reputation Comm Strategy	3
APR 525	Brand Communication Strategy	

7. What is the scope or effect of the proposed extension?

- a. How many of the major courses to be offered by the proposed extension are offered in the existing program?

The Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations is already offered online, and this concentration will be offered to distance learning students as an option along with the concentration in Marketing Communication Management. All of these courses are currently taught (or will be taught) in a scheduled rotation. The core classes are taught face-to-face every fall semester (APR 550, 551 and 570) or spring semester (APR 593). Online versions of these courses will be offered on a regular, rotating schedule to support this program. The department also offers the concentration courses during the regular academic year, though the specific term may vary between academic years. Also, while A+PR will need to create online versions of the newer courses, the department already offers many of these courses online.

- b. How will the proposed extension impact other public institutions?

No impact is expected on other public institutions.

- c. Will the proposed extension move the program listing to a new two-digit CIP category in the Commission's academic program inventory? **No**

8. What is the impact of the proposed change on the existing program or unit?

- a. What will be the budgetary impact of the proposed extension?

Costs for this program will be shared by the College of Continuing Studies and The Department of Advertising and Public Relations. The concentration will require developmental resources during course building and activation that will be provided by Continuing Studies, specifically regarding compensation for current faculty to produce online versions of the courses for the program. In addition, adjunct professors with relevant professional experience will be hired by A+PR to teach some of these courses. Advertising and Public Relations anticipates that 1-2 adjuncts will be used per semester to teach courses for this specialization.

- b. What changes in faculty and staff will be required to implement the proposed extension/alteration?

Implementing this concentration will not require any additions or reassignments among the current faculty or staff. Given this, it is noted that this concentration would greatly benefit from adjunct professors that have

Digital Communication Concentration

extensive experience in the field to teach selected courses within the core and concentration. In addition, recent faculty hires in A+PR that have been made independent from this proposal will provide sufficient faculty resources to support the program.

9. If the extension will require additional resources, please provide a list of sources of funds available for the extension.

Adjuncts that are hired to teach for this concentration will be paid from the revenue generated from the online program.

10. Please state the rationale for the extension/alteration.

As the field of advertising and public relations evolves during the digital age, it is more apparent that practitioners that specialize in managing social and digital media move beyond the tactical approach to creating content. There is a need for future professionals to understand the strategy behind producing content, communicating across the fragmented array of digital platforms that can be used to communicate with a diverse set of audiences on behalf of an organization.

As a direct complement to our concentration in Marketing Communication Management, which is designed for more advanced professionals, the concentration in Digital Communication is designed to provide recent graduate and younger professionals the expertise to manage digital communication for an organization. In addition, for our department, this program will also give us another opportunity to contribute to the growing demand for online education, and will benefit working professionals by providing a flexible, yet relevant, program for their development as industry leaders.

Signature of Institution's Authorized Representative

Date

Executive Vice President and Provost

Title

The University of Alabama

Institution