

**AEJMC: The Next 100 Years**  
**Moving Into Tomorrow**

Executive Summary

*Imagine AEJMC's possibilities...*

*It is summer 2012 .... AEJMC was founded 100 years ago ....*

- *Looking for a collaborator for a grant proposal, assistant professor Joe Research logged onto the Scholar-Link-Up section of the AEJMC website and posted his query. A day later he had five responders, one of whom looked perfect to help with the \$1 million project. To date, more than 50 scholars have been matched through the service.*
- *Senior scholar Maryanne Tenure met with four graduate students at the March AEJMC Northwest Regional Conference. Within an hour they had feedback on their research, and suggestions on possible publications for the work. In three other regions of the country, similar mentoring is taking place at AEJMC regional conferences.*
- *Approaching graduation, doctoral student M.C. Journal visited the AEJMC Job Network weekly. He applied online for several positions and set up three interviews for the August AEJMC Convention in New York City. The Job Network, featuring the latest position openings, is a members-only service that racks up half a million hits each month.*
- *AEJMC President Susan Leader testifies before a congressional panel about the Telecommunications Act of 2012. Thousands of Americans benefit from her insights about citizens' access to public information as her remarks are broadcast for weeks on C-SPAN.*

## **The Possibilities Begin Here**

It is summer 2008. How do we move forward to this imagined future with more year-round services, and greater input into the issues impacting the discipline? What will our members need in our next century? How will the changes in communication media change the way we educate students and deliver services to our members?

## The AEJMC Strategic Plan

AEJMC has spent 18 months exploring that future. More than 1,000 members have participated in the process, taking an online survey, writing reports from task forces and joining group discussions at meetings. It has been exciting and uplifting to hear the ideas and possibilities that will take AEJMC into its next century.

Together we have crafted a “living” plan of action that will be re-examined and assessed each year, continually refined to keep the association focused and relevant as the world and its needs change.

AEJMC has sought the common ground and values that will move it forward, and better serve the needs of members, the students we educate and the media we help staff. Five core themes have emerged from the deliberations, the survey and the analysis:

### Emerging Themes

1

#### We need a cohesive and relevant public voice.

AEJMC needs to lead at a time of change and uncertainty in our academic disciplines and in the media fields we study. We should innovate and influence other constituencies, and not simply follow their leads, by asserting our values in the social debates.

2

#### We need to debate and define our core values.

AEJMC needs to better understand and articulate the values we hold in common. AEJMC should reassess our vision and mission, and explore an association-wide discussion and development of our core values.

3

#### We need to respond to changes in the environment.

Because our society is changing and becoming more diverse, AEJMC needs to guide change and define standards in both universities and media industries, transformed by technology and new business practices.

4

#### We need to offer more member services, interaction and connection.

As AEJMC grows, the demands on our members also grow. AEJMC needs to expand services to its members beyond the convention, creating year-round services to meet needs.

5

#### We need to improve our partnerships with media industries.

As transition sweeps the field, AEJMC needs to assist media through the changes. AEJMC needs to find innovative ways to provide services to industry through partnerships that are mutually beneficial for media and our members.

## Strategic Directions

Using these five core themes, eight strategic directions were identified by members in the course of the 18-month envisioning process. If approved by the membership, these eight directions will form the foundation of the AEJMC strategic plan.



The organization needs to **Create Brand Awareness**, clearly articulating to itself and the rest of the world what AEJMC is and does. This process can lead to a needed influence in the academy and the industries into which our students and our research can move successfully. Tactics suggested include revising the mission and articulating and operationalizing the association's core values. It could include consideration of a name change to better communicate internally and externally, and the development of a variety of publicity and outreach tools.

Brand awareness is a key to **Building Academy and Industry Prestige**, Reputation and Influence. As a recognized leader, the association could consider conducting town hall meetings with peers, higher administration and professionals. It could create more media awards, including recognition for accomplishments in scholastic journalism. It could consider empowering the president to speak out on key communication issues, and relocating headquarters to both signal and facilitate interactions with major industry leaders.

To make change possible, AEJMC needs to **Develop Financial Strategies** in line with its long-term vision. Tactics could include hiring a fundraising staff, developing a plan for event fundraising, developing financial streams beyond dues and convention income, and building an endowment. AEJMC needs to generate income via year-round programs and could ask headquarters staff to explore cost saving methods like distributing publications online.

Similarly, to best use and showcase association strength, AEJMC might **Redefine its Internal Structure**. It may be time, given increasing pressures for convention slots and association resources, to consider an interests inventory to determine the best use of the division and interest group structure. It may be time to consider unifying the organization across divisions and interest groups, across industry interests and research methodologies. The association could develop additional ways to promote and reward members' leadership service. It may also be appropriate to re-examine and possibly increase Board membership.

Members are the strength of the organization, and AEJMC must **Develop its Membership Program** to more effectively recruit, retain and engage members at all levels, with particular attention to international and multicultural realities and opportunities. This could include membership drives to industry and the academy; development of new member tiers including undergraduate students; and establishment of member recruitment incentives. It could also include member services in the form of increased regional conventions.

Given the importance to the academy of building a knowledge base, AEJMC must contribute to developing the scholarship of its members and **Expand its Expertise**. Tactics could include developing a web network for scholars, creating an experts hotline and a central information database to enhance accessibility of research among scholars and industries, and finding a way to showcase research presented at conventions and regional conferences.

In support of the above, AEJMC must **Create an Innovative Scholarship Center**, which could entail establishing research incubators, the exchange of research training, and the creation of research fellowships, teaching fellowships, online mentoring, and interdisciplinary workshops

In seeking growth and influence, the association must **Engage Globally and Multiculturally**. It must signal by its own structure and activities the value of international and multicultural teaching, research and service. It must champion global free expression and deep democracy. It must intensify the global agenda through programming, publications, and member involvement. To further these ends it must more effectively tap governmental funding for international exchange and development.

Some of the potential tactics for realizing each of these eight directions may seem more radical than others, such as the possibility of a name change, divisional restructuring and headquarters relocation, which will require careful consideration. If adopted, they will involve a good deal of courage on the part of AEJMC members. Some tactics may amplify what is already being done, such as more media awards, more effective web usage and more regional conferences. All can exploit the considerable talent in the organization to make AEJMC *THE* influential source in the academy and the industry.

## **Continuing Member Involvement**

The robust discussions and research across the association in the past year yielded optimistic responses by members that envision a new, active AEJMC that will adapt and embrace growth and entrepreneurship in the next five years. The strategic directions include a clear call to action, which includes the need for AEJMC to reach into its second century with a plan for becoming not just a national, but a global leader with institutional and managerial structures that highlight the expertise of the organization.

Members will vote on the eight Strategic Directions during the AEJMC Business Meeting at 10 a.m. August 8 in Chicago. The association needs your presence at this important vote to determine the path to our future.

A positive vote endorsing these directions will initiate the next stages of strategic planning to reflect the organization's responsibility to embrace the opportunities of the future for a stronger public role combined with careful nurturing of internal goals for diversity, integrity and community.

The Board of Directors, working with the Implementation Committee (which was approved by the membership last year), will work together to create the specific goals, objectives and strategies for implementing the eight directions and develop benchmarks and a timetable for our work. AEJMC plans to implement the Strategic Plan by early 2009.

While the Implementation Committee will have specific duties to develop, monitor and adapt the plan to keep AEJMC responsive to internal and external changes, AEJMC members will remain a crucial part of the process. In the course of implementing Strategic Plan goals and objectives, any recommended structural or procedural changes within the association and how it operates will still need membership approval. The membership will continue to be involved in the work of the Strategic Plan.

*Imagine AEJMC's possibilities...*

- *A team of AEJMC leaders and members leaves for Mumbai to conduct an international workshop for AEJMC members on preparing journalists and public relations practitioners to offer better health care information in developing nations.*
- *The Ford Foundation-funded AEJMC Idea Institute will hold an interdisciplinary meeting of media industry leaders, journalism educators, government policy makers, international political scholars, and foundation representatives to share ideas on how media can provide better civic information in multiple media formats.*

**Help make them a reality...**

Download the full plan and supporting documents at:  
[http://aejmc.org/\\_strategicplan/index.php](http://aejmc.org/_strategicplan/index.php)