



Preface

From the moment I began to consider running for the AEJMC presidency, I've been focusing on what we might do to strengthen the relationship between media professionals and media educators. The two groups were facing similar challenges, especially in the arenas of economics (“doing more with less”) and technology (keeping up with an ever-quicken pace of change).

That was three years ago. By the time I actually assumed office in the fall of 2016, a third challenge had arisen: ideological (and practical) challenges to the very legitimacy of journalism.

I don't think there has ever been a time in which a symbiosis between educators and the professions was more urgently needed. Editors, directors and managers say they need our research to help them address current challenges. Educators say they need help from the professions in preparing their students for success in a protean media environment. Our educational institutions retain expectations of research and service that are not necessarily conducive to relevance or immediacy.

Our AEJMC mission is very much committed to this symbiosis. Included in the goals of the organization we see “the improvement of education in journalism and mass communication to the end of achieving better professional practice,” and “fostering scholarly research and inquiry in mass communication and facilitating the publication and distribution to the public of reports based on such activity.”

So last fall I assembled a Presidential Task Force, composed of experienced and thoughtful members, and asked them first to study the current relationship between the JMC academy and the media professions, and then to suggest how our organization can reach out to improve synergies. Their charge has been to develop strategies over the course of two years, beginning in Fall 2016. What you have on the following pages is a progress report after their first, highly productive year.

I wanted to release this progress report to the organization in order to elicit members' comments and suggestions as the Task Force readies its final report, due in the summer of 2018. Please enjoy these ideas, and please be in touch with the Task Force's co-chairs with your feedback.

Finally, I wish to thank the authors, the eight talented Task Force members, ably led by Co-Chairs Deb Aikat and Battinto Batts. I very much appreciate your work, both on this report and on what lies ahead in year two.

— Paul Voakes, 2016-17 President, AEJMC





Closing the Gap: Media, Research and the Profession

AEJMC Presidential Task Force Panel Session

1:30 to 3 p.m., Aug. 9, 2017

Moderating/Presiding:

Battinto Batts, Scripps Howard Foundation

Panelists:

Professional Partnerships, a Nationwide Look

Sonya Forte Duhé, Loyola University New Orleans, ASJMC President-elect

Encouraging and Incentivizing Professional Relevance in Academic Research

Jake Batsell, Southern Methodist

Forging Partnerships between AEJMC and Professional Organizations

Sue Burzynski Bullard, Nebraska-Lincoln

Collaborations with Industry to Provide Academics Access and Insights to Workplace Changes

Nancy L. Green, Southern Newspaper Publishers Association

Ways to Solicit Ideas on Research and Teaching

Vicki Krueger, Poynter

Inviting Professionals to Share Insights to Better Inform Academics of Current Issues and Trends

Paul Parsons, Elon University

Reimagining Interactive Digital Works to Publish New Modes of Inquiry and Establish a Major Publishing Presence in Our Field

Deb Aikat, North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Seeking Research Relevance and Building Bridges to the Profession

Paul Voakes, AEJMC President, Colorado-Boulder

30 Years of the C-SPAN Video Library

Howard Mortman, C-SPAN

Enhancing Content and Product Innovation with Analytics and Data Storytelling

Eric Duell, The E.W. Scripps Company

Ways to Bridge the Gap between the Media Industry and Academia

Monica Davey, New York Times

Understanding which platforms work to serve your audience: mobile, print, social and video

Carolyn Fox, NOLA.com & *The Times-Picayune*

The AEJMC conference theme “Closing the Gap: Media, Research and the Profession” seeks to address industry innovations and a widening divide between media educators and professionals. Professionals no longer need some of the skills taught in our classes, and, too often, research conducted by educators is no longer relevant to a rapidly evolving industry.

In October 2016, AEJMC President Paul Voakes created the AEJMC Presidential Task Force on Bridges to the Profession to develop ideas to bridge the gap between the media industry and academia. Read task force report and recommendations on the AEJMC website.

This task force session will engage conference attendees in an interactive open forum to manifest the 2017 conference theme “Closing the Gap: Media, Research and the Profession.” Our goal for this session is a fast-paced, informed and participatory discussion. Panelists will offer brief remarks, then address issues suggested by attendees.

If you have suggestions for issues or ideas that we might discuss, please email them to Task Force Co-Chair Deb Aikat (da@unc.edu), North Carolina-Chapel Hill, with the email subject line “2017 Bridges.” The agenda for this interactive session will be based on issues and ideas raised by AEJMC members like you.





Let's Leverage Our Strengths to Foster Stronger Ties between Media Professionals and Educators

Our 100th conference this year in Chicago, the birthplace of AEJMC, signifies AEJMC's rise as a singularly collegial, interdisciplinary organization fostering education, research and professional freedom. AEJMC's rich heritage dates back to November 30, 1912, when a motivated group of journalism educators and professionals convened at Chicago's erstwhile Sherman House Hotel.

In our commitment to sustain AEJMC's rich heritage, the AEJMC 2017 conference theme "Closing the Gap: Media, Research and the Profession" seeks to address industry innovations and a widening divide between media educators and professionals.

The AEJMC Presidential Task Force on Bridges to the Professions has developed ideas to foster closer ties between the media industry and academia. Our 10-member task force represents a thoughtful collaboration of intellectual strengths of leading administrators, innovative researchers and dedicated teachers. We interacted for eight months to carefully consider and propose important recommendations for approval and action by the AEJMC Board of Directors (BoD).

We request the AEJMC BoD to approve recommendations 1 through 4 and share feedback on recommendations 5 through 8. To that end, our initial recommendations represent a work in progress, not a final report. Our task force will complete a final report by May 2018, in time for the AEJMC conference (August 6-9, 2018) in Washington, D.C.

We urge AEJMC to leverage its strengths to foster stronger ties between media professionals and educators. From a personal perspective, I know the power of such ties. I was awarded a 2015 Scripps Howard Foundation Research Grant that enabled me to appreciate the potential of AEJMC's research to forge better collaboration between the media industry and academe.

Please share your critique. We are deeply committed to incorporating your feedback. We wish to enrich our work based on insights and ideas from AEJMC members like you.

Deb Aikat, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Co-Chair, AEJMC Presidential Task Force on Bridges to the Professions, 2016-2018