



**Initial Recommendations and Priority Areas from the
AEJMC Presidential Task Force on Bridges to the Professions**

We request the AEJMC Board of Directors to approve recommendations 1 through 4 and share feedback on recommendations 5 through 8. 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.



Task Force Recommendations and Priority Areas

We request that the AEJMC Board of Directors approve **recommendations 1 through 4**, as outlined below:

1. Conduct a nationwide survey of mass communication programs and media professionals on the state of partnerships.

While members of the task force recognize existing partnerships between media professionals and academicians in journalism and mass communication programs, this survey will provide a scientific look at what is happening across the country and what both academicians and professionals believe are most beneficial. This survey should also help to identify best practices and recommendations.

- Develop survey instrument (completed May 2017).
- Conduct survey with academicians using ASJMC membership (completed June 2017).
- Conduct survey with potential professional organizations including:
 1. RTDNA
 2. ASNE
 3. APME
 4. AAF
 5. PRSA
- Analyze results.
- Determine next steps to close the gap.
- Develop report on state of partnerships, challenges, opportunities, best practices and recommendations.

2. Establish an AEJMC Research Prize for Professional Relevance.

This annual prize will recognize the top AEJMC conference paper for "clarity and insight to emerging media industry practices, cultures and business imperatives." The prize, with a cash award of at least \$1,000 as well as a trophy or plaque, will be presented to the first winner(s) at the 2018 AEJMC Conference in Washington, D.C.

- Unlike other paper competitions that award first, second and third prizes, there will be only one Research Prize for Professional Relevance awarded each year.
- Accepted AEJMC conference papers with researched themes of timely importance to the media industry are automatically eligible to be reviewed by a select committee including both conference peer reviewers and members of the AEJMC Council of Affiliates.
- The award will be administered via the normal AEJMC paper submission process. Divisions, commissions and interest groups will complete their own review process as usual and then forward their most promising papers pertaining to professional relevance to the select committee for a separate review process. The chair of the prize committee will work closely with the Council of Divisions and AEJMC staff to coordinate this process.
- To be eligible for this award, authors are particularly encouraged to structure their paper around fieldwork, participant observation, ethnography and other interpersonal research methodologies. Quantitative and theoretically driven methodologies also may be considered, but ultimately must produce accessible conclusions that are meaningful for both academic and professional audiences.
- Academic jargon should be kept to a minimum. The abstract, introduction and conclusion should clearly describe how the paper's research and findings apply to the profession and/or the classroom.

3. Create a professional advisory committee to solicit ideas on research and teaching.

In a turbulent media environment full of questions, the need for answers has never been greater. We propose a strategic approach to identify, quantify and clarify the ideas that hold promise for the future of media and journalism.

- Use the existing Council of Affiliates to form an active advisory committee (a subcommittee of the larger council) to specifically advise the AEJMC president and board on applied research and teaching.
- Hold quarterly meetings with the advisory committee, which would provide the AEJMC president a direct liaison with industry representatives.
- Use the advisory committee to conduct regular surveys of professional affiliates on research and teaching ideas.
- Present recommendations and ideas for conference and other programming relevant to the industry to the AEJMC president and board through the Council of Affiliates representative on the AEJMC Board.
- Consider forming a new professional/academic group similar to the former NAA Foundation/AEJMC Cooperative Committee on Newspaper Education. It would consist of representatives of the News Media Alliance (formerly Newspaper Association of America) and representatives of various AEJMC disciplines. The group would work jointly on new initiatives (scholarships, internships, training etc.) and report to both the News Media Alliance and AEJMC at the national conventions.

4. Increase partnerships between AEJMC and professional organizations in a variety of ways.

The rapidly changing media environment demands close ties between the industry and the academy. We propose making partnerships between industry groups and AEJMC more visible and more formal.

- Partner with The Poynter Institute on a column, webinar or web channel devoted to academic research applicable to professionals.
- Ask AEJMC members who also belong to professional organizations to act as liaisons between academia and the professions by attending professional conferences and sharing what they've learned with other AEJMC members through panel presentations or written reports. Start with collaborations on a test basis, perhaps with members who belong to Council of Affiliate organizations.

Other possible partnership steps:

- Survey AEJMC members to determine who and how many are currently members of targeted professional organizations.
- Explore the possibility of adding an AEJMC member to every professional media organization board as a full member, ex-officio member, or at least a relevant committee member. The idea would be to strengthen AEJMC/professional partnerships. The AEJMC member would gain a better sense of industry concerns, trends and issues and be able to translate that into action or programming at AEJMC. The member also could share AEJMC's focus for a particular year with the professional groups. This is already being done in some organizations. ACES: The Society for Editing has at least one AEJMC member on its elected board. RTNDA has an AEJMC member as an ex-officio member of its board. Recommend serving at least 2- to 3-year terms.
- Look for ways to help with funding travel for AEJMC members who serve as liaisons with professional organizations. Talk to professional organizations about waiving conference registration free for the AEJMC designate.
- Create a more formal method for academics involved in professional organizations to share what they've heard or learned with other AEJMC members.