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## CU exploring 'school of information'

Journalism school merger would address evolution of media

By Brittany Anas Camera Staff Writer  
Posted: 10/08/2009 10:48:25 PM MDT

The University of Colorado is exploring whether it should merge its journalism school with other disciplines to create a broader "school of information," a shift that could address the evolution of media.

Interim Provost Stein Sture has appointed a panel to investigate the benefits of such a school.

The restructured college would combine the School of Journalism and Mass Communication with the Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society Institute, the telecommunication program and computer science department. Other schools, institutes and programs may also be considered, and a range of disciplines is represented on the task force.

"We see opportunities as classical journalism -- in terms of print media -- is going through a turbulent period," Sture said. "We want to align ourselves to the current, national trends and make sure that students are prepared to get good jobs."

More than 25 schools of information, existing under various names, have been created at comparable universities across the country, according to a preliminary report.

ATLAS spokesman Bruce Henderson said the new association makes sense as journalism changes, and as content becomes more digital.

"It's especially important now that many newspapers are closing and news organizations in general are facing tough times," he said. "Without reporters, how are we going to get our news?"

The task force, and a new information school, could help address that large-scale question, Henderson said.

ATLAS and the journalism school already have a strong relationship, and he said he favors a more formal one. Journalism students take ATLAS classes more than students from any other major, Henderson said.

"As a journalism professor for almost 10 years, I was very involved with ATLAS right from the beginning," Henderson said. "Even in the early nineties, it was obvious that the Web was going to change forever the way we communicate and get our news."

The task force is led by journalism school Dean Paul Voakes and ATLAS Director John Bennett. The panel will deliver a set of recommendations by April 15. The report will then be reviewed by the deans before the chancellor and provost make a final decision.

Even amid the shaky journalism industry, the CU school is seeing an increase in applications, according to Voakes. Last spring, 305 students applied to the journalism school, up 11 percent from the previous year. There was a slight uptick in students applying this fall, too.

Voakes said journalism schools and professionals are witnessing the traditional model of journalism explode, and watching anxiously for new technologies that could help salvage mass communication.

"I don't want to be among the hand wringers," Voakes said.

CU is positioned to become a leader in a new brand of media education, he said.

Lauren Adams, a senior broadcast news major, said she has taken courses for her major in a high-tech studio inside the ATLAS building. The technologies and skills she's learned have prepared her for her internships with Warren Miller Entertainment and Studio Four Productions, she said.

She favors the idea of merging the journalism school with ATLAS and other disciplines.

"I think it would be good for the journalism school because some of its technologies need to be updated," she said. "All of the classes I've had in the ATLAS building have been helpful and up-to-date."



University of Colorado junior Jacob Elyachar, left, performs in front of a camera operated by junior Allie Nunes during a rehearsal for their final project Thursday at the production studio in the ATLAS building. The rehearsal was part of the Television Production I class offered by the journalism school. ( JEREMY PAPASSO )



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