



PRELIMINARY
SCHEDULE

#ASJMC26

ASJMC CONFERENCE

**MARCH
18-19, 2026**

CHICAGO, IL

InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile

**STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS
IN A TIME OF CHALLENGE**



ASJMC Conference • March 18-19, 2026

Strengthening Connections in a Time of Challenge

Wednesday, March 18

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM [11th Floor | Halas Room]
Executive Committee Meeting

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM [11th Floor | Roosevelt Room]
IDL Session

1:00 PM to 6:00 PM [11th Floor Foyer]
Registration

- Conference Begins -

5:00 PM to 6:30 PM [11th Floor | Hemingway Room]
Opening Keynote: AI Essentials for Educators: The Useful, The Inspirational, The Lurking Threats

Moderating:

Hub Brown, Dean, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida

Keynote Speaker:

AI Tompkins, Author of "Aim for the Heart"

6:30 PM to 7:30 PM [11th Floor | Armstrong Room]
Light Reception at Hotel

Thursday, March 19

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM [11th Floor Foyer]
Registration

9:00 AM to 10:30 AM [11th Floor | Hemingway Room]
Session 1 – Addressing the Threats to JMC Programs and Education

Description:

From reductions in research funding to curriculum mandates and demographic changes, it seems that leaders barely get a chance to address one challenge before another comes along. We'll discuss how institutions are handling the stresses to the system from multiple directions, and what lessons can be gained from our experiences so far.

Moderating:

Dave Kurpius, Dean, Missouri School of Journalism

Panelists:

Diana Martinelli, Vice Dean, College of Creative Arts and Media, West Virginia University

Rafael Lorente, Dean and Professor of the Practice, Phillip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland

Jelani Cobb, Dean, Graduate School of Journalism and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism, Columbia University in the City of New York

10:30 AM to 10:45 AM
Break

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Schedule continues on next page.

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10:45 AM to 12:15 PM [11th Floor | Hemingway Room]

Session 2 – Leadership in Challenging Times: What Experienced Leaders Wish They Knew

Description:

The job of leadership in journalism/mass communication programs has changed rapidly over the years. So many of the trends facing institutions—shifting regional demographics, increasing diversity of all kinds in classrooms, the pressure to raise money, generational change among faculty—have made the job of leading them a different kind of challenge. What are the lessons to be learned from the changes, and what has it meant for how leaders approach the task now? What do leaders wish they had known walking in the door?

Moderating:

Don Heider, Executive Director, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University

Panelists:

Al Stavitsky, Dean Emeritus, Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada-Reno

Elisia Cohen, Director, Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota

Charles Whitaker, Dean, Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Integrated Marketing Communications, Northwestern University

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM [11th Floor Foyer]

Mentor Lunch

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM [11th Floor | Hemingway Room]

Session 3 – The Challenge and Promise of Fundraising

Description:

Fundraising is often the least-discussed addition to the skill set required of new leaders in journalism and mass communication. Emerging leaders can go from spending none of their time on the subject as a department chair, to as much as 30 percent of their time on it as a dean or director. This as industry and demographic changes alter the fundraising landscape for even the most experienced leaders. What should be on a leader's agenda regarding fundraising in 2026?

Moderating:

Jessica Pucci, Senior Associate Dean, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University

Panelists:

Ann Searight Christiano, Director, Center for Public Interest Communications, University of Florida

Kyle Daniels, Director of Development, Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Integrated Marketing Communications, Northwestern University

3:30 PM to 3:45 PM

Break

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM [11th Floor | Hemingway Room]

Session 4 – Building Resilience and Morale for the Future

Description:

2025 was a difficult year for universities across the United States. The pressure on them comes from a variety of sources—politicians, demographic shifts, and budget reductions, to name a few. Faculty, staff and students share that they simply are tired and are fearful of what could be next. How do we hold onto morale in our institutions and instill a culture of resilience?

Moderating:

Deborah S. Chung, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, College of Communication and Information, School of Journalism and Media, University of Kentucky

Presenter:

Katherine Greenwood, University of Southern California

5:30 PM to 7:30 PM [11th Floor | Armstrong Room]

Sass Award Presentation/Reception

– Conference Concludes –

Friday, March 20

ACEJMC Committee Meeting