



Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026–2031

Our Vision

To advance the future of advertising within an evolving media landscape by **empowering our students** and **producing transformative research** to shape what comes next. So how do we do that? At the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising in the College of Media at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign:

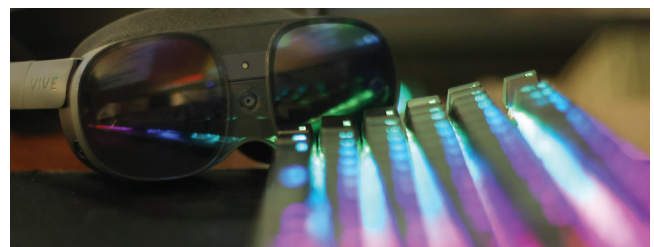
WE LEAD THE FIELD. Advertising education was founded here at the University of Illinois with the first such department established in 1959. Advertising scholarship was developed here, too, with the funding and publication of *Occasional Papers in Advertising* (1966), the prototype for the premier academic journal in our field—*Journal of Advertising*. Our alumni are leaders in the professional world and in academia, and multiple Illinois graduates and faculty have served as Head of the Advertising Division at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and/or as President of the American Academy of Advertising.

WE EMPOWER STUDENT SUCCESS by focusing on the “why” not just the “how-to” behind advertising. In this way, we foster intellectual curiosity and professional development through experiential learning rooted in human insights, creativity, critical thinking, and data analysis and interpretation.



WE ADVANCE TRANSFORMATIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH led by faculty experts who tackle complex questions across advertising, communication, media, technology, and human behavior.

WE ENGAGE AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS through collaborative scholarship, innovative ideas, and strategic communications designed to solve pressing societal and business challenges.



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The Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising has identified unique priorities and illustrative activities for education, research, and public engagement.

Undergraduate Experience & Education

- **We facilitate student excellence** by offering an innovative curriculum that combines core knowledge with specialized courses that provide several curricular paths to meet the demands of the evolving media landscape.
- **We foster professional preparation and experiential learning** through partnerships with industry and project-based courses, undergraduate research experiences, short-term study abroad programs, and extra-curricular opportunities.
- **We lead at the intersection of technology and advertising** through the world's first Computer Science + Advertising degree program, ensuring our graduates are uniquely equipped for the future of technology and advertising.
- **We honor a legendary heritage** by leveraging the legacy of Charles H. Sandage, the father of advertising education, to inspire active, community-driven student experiences and public engagement through curricular and extracurricular projects that help local non-profits and community stakeholders.



Graduate Education

- **We nurture transformative research and scholarship** by providing mentorship and funding opportunities for graduate student research, collaborative faculty lab groups and research equipment, and encouraging conference participation.
- **We mentor students in career opportunities** through a dedicated faculty that guide students into industry roles, doctoral programs, and tenure-track academic positions.
- **We deliver rigorous, relevant curricula:** a foundational MS in Advertising, formally classified as a STEM graduate degree, and a curriculum which allows students to choose individual theses or projects, and an online professional Strategic Brand Communication program tailored for the contemporary global media landscape.
- **We build a vibrant community** through popular welcome events, gatherings, and our dedicated colloquium series that offers graduate students and faculty a platform to present research and engage with leading scholars.

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Faculty Research

- **We achieve international research visibility** via our talented and energetic faculty who publish in highly ranked journals and presses, are regular recipients of disciplinary awards, and shape scholarship as editors of major journals in the field.
- **We champion interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship** by fostering an active research culture where faculty collaborate across disciplinary boundaries to generate novel ideas and scholarship that impacts the field and solves complex societal problems (e.g., AI and de-escalation training for police officers, humor and trust in renewable energy, misinformation and health).
- **We maximize institutional resources and funding** by securing external research support and managing effective use of gift funds for faculty research projects, equipment, and conferences.
- **We elevate intellectual engagement and scholarly community** through our internal colloquium series, invitations to external speakers, and collaborative research groups.

Societal Impact & Public Engagement

- **We strengthen local community organizations** through our undergraduate capstone projects to help regional businesses and non-profits elevate their strategic brand communications.
- **We collaborate with community partners** through our public engagement initiatives (e.g., Advertising Brand Coaches program, which has facilitated over 100 professional brand consultations for more than 70 clients; the IMEDIA group, together with faculty and students from Journalism and Media & Cinema Studies, which has delivered media literacy workshops to Illinois high school teachers).
- **We provide solutions to real-world problems in our academic scholarship** by applying our faculty and graduate research to solve real-world challenges for community partners (e.g., media literacy for educators, AI and advertising professionals, social media best practices for agricultural professionals).

