

## Research Statement

### Matthew W. Ragas

*“Passionate and dedicated scholar committed to creating and sharing knowledge, educating and inspiring students, and bettering the institution and the community he serves.”*

My interdisciplinary research interests include financial public relations, business journalism, political public relations and interactive media. Specifically, my media effects-focused research studies agenda-setting, agenda-building, and framing effects involving news media content, public opinion and the strategic communication efforts of corporate, brand and political actors. This research includes exploring the attitudinal and behavioral *consequences* of these cognitively-based effects.

### Defined Research Agenda

Traditional agenda-setting research has historically focused on the influence of the news media on the public agenda, while agenda-building in turn has investigated, “who sets the media agenda?” The majority of these empirical investigations have occurred in the *public sphere* – primarily in political election settings. My work seeks to build upon forty years of previous literature, while further extending these classic theoretical perspectives into an important new setting – the *corporate sphere*.

### Dissertation Research Focus

The working title of my dissertation is, “Agenda-Building and Agenda-Setting in Corporate Proxy Contests: Exploring Influence Among Public Relations Efforts, Financial Media Coverage and Investor Opinion.” This research is being made possible in part by in-kind support from SharkRepellent.net, a unit of FactSet Research Systems Inc., a large financial data provider.

### Demonstrated Scholarly Potential

I believe my research agenda to date has demonstrated significant scholarly potential:

- Author of three published/in-press refereed journal articles with *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (lead author), the *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (lead author) and the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (second author).
- Author of six accepted refereed conference papers presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the International Communication Association, including two Top Student Paper awards (ICA Instructional/Developmental Communication Division and the AEJMC Public Relations Division).
- Two manuscripts currently under review at journals and the potential for four or more journal submissions out of my dissertation research. Additional papers in development. Potential outlets for my multidisciplinary research include mass communication, journalism, public relations, strategic communication and corporate communication-related journals.

In closing, I am excited about the future of my research agenda. I believe my research holds the potential to advance theory, inform practice and demonstrate leadership for the institution I serve.