

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 mass media effects research examines the interplay among public relations efforts, news media coverage, and public opinion in corporate and political contexts from an agenda-building/agenda-setting, framing, and priming perspective. Beyond testing these perspectives with new actors, new information subsidy types, and new issues in new settings, my research examines the *contingent conditions* and potential attitudinal/behavioral *consequences* of these effects.

Defined Research Agenda

Agenda-setting research has historically focused on the influence of the news media on the priorities of the public, while agenda-building research 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 with public issues. My work builds upon 40 years of prior research, while further extending these theoretical perspectives into an important new setting – the *corporate sphere*.

Award-Winning Research

Directed by Dr. Spiro Kiouisis, my dissertation titled, “Agenda-Building and Agenda-Setting in Corporate Proxy Contests: Exploring Influence among Public Relations Efforts, Financial Media Coverage and Investor Opinion,” received the 2011 AEJMC Nafziger-White-Salwen award. This project was made possible by in-kind support from SharkRepellent.net, a unit of FactSet Research Systems Inc., a leading financial data provider, and Mergermarket, a unit of The FT Group/Pearson.

Demonstrated Scholarly Potential

I believe my research agenda to date demonstrates significant scholarly potential:

- Author of eight published/in-press refereed journal articles with *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (lead author of two articles), *Mass Communication and Society* (lead author), *Public Relations Review* (lead author), *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (lead author), *Web Journal of Mass Communication Research*, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, and *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*.
- Author of twelve accepted refereed conference papers presented at conferences, such as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the International Communication Association, including three Top Paper awards (the AEJMC Public Relations Division and the ICA Instructional/Developmental Communication Division).
- Three accepted/in-press book chapters (Routledge and Wiley books). Potential outlets for my mass media effects-oriented research include public relations, mass communication, strategic communication, journalism, 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.