

Tombras and UT to Unveil the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations

Innovative Curriculum, Facilities and Increase in Faculty Will Transform Next Generation of Advertising and PR Professionals

KNOXVILLE, TENN (March 25, 2022)— [The University of Tennessee](#), Knoxville, and Knoxville-based advertising agency [Tombras](#) have partnered to create a first of its kind, landmark program and investment plan to modernize and expand advertising and public relations education.

Key goals for the newly named Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations are to double the number of BIPOC graduates entering those industries from UT and to make advertising and public relations industry demographics more representative of state and national populations.

Dooley Tombras, President, Tombras: “We believe it is our duty to give back and lead the advertising and public relations industries into a more equitable future. The biggest opportunity is to solve the root problem of getting more diverse talent into the industry by creating awareness, interest and clarity on what’s possible through the Tombras School. Once a student is enrolled, we’re ensuring the facilities are state of the art and the Tombras School faculty are supported in creating the curricula. That along with access to real-world practical experiences will produce graduates who are among the most competitive in the country.”

Joseph Mazer, Dean, UT College of Communication and Information: “We are tremendously grateful for the overwhelming support of Tombras. Their creative and visionary force in the industry will serve as an inspiration to our students and faculty. Tombras’ generosity will enhance the national prominence of the school and provide transformational opportunities for our students.”

The school will measure its effectiveness in three primary areas: an increase in underrepresented students in the Tombras School; an increase in overall enrollment of advertising and public relations majors and therefore adding new faculty lines; and supporting historically underrepresented students with opportunities for scholarships to study abroad, intern in a large city, and meet technology needs.

The strategic goals will be met through the Tombras Touchpoints, a series of innovative, visible, and impactful initiatives of the Tombras School to demonstrate its commitment to DEI and academic excellence. Details can be found at tombras.utk.edu.

Beth Avery Foster, Director of the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations: “This industry leader-academic partnership represents one of few of its kind in the country, and the potential is overwhelming. I am humbled with gratitude for the generosity, vision, and support of the Tombras family as it positions the School for immense growth and to move the needle on representation in higher education and the industry. I am also deeply grateful for our faculty, who are central to enacting these exciting efforts.”

Donde Plowman, Chancellor of University of Tennessee, Knoxville: “When I meet with industry leaders across the state and beyond, the one thing companies tell me is that they need more diverse talent. They want their workforce to reflect the diversity of their consumers. Investments like this one are a game-changer—not only for the students who will graduate from the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations, but for the people and communities across Tennessee who benefit when we are able to meet the needs of our industries.”

The Tombras School is the first named school at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the first named school of advertising and public relations among all land-grant institutions in the country, and the first of its kind in the SEC. It will be housed in the College of Communication and Information. The School honors the legacies of Charles Tombras, Sr., and Charles Tombras, Jr., and the indelible imprint the Tombras agency has made on the industry.

Today marks the official dedication and naming ceremony of the Tombras School. An event will be held on campus to unveil signage and celebrate the momentous occasion. For more information on the event, this partnership, including press images and media contacts, please visit tombras.utk.edu.

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