

SUNY Potsdam

Administrative Unit Assessment Report and Improvements

Administrative Unit: College Communications

Unit Contact -- Name: Mindy Thompson

Phone: Ex. 2114

Email Address: thompsme@potsdam.edu

Date Submitted: September 30, 2017

Mission Statement: The primary function of the SUNY Potsdam Office of College Communications is to assist in articulating the mission, vision and values of the College, for both internal and external audiences. College Communications helps to facilitate campus communications through research, content development and distribution, designed to document, promote and advance the mission of SUNY Potsdam.

Goals	Desired Outcomes/Objectives	Assessment Methods and Targets	Results	Planned Improvements Based on Assessment Results
<p>1. Public Relations: Increase awareness of and advocacy for SUNY Potsdam on the local, state, national and international levels.</p>	<p>A. Capture stories that reflect the SUNY Potsdam mission and brand, coordinating coverage via news releases and posts to web/social media. B. Monitor earned and organic media coverage on a regular basis. C. Respond quickly and effectively to reporter requests. D. Share positive news coverage with campus community via website, email</p>	<p>1A1. Establish clearer policy for granting news release requests, to dedicate more time to high-level stories. 1A2. Track data for news release distribution, and frequency of stories being picked up as a result. 1B1. Utilize Meltwater News and Google Alerts to review statistics for media coverage related to SUNY Potsdam and track over time, looking not only at quantity but quality (sentiment/reach). 1C1. Track reporter requests and ensure that someone is on call to respond within 1-2 business days. 1D1. Share news links for earned media on website, via social media</p>	<p>1A1. We have been coordinating more closely with departments to advise them on our limits in fulfilling release requests, and offering other publicity options. 1A2&3. Our Meltwater News data shows that a great number of our press releases result in local news coverage, with significant spikes for Merit student new achievements, which have greater disbursement. The sentiment has trended positive since December 2016, with brief dips related to campus culture issues and two court cases related to campus community members. Regarding reach, we still have a way to go to pick up more national coverage. 1C1. Complete. Multiple people monitor reporter requests that come in to news@potsdam.edu address,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Meltwater News data and analytics to assess performance of press release placement and media pitches, as well as organic coverage. • Prioritize news related to image and distinction, donor gifts, student achievements, faculty research/creative work, and high profile events open to the community.

	marketing and social channels.	and in the Reporter.	and via phone. Jason Hunter and Mindy Thompson are backups for response when Alex Jacobs Wilke is out of the office. 1D1. Done. Shared news stories perform much better on social media than the original news releases. News stories are also featured on the website, linked to on department pages, and are included as links in the Reporter.	
2. Marketing: Enhance and clarify the SUNY Potsdam brand, and realign strategic resources to create engaging campaigns to advance College goals.	<p>A. Establish an updated unified marketing strategy, based on research on effective messaging and targeting, to better reach prospective students.</p> <p>B. Review past comprehensive marketing spending and outlets used, both from accounts in Communications and in Admissions, Crane and Graduate Studies.</p> <p>C. Work with liaisons working in recruitment and retention to unify our College marketing strategies and propose increased advertising budgets.</p> <p>D. Identify key outlets and methods for reaching target audiences; concentrate new efforts accordingly.</p> <p>E. Review and adjust strategy annually to stay competitive.</p>	<p>2A1. Complete new unified marketing plan.</p> <p>2B1. Complete marketing spending review and conduct assessment of advertising buys on annual basis.</p> <p>2C1. Increase collaboration with Admissions, Graduate Studies and The Crane School of Music, to better focus marketing mix on recruitment.</p> <p>2C2. Success of increased advertising proposal requests.</p> <p>2D1. Track effectiveness of marketing efforts with target audiences via not only reach (readership, viewership, etc.), but also direct effects – clicks to website, resulting visits to campus, etc.</p> <p>2E1. Establish annual performance review of marketing efforts.</p>	<p>2A1. In progress. College Communications hired IDFive to complete an assessment of our marketing strategy and make recommendations for moving forward. Based on that report, Communications has been working with President’s Council, the Strategic Enrollment Team and others to refine a strategy and plan that we can execute based on our staffing and budget realities. Currently, Communications is moving forward with a new Pandora advertising campaign targeting prospective high school juniors and seniors in key areas, as well as planning for a digital campaign to roll out in late fall, plus preparing to launch a new virtual tour. Additionally, Communications has completed a comprehensive branding guide for campus, to better explain our brand and our usage guidelines on creative content, our logos, colors, visuals, text, editorial style, social media and more.</p> <p>2B1. In progress. Have begun to realign our spending on advertising to focus less on geographic areas where we already have good brand awareness and less on platforms that are not popular with our target demographics.</p> <p>2C1. Ongoing. Continuing to work closely on recruitment marketing,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze results and performance of new and adjusted marketing initiatives. • Analyze target audience feedback (prospective students, parents) from Open House surveys, etc. • Propose new marketing plan with identified target audiences, messaging, strategies, tactics and budget, for use in 2018-19 academic year. • Launch brand guide and promote it to campus constituents through presentations, links in the Reporter and meetings.

			<p>refocusing our efforts on all touch points for prospective students for these areas.</p> <p>2D1. In progress. We are continuing to analyze the results for our new marketing efforts and assess any negative impact from reductions in certain publications/outlets. As we are just beginning several of these efforts with this type of ROI tracking, we won't have results to learn from for several weeks yet.</p> <p>2E1. Ongoing. Now that Communications reports directly to the Office of the President, we are analyzing how best to incorporate an annual review with our new reporting structure.</p>	
<p>3. Website: Communicate and support the College's mission and values expressed in a unified institutional image and positive web experience. Recruit / attract students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and friends.</p>	<p>A. Provide an engaging and usable interface that is compatible with the established brand identity of SUNY Potsdam.</p> <p>B. Ensure a consistent user interface on the home and sub-level pages of the site while providing an appropriate level of flexibility in layout.</p> <p>C. Delivery of timely, dynamic content.</p> <p>D. Flexibility in accommodating new content.</p> <p>E. Provide a responsive design framework so the website is viewable on any number of platforms including computers, tablets and mobile devices of</p>	<p>3A1. Review of web usability and usage statistics, as well as design, annually. Strict adherence to College colors, fonts, logos and messaging.</p> <p>3B1. Provide training to campus liaisons ensuring all users are knowledgeable in the Drupal page creating process which provides access to vetted templates.</p> <p>3C1. Monitor Google website analytic reports that track site speed.</p> <p>3D1. Work with campus liaisons who request content changes.</p> <p>3E1. Monitor Google analytics reports which outlines audience by technology. Q/A analysis of responsive design templates ensuring that used technology functions properly.</p>	<p>3A1. The official College and auxiliary sites have recently been altered to ensure that it meets ADA accessibility. WCAG 2.0 compliance has been met. The webpages are consistently using stylesheets which adhere to the College style guide. The Office of College Communications approves all page modifications to ensure that messaging needs are met.</p> <p>3B1. Site liaisons have been identified and trained where needed.</p> <p>3C1. Google analytics is used on weekly basis.</p> <p>3D1. Those who don't wish to develop their pages know that they can submit content changes via the ticketing system by emailing webcontent@potsgdam.edu.</p> <p>3E1. The site is continually monitored and modified when necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since web technology trends are ever-changing, a site upgrade has been planned. A RFP for a site redesign will be forthcoming, with a timeline to launch during summer 2018. Google analytics will play a large role in determining improved information architecture, design and content improvements.

	varying sizes.			
4. Creative Services: Uphold the SUNY Potsdam visual identity through consistent branding and engaging, creative design.	<p>A. Maintain consistent visual identity with integrated branding across campus.</p> <p>B. Provide creative and engaging artwork for signage, publications and promotional materials.</p>	<p>4A1. Review of all written policies and procedures annually. Strict adherence to College colors, fonts, logos and messaging.</p> <p>4A2. Review all trademark requests for use of SUNY Potsdam logo/brand marks for College-branded merchandise.</p> <p>4A3. Review campus requests for design and track consistency of branding across publications via annual comprehensive design review.</p> <p>4B1. Track campus department satisfaction with publications via feedback forms.</p> <p>4B2. Measure creativity and effectiveness of design through submissions for design awards through SUNYCUAD and CASE.</p>	<p>4A1. In progress. College Communications is in the last stages of updating the College Style Guide to make it a more cohesive branding/marketing guide with a late fall completion date. Also in the process with rolling out new design templates for departments to use in creating brochures, flyers, posters and postcards – which will improve in more consistent branding across campus. No changes in policies/procedures as they are working smoothly.</p> <p>4A2. Ongoing. Reviewed approval/denial of over 440 trademarking requests to be sure proper use of the official logos/colors are used.</p> <p>4A3. Ongoing. Received over 200 design requests. Annual review of branding is scheduled annually at the conclusion of the Spring semester. Updated entire College stationery package (letterhead, various size envelopes, business cards). New files sent to Central Printing for uploading to the online print portal.</p> <p>4B1. In progress. Form needs to be developed.</p> <p>4B2. Ongoing. SUNYCUAD and CASE submissions will occur in the Spring semester.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the newly developed College Style Guide with academic departments and offices. • Continue to monitor trademark requests to be sure official logos/colors are used and clearly communicate our brand. • Work with departments on developing materials that will bolster brand awareness. • Provide training on newly developed templates in Design Conductor, which will strengthen SUNY Potsdam’s brand in print publications.
5. Social Media: Engage with key College audiences with digital content on social platforms, to reach recruitment, retention and fundraising goals, while also raising the	<p>A. Hire and train new Social Media Coordinator to oversee main SUNY Potsdam accounts and assist other departments with their social marketing.</p>	<p>5A1. Employment and professional development for new Social Media Coordinator position.</p> <p>5A2. Establish regular meetings for SUNY Potsdam Social Media Network, the committee including representatives managing the College’s major social accounts.</p>	<p>5A1. Although College Communications did hire a new Social Media Coordinator, the employee has moved on and this position is currently being held open. The division is considering moving toward pursuing a content creation specialist (such as a videographer), to focus more on production of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize team approach to social media content creation and monitoring, and assess effectiveness. • Utilize boosts and targeted posts as part of our social media content strategy, and incorporate into marketing plan.

<p>College's profile.</p>	<p>B. Build a social media strategy to create content calendar and post targeted content on relevant platforms.</p> <p>C. Utilize engaging social media marketing on key platforms to reach target audiences.</p> <p>D. Grow audiences on College's main platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).</p> <p>E. Increase engagement on social media, both on main platforms and via social media hub, Tint.</p>	<p>5B1. Complete social strategy and content calendar, tying posts to best practices for each platform and matching stories to SUNY Potsdam priorities.</p> <p>5C1. Increase use of digital communications budget for targeted social promotions, including sponsored and boosted posts for target audiences.</p> <p>5D1. Track follower numbers for major platforms; look for trends and compare to SUNY and private competitors.</p> <p>5E1. Track average likes per post and average post reach on major campus platforms.</p> <p>5E2. Increase use of Tint on campus displays and for major College events; utilize promotions to encourage audiences to share their content with the SUNY Potsdam community.</p>	<p>content, and continuing to manage our platforms as a team, as we currently are.</p> <p>5A2. Not complete. This was postponed while we consider how to manage the open position and our staffing for this function going forward.</p> <p>5B1. Complete and ongoing. Social media guidelines for campus are complete, and Jesstine Avadikian maintains a shared Outlook calendar for social media planning.</p> <p>5C1. Ongoing. We have focused mainly on boosting posts, but are planning to work toward targeted digital campaigns on social platforms beginning in late fall 2017.</p> <p>5D1. Ongoing. We utilize Sprout Social and Iconosquare to track our performance compared to competitors and are happy to report that SUNY Potsdam performs very well compared to peer institutions for engagement on social media.</p> <p>5E1. Ongoing.</p> <p>5E2. Ongoing. Campus displays now pull in our live Tint feed, helping to drive engagement. Use of Tint for events has been more limited. We have used event-focused Snapchat filters and contests to drive engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess performance on social media compared to competitors as part of marketing plan review. • Continue to track performance on posts and each platform. • Broaden use of Tint and promotions to engage with campus community on social media.
<p>6. Communications: Support the College's vision and goals through unified strategic messaging, while building strong relationships with stakeholders across campus.</p>	<p>A. Craft messaging on strategic priorities for campus leadership.</p> <p>B. Engage with campus as a department to encourage faculty and staff to work more closely with College Communications.</p>	<p>6A1. Regular meetings between key Communications staff and campus leadership, emphasizing priorities in regular campus communications.</p> <p>6B1. Representation and active participation in strategic planning, task forces, Faculty Senate, campus committees and other groups.</p>	<p>6A1. Complete. Mindy Thompson now reports directly to the President and is a member of the President's Council, giving the Division of College Communication a stronger voice in leadership decision-making.</p> <p>6B1. We have representation on Faculty Senate and various campus committees, but have not been involved with strategic planning group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to meet with campus departments and engage with shared governance. • Continue to support leadership through thoughtful strategic messaging.

<p>7. Email Outreach: Communicate and support the College’s mission and values expressed in unified email outreach campaigns.</p>	<p>A. Provide engaging campaigns that are compatible with the established brand identity of SUNY Potsdam.</p> <p>B. Develop a family of templates for various constituents to assist with recruitment, retention and fundraising for the College.</p>	<p>7A1. Use data analytics results to track open and interaction rates.</p> <p>7B1. Monthly communication with account holders and annual comprehensive review.</p>	<p>7A1. Ongoing. Account holders continually review open and interaction rates to determine improvements. A/B testing is becoming more valued.</p> <p>7B1. Ongoing. Developing new email templates, increasing email graphics, suggestions for email marketing content is happening on a regular basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with account holders to analyze email performance, in order to get continually better results. • Finalize email templates and graphics, and create guidelines to assist departments in better utilizing this tool.
<p>8. Government Relations: Lobby lawmakers on the federal, state and local level to pursue funding opportunities and advance SUNY Potsdam’s legislative agenda.</p>	<p>A. Execute advocacy strategy to assist leadership in lobbying efforts, working with SUNY Government Relations.</p> <p>B. Positive engagement with legislators on state and federal levels.</p>	<p>8A1. Integration of government relations strategy into strategic communications priorities for campus leadership.</p> <p>8B1. Track success of legislative agenda, in terms of support for funding and/or relevant legislation by SUNY Potsdam representatives and key elected officials.</p>	<p>8A1. Ongoing. The Government Relations function has been moved to the President’s Office, and will now be overseen by Nicole Conant. In this capacity, she will work to ensure that the President integrates lobbying priorities into scheduling priorities and messaging.</p> <p>8B1. The College was not successful in getting carve-outs for capital projects this fiscal year, but did have positive engagement with legislators regarding the Excelsior Scholarship Program, our TeachNY efforts, and groundbreakings for projects that had been funded in past cycles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist President’s Office as needed in order to ensure a smooth transition.