INTRODUCTION
Dear Colleagues:

Penn State has an excellent reputation as a top, global, public research university that is Pennsylvania’s sole land-grant institution. Nevertheless, the true character, quality, and excellence of Penn State is underappreciated and not fully reflected in its excellent rankings.

This includes:

1. The unique nature of our twenty-four campus educational model, plus World Campus
2. The breadth and depth of our $800 million+ research engine
3. The collegiality, character, and selflessness of our community of 700,000+ Penn Staters
4. The land-grant character that underpins our commitment to serve society and provide for social and economic mobility
5. Our role as an engine for quality of life in Pennsylvania

These characteristics are not as well known as they could be, emanating in part from underinvestment in proactive media and marketing. This was exacerbated by a characteristic of humility, which, while admirable, has inhibited more robust communications.

There is, however, a Yiddish expression that characterizes our view of communications:

"TOO HUMBLE IS HALF PROUD."

We have a magnificent story to tell. We can tell it with taste, creativity, and some humility. But tell it, we will.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Lokman
Vice President
Strategic Communications
OVERVIEW
**MISSION:** Promote Penn State as a top-tier university, strengthening its reputation in regional, national, and international spheres of influence and support, in ways that serve University recruitment, resource, and leadership goals.

**GOALS:**
- Strengthen the University’s reputation for academic, research, and service excellence
- Protect and advance the University’s reputation for integrity
- Nurture pride and attachment to the University
- Build understanding and support for the University’s needs and priorities
- Grow the value of a Penn State degree

**OUTCOMES:**
- Recruitment of the best students, faculty, and staff
- Expanded volunteer, donor, and advocacy support
- Enhanced reputation for excellence
- Increased value of degree
- Increased support for leadership priorities
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Operate with candor, integrity, and respect
Form partnerships to leverage expertise and resources
Strive for excellence and creativity
Embrace diversity in all aspects of our organization and work
Solicit stakeholder and advisory input
Anticipate and solve problems
Focus on opportunities
APPROACH
INITIATE
- Enrollment Campaigns
- Reputation Campaigns
- Opportunistic Campaigns

ALIGN
- Strategic Plan
- Fundraising Campaigns
- 24 Campuses

BUILD
- Research
- Visual Identity
- Brand Positioning and Guidelines

TEST, MEASURE, & REFINE
BASE

INTERNAL COMMUNITY
President, Provost, Business & Finance, Student Affairs, Academic Senate, committed alumni and donors

COMMITTED ALUMNI AND DONORS
Alumni Association, Office of University Development, Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA)

KEY LEADERSHIP
Board of Trustees, President’s Council (PC), Academic Leadership Council (ALC), University Faculty Senate, volunteer boards, Council of Campus Chancellors (CCC)

PROSPECTS

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES
Admissions, the Commonwealth, World Campus, ICA, ALC

PROSPECTIVE FACULTY
Office of Human Resources (OHR), Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), Academic Senate, ALC

PROSPECTIVE STAFF
OHR, University Staff Advisory Council (USAC)

HIGH YIELD

PROSPECTIVE DONORS, FOUNDATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT FUNDING AGENCIES
Office of University Development, OVPR, Government and Community Relations

GREATER SUPPORT FROM YOUNG ALUMNI AND MILLENNIALS
Alumni Association, Office of University Development

CRITICAL INFLUENCERS

INFLUENTIAL MEDIA
Top 80 worldwide outlets

OTHER LEADING ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS
OVPR

BRAND AMBASSADORS
Office of University Development, Alumni Association

COMMONWEALTH VOTERS AND OPINION LEADERS
Alumni Association, Government and Community Relations
STRATEGIES & FOCUS AREAS
ALIGN PEOPLE AND RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

• Align work across eight core areas under a new brand and identity and content and storytelling continuum that integrates unit work

• Maintain an active professional development program that emphasizes skills, initiative, problem solving, communications, project management, and collaboration

• Build division capacity to meet goals though a University-wide communications audit and three-part investment strategy that:
  1. Eliminates waste and redundancy where possible (e.g., more efficient media buying)
  2. Redeploys resources for maximum effect (e.g., IT Communications partnership)
  3. Involves strategic personnel investments to ensure sustainability across the eight core functions
ORGANIZATIONAL IMPERATIVES

BUILD DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INTO ALL ASPECTS OF DIVISION OPERATIONS

- Broaden recruitment channels to ensure diverse pools of candidates
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion metrics in employee goal setting and evaluation
- Maintain division-wide diversity and inclusion committee that educates employees (e.g., meetings with diverse student organizations, faculty, and guest speakers)
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion in all channels (e.g., ethnic media publications, photo library, and media buying for enrollment campaigns)
- Incorporate into annual division-wide climate survey
CREATE AND MAINTAIN STEADY BRAND PRESENCE

MARKETING AND NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS COLLECTIVELY, TO DRIVE CONSISTENT PRESENCE ACROSS ALL CHANNELS AND AUDIENCES

• Develop and test core brand messaging, including message matrix, that will define key messages to reach target audiences (PA voters, legislators, influencers, peers, etc.)

• Develop and manage all aspects of the visual identity, including the mark, cross-platform design standards, and toolkits for graphic/video elements (concentrate on high-visibility platforms)

• Build unique content through active storytelling and ensure a steady drumbeat of compelling Penn State stories to core audiences and through key media (requires strong content creation infrastructure in tools and personnel)

• Develop high-impact campaigns that are key performance indicator focused, audience centric, and activated across owned, earned, and paid channels

• Align efforts (focusing on those with a strong communications appeal) with thematic priorities, including health; arts and culture; open doors; digital innovation; engagement; and food, water, and energy security
DRIVE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS

ESTABLISH UNIT AS A UNIVERSITY-WIDE THOUGHT LEADER FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

- Serve as counselor and partner to vital units whose work impacts reputation (PC, alumni, Office of University Development, leadership councils, etc.)
- Engage key stakeholders around priority topics and develop directional strategies (e.g., Marketing Council, Social Media Council)
- Establish clear standards, training, and resources for brand messaging and design to ensure strong and consistent reputation
- Create an active media support program for University communicators that includes training, tools, and counsel; provide strategic counsel and support as needed to increase the effectiveness of media pitching by University communicators
- Define and promote best practices around critical communications priorities, including digital analytics, digital advertising, advertising, infographics, GIFs/animations, and video storytelling through media and influencers
- Maintain active community building and professional development programs for all communications professionals (e.g., ice cream socials)
- Audit University-wide communications for opportunities and efficiencies
DRIVE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS

SPOTLIGHT: ANNUAL SOCIAL MEDIA SUMMIT

GOALS:
To provide networking opportunities and information about topics relevant to social media practitioners

AUDIENCE:
Penn State communicators who work in social media (approximately 120 people attend each year)

TIMING:
An annual event held at the University Park campus

OUTCOMES:
Participants learn about best practices, trends, and practical tips from highly accomplished colleagues as well as current Penn State students. The 2016 keynote speakers were:

- Mike Karns, Penn State graduate and founder and CEO of Marathon Live Entertainment—manages social media for the hit Broadway show “Hamilton”
- Morgan Greco, Penn State graduate and vice president of social media and fan engagement for A&E Networks, History Channel, Lifetime, and FYI
PROTECT REPUTATION FOR INTEGRITY

CREATE AND MAINTAIN A FIRST-CLASS CRISIS AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT ANTICIPATES ISSUES, ALIGNS MESSAGES WITH UNIVERSITY VALUES, ENSURES STAKEHOLDER INPUTS, AND INTEGRATES COMMONWEALTH CAMPUSES

• Inform decision making and policy setting, and drive messaging around topics/issues that could impact reputation; work to ensure “early warning” processes are in place to surface issues
• Conduct a University-wide gap analysis and create improved processes and best practices crisis communications templates, including social media and the formation of an issues comm team
• Maintain an open and productive relationship with legal counsel that involves active information sharing, early communications planning, and collaboration
• Assume an aggressive posture in communicating University decision making on sensitive issues; do not allow Penn State to be defined by others in an information vacuum, and center communications on values
• Maintain an active training and emergency communications certification program
• Communicate actively with key board of trustee leaders
• Coordinate closely with Emergency Management Group
• Collaborate appropriately with key groups (OHR, ICA, etc.) to determine needs and synergies
AUGMENT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

BUILD INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM THAT POSITIONS LEADERSHIP AS A TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR CRITICAL FACULTY AND STAFF ISSUES

• Analyze all communications vehicles (e.g., Penn State Today and Headlines) to determine optimal frequency and content, from Town Hall to video messages and the newly-formed/branded President’s blog

• Roll out improved Penn State daily monitoring report that highlights traditional and social media

• Get ahead of key campus issues (e.g., HR Transformation) with strategic approaches that raise awareness, and create understanding, buy-in, and support

• Increase visual aspect (engaging videos, infographics, animation, etc.) of communications, particularly when it comes to leadership messages/topics and issues of critical importance

• Conduct regular surveys of key audiences on content and calls-to-action (e.g., through Penn State Today audience)

• Incorporate broadcast studio into internal communications practices
RAISE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL MEDIA PROFILE

DEVELOP A PROACTIVE MEDIA PROGRAM THAT BUILDS ON CURRENT EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE MEASURABLE INCREASES IN COVERAGE OF THE UNIVERSITY BY MEDIA THAT MATTER

• Put in place technology tools and infrastructure that allow for a proactive media program in the digital era; this includes broadcast studio and a gold-standard online newsroom

• Target and increase coverage of Penn State in top 80 worldwide outlets, including key media markets in PA, the northeast, and internationally

• Focus media outreach around trends/topics of interest to the media and public, where Penn State has key experts (update expert database); includes social listening and message dissemination

• Develop media partnerships (e.g., The Conversation) and content for digital era that includes greater use of infographics and video

• Develop key metrics and analysis of successes, and identify opportunities for future paid amplification and strong top-tier stories

• Use key distribution methods to disseminate media releases (Eureka Alert, Futurity, etc.)

• Team to coordinate on mediable stories to be showcased across key channels (Penn State homepage)
GOALS:
A University-wide nonpartisan elections blog, election2016.psu.edu, was created to aggregate political experts, leverage our partnership with The Conversation, surface new opportunities, and market to media. In a time with great change, this is an opportunity to be part of critical trending topics. By creating fodder, the team had the ability to highlight Penn State political science and other topical researchers as thought leaders with influential media to shape and be part of the election-year conversation.

AUDIENCE:
The audience was far reaching and broad. In one year, the blog had approximately ninety posts with 13,600 page views.

TIMING:
The blog launched in January 2016 to coincide with a high level of consumer interest in pre-election news. There is now an additional opportunity for the blog to be redefined post-election.

OUTCOMES:
Work through the blog engaged more than forty faculty researcher experts and aggregated more than 1,000 media clips, resulting in 980+ million potential impressions.
DEVELOP STRATEGIC ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS TO SUPPORT UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT GOALS

ORGANIZE AND ACTIVATE AROUND THE RIGHT MESSAGE THROUGH THE RIGHT CHANNELS AT THE RIGHT TIME TO DELIVER POTENTIAL STUDENTS INTO THE ENROLLMENT FUNNEL

• Separate enrollment from image communications and leverage the unique attributes of Commonwealth campuses within overall brand

• Leverage the targeting and negotiating capabilities of media partners to execute campaigns that bring student prospects into the funnel and support Penn State Undergraduate Admissions with their efforts to convert prospects into enrollments

• Maximize digital channels for improved targeting, flexibility, optimization, and analytics

• Identify and analyze targeted audiences to determine message segmentation and aid efforts to attract new enrollment targets (e.g., adult learner pilot project)

• Optimize web experience(s), in conjunction with Admissions and campus partners, to deliver on user expectations and ultimately convert suspects to prospects
MORE FLEXIBLE AND NIMBLE ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGNS

SPOTLIGHT: ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN “NOT THE SAME”

GOALS:
The annual enrollment campaign is designed to:
• Increase awareness of the Commonwealth Campuses among college bound 16-18 year olds in PA
• Increase applications to campuses

APPROACH:
• Elevate creative to resonate with target audience and stand out in a crowded marketplace
• Migrate media to measurable channels
• Use real time creative testing and media optimization
• Leverage external expertise (Decoded Advertising and Generator Media)
• Align with key partners (UAO and Commonwealth Campuses)

CREATIVE:
• “Not the Same” is fresh and contemporary, breaking through the clutter to appeal to 16-18 year old demographic
• The video, a 30-second commercial, and four 15-second short-form digital pieces feature talented Penn State students

OUTCOMES:
• Launched first ever paid social campaign, including social video
• Established baseline metrics for advertising performance by channel
• Laid groundwork for optimizing user experience from first contact through application
• Extended use of 30-second commercial by using short-form video elements in digital/social advertising
RAISE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

BRAND MAJOR LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES AND GROW ACTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS PRESENCE

• Maintain and grow marketing and media support for Presidential initiatives (All In Diversity and Inclusion, Invent Penn State, and Engage Penn State)

• Conduct targeted media and opinion leader outreach in support of President and Provost priorities and vision for Penn State (e.g., Duquesne Club speech, 1:1 with key top tier reporters in NYC, DC, and PA)

• Evaluate, create, and maintain tools to support Presidential communications (e.g., Digging Deeper blog)

• Ensure the President’s positions on major issues impacting the University are known and understood by the media and key base audiences (e.g., letter to the alumni on Freeh report)
SPOTLIGHT: ALL IN...A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

GOALS:
Increase awareness and engagement in the University's commitment to a diverse and inclusive Penn State, as well as inspire participation and personal action among members of the Penn State community.

TIMING:
September 2016 to May 2017

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Development and deployment of language and visual assets to unify University-wide effort
• Dedicated website, (allin.psu.edu) featuring film from WPSU, event calendar, and resources
• High-impact multimedia show and kick-off event on Old Main lawn and live streamed to all Commonwealth campuses (October 6, 2016)
• Ongoing cadence of communications across owned and earned channels
• All In bus wraps (January to April 2017)

OUTCOME:
• Positive student, faculty, and staff response to All In initiative, creative elements, and event
• Robust partner engagement across colleges, campuses, ICA, Undergraduate Admissions Office, Penn State Health, World Campus, and more
• Opened channels for ongoing dialog around diversity and inclusion
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

EMPLOY QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION TECHNIQUES TO BENCHMARK AND TRACK PROGRESS

• Benchmarking and tracking surveys that measure impact on KPIs that include reputation for quality compared to peer institutions and audience inclination to give, volunteer, or advocate

• Informal feedback (e.g., word of mouth, support, and interest from partners)

• Quarterly media monitoring and social listening that tracks reach, frequency, content, and presence in key outlets and focus areas

• Digital analytics across all platforms and channels to guide continuous and real-time improvement
KEY INITIATIVES
• Activate University-wide diversity and inclusion campaign (All In)
• Complete twenty-four campus website relaunch (Polaris 2)
• Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to inform brand positioning
• Elevate enrollment creative and shift advertising to measurable channels
• Develop and launch thematic brand campaigns, beginning with Pennsylvania brand campaign
• Develop and roll out twenty-four campus crisis issues analysis and playbook
• Plan and host National Association of Science Writers Conference (ScienceWriters2019)
• Align and expand psu.edu, news.psu.edu, and media and expert database
• Create brand message matrix and visual elements toolkit
• Establish Student Implementation Team to explore and produce brand storytelling content
• Create Penn State communications map to identify and maximize messaging and communications opportunities
• Develop a communication strategy to reach local, regional, and national employers to underscore the value of a Penn State degree
• Develop and launch Brand Ambassadors initiative
• Launch global media strategy
• Develop HR recruitment branding
• Launch broadcast studio
THANK YOU