Marketing and Communications Work Group

Report – September 30, 2014

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Related Fiscal Sustainability Recommendation: (O4) Target our advertising dollars in a coordinated manner across the university. This should involve improved coordination and collaboration of marketing activities campus wide.

Desired Outcome: A unified marketing and communications infrastructure designed to create efficiencies, realize cost-savings, meet the strategic needs of the university, control and coordination of resources for strategic marketing and communications, and serve as a best practice model.

Principles
1. No segment of the university was exempt from this review and the position funding was not a consideration during the review.
2. The organizational structure may require additional modifications over time, but ultimately the strategic marketing and communications functions of the university report to the Executive Director of Communications, Public Affairs, and Marketing.
3. Recommendations contained herein seek to capitalize on existing talent and capacity while also realizing some savings to the university.
4. The work group offers no specific guidance in relation to positions that currently have some responsibilities in marketing and communications, but are not recommended for the consolidated structure.
5. All positions, regardless of the initial funding sources, are under the purview of the Chancellor.
6. The organizational approach is divisional in nature and while the consolidated structure results in no direct reporting line to the divisions, the Executive Director, chief for each division, and respective Vice Chancellor must work collaboratively within this model.
7. Initial estimates are a cost-savings of $100,000 in salary and benefits. The implementation team will identify additional personnel and operational savings.

Process
1. At the request of the work group, Chancellor Ballard placed a hiring freeze on all marketing and communications recruitment pending completion of this review.
2. A summary of organizational structures for peer and sister institutions was reviewed by the working group, along with a report on this topic by a prior business group.
3. The Executive Director of Communications, Public Affairs, and Marketing tasked a team of professionals to conduct a comprehensive review of marketing and communications positions and capacity, differentiating other duties (e.g., event planning).
4. Academic deans were briefed on the process and participated in a survey of draft recommendations.
5. The work group established priorities and recommends (see section below) a phased approach to consolidation.

Findings
1. Sixty percent of the marketing and communications positions are in units outside of centralized marketing and communications. Of the total 55.5 FTE (pro-rated based on duties) with marketing and communications as the primary or secondary role, 21.75 FTE are assigned centrally.
2. Decentralized resources are not aligned with university priorities.
3. Duties in decentralized positions do not align with existing position descriptions and in many instances spend significant time on event planning, fund and friend-raising, scholarship processing, report writing, and various duties more aligned in some instances with an administrative assistant. In addition, salaries are inconsistent.
4. Decentralized marketing and communications resources are not organized in a way that prioritizes, recognizes, and supports the distinct needs of each division.
5. The ability to think and act strategically and provide communication and marketing leadership is limited. Of specific concern is lack of strategic marketing and communications leadership and capacity in University Advancement, Academic Affairs, and Research.
6. Admissions is a priority area of major concern. The single position, which is focused only on undergraduate admissions, is managed by non-marketing and communications professionals; therefore, strategy and decisions are not connected with a central vision and funding source. Staffing in this area is below comparable institutions and capacity in this area is insufficient. One result of this structure is the increased pressure placed on units to provide recruitment resources.
7. As an institution we are not planning strategically for marketing and communication. The lack of dedicated marketing budgets in our primary ticketed or clinical enterprises (e.g., ECU Physicians, SoDM clinics, and SRAPAS) is a concern.
8. Our video capabilities, which are an important strategic resource, are located in three separate units and have no coordination due to varying priorities. In addition, our still photography capabilities are limited, yet in high demand.
9. We invest significant resources in producing a substantial number of college/departmental newsletters and internal documents.
Recommendations

1. Announce consolidation of strategic marketing and communications resources under the leadership of the Executive Director. Such consolidation will include the following units: News Services, Creative Services, and Strategic Marketing, each division with the exception of Finance and Administration will have a communication chief reporting directly to the Executive Director. The communication chief will directly supervise the resources in the division and must work closely with the vice chancellors to identify and set divisional communication/marketing priorities and to support needs as determined by the Vice Chancellor, the communication chief, and the Executive Director. As a result of the new consolidated strategic structure, fewer total FTE will be required. See attached organizational chart.

2. Under the direction of the Executive Director, a team of professionals will be charged with mapping resources to support the new organizational structure with a goal of full implementation by July 1, 2015.

3. An immediate priorities assessment will be distributed to the deans and vice chancellors. Data from this assessment will be considered in the deployment of resources.

4. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, a formal communications plan for the institution will be presented to Executive Council prior to full implementation of the consolidated structure.

5. The following will inform priorities for the consolidated structure:
   a. An inventory and review of all newsletters with the goal of divisional newsletters unless an exception is provided by the Executive Director.
   b. Resources will be focused on high impact areas aligned with the strategic plan.
   c. Strategic execution of development and event-related communications and marketing support.
   d. Establish a set of standards to justify the creation and publication of annual reports.
   e. Adherence to the UCFS recommendation to reduce copier usage and transition to paperless workflows.

6. Effective immediately, the hiring freeze is lifted with all marketing and communications recruitment approved by and conducted under the direction of the Executive Director and with those resources managed under the consolidated organizational structure.

7. An immediate step is to deploy a plan to support the current needs of Admissions. This may include reassignment of some component of a state-funded distributed FTE. The urgency to positively impact the 2015-16 enrollment demands immediate action in this regard.

8. Announce the discontinuation of ECU-TV with the expiration of the current contract in June 2015. The termination of this contract results in the loss of $38,000 in revenue annually. Leading up to the end of the contract, a plan will be developed for on-demand
(e.g., YouTube and website) replay and distribution and recommendations will be made for the positions currently affiliated with ECU-TV. Savings resulting from this transition will be documented in the fiscal sustainability scorecard. [Note: At least 3.0 FTE of the 5.0 FTE in this unit directly support marketing and communications. The remaining 2.0 FTE remain in ITCS for deployment; ITCS will decide if current capture and replay academic services will continue with the remaining FTE].

9. Marketing and Communications functions in Athletics and SRAPAS support ticketed functions of the University and thus are not candidates for consolidation, based on best practice examples from our peers. However, a dotted line from Athletics to the Executive Director exists and by Feb. 1, 2015, an MOU between the Director of Athletics and Executive Director outlining specific collaborative and resource-sharing steps is required. The MOU must provide a clear line of accountability for media relations/crisis communication actions in Athletics to the Executive Director, recognizing the institutional nature of those functions.

10. As a follow-up to these recommendations, if accepted, we recommend three implementation reports: December 2014, July 2015, and December 2015.

11. Recommend combining East magazine and EC Alumni magazine to produce one unified institutional magazine.

12. Cost-savings are anticipated in the discontinuation of ECU-TV, anticipation of fewer FTE dedicated to marketing and communications, strategic use of operating funds, and focused publications.