



University of Florida Strategic Communications Plan

Strategic Communications Planning
Committee Report
December 10, 2009



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Introduction

University of Florida Strategic Communications Planning Committee

- Created in May 2009 to prepare and present “big picture” strategic communications plan to UF Board of Trustees External Relations Committee. Sponsored by the Levin College of Law
- Consists of 20 faculty and administrators from a broad spectrum of colleges and key administrative areas. Nearly 40 participants from diverse campus units worked on Branding and Policy, Online and Electronic Communications, Research and Resources, and Best Practices subcommittees, and additional subgroups focused on deliverables
- Met monthly, with some groups meeting weekly. Reviewed research, consultations and recommendations from external consultants since 2005 and input from faculty and staff from a wide range of colleges and units, and conducted original qualitative and quantitative research
- Prepared strategic communications plan, analysis and toolkit to help unify, strengthen and focus communications efforts (public relations, branding, marketing, advertising, media relations, crisis management, strategic planning, print/online/electronic communications, process management and social media)



2009 Steering Committee

- **Chair: Debra Amirin, APR**, Director of Communications, Levin College of Law
- **Jack Battenfield**, Director of Academic Support Services, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- **Chris Brazda**, Assistant Vice President of Public Relations, University of Florida Foundation
- **Linda Hon**, Senior Associate Dean and Professor, College of Journalism and Communications
- **David Denslow**, Professor and Director, Policy Studies Program, Bureau of Economic and Business Research
- **Steve Orlando**, Interim Vice President, Marketing and Public Relations, University Relations
- **Melanie Ross**, Director, Health Science Center News and Communications
- **Christine Schoaff**, Director of Web Administration
- **Joseph Kays**, Director of Research Communications, Office of Research
- **Fedro Zazueta**, Associate CIO and Director of Academic Technologies
- **Jeanna Mastrodicasa**, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
- **Kim Pace**, Special Assistant to the Provost, Office of the Provost
- **Megan Gales**, Director of Communications, College of Engineering
- **Marie E. Zeglen**, Assistant Provost and Director of Institutional Planning and Research, Office of Institutional Planning and Research
- **Lindy Brounley**, Associate Director of Communications, Levin College of Law
- **Jodi Gentry**, Director, UF Training and Organizational Development
- **Mike Hill**, Assistant Athletic Director for External Affairs
- **Richard Lutz**, J. C. Penney Professor of Marketing and Distinguished Alumni Professor, Warrington College of Business Administration
- **Leland D. Patouillet**, Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Executive Director, UF Alumni Association
- **Technical Advisor: Mike Davis**, Electronic Communications Coordinator, Levin College of Law



Subcommittee Members

Branding and Policy Subcommittee

Chair: Linda Hon, Senior Associate Dean and Professor, College of Journalism and Communications

Members: Chris Brazda, Assistant Vice President of Public Relations, University of Florida Foundation; Sharon LaFragola Eyman, Publications Coordinator, Office of University Relations, Katie Blasewitz, Communications Coordinator, Levin College of Law, Karen Rhodenizer, Director of Communications, College of Dentistry; Kim Pace, Special Assistant to the Provost, Office of the Provost; Jeff Stevens, Webmaster, Writer, Graphic Artist, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Office of Communications and Outreach

Research and Resources Subcommittee

Chair: Megan Gales, Director of Communications, College of Engineering

Members: Marie E. Zeglen, Assistant Provost and Director of Institutional Planning and Research, Office of Institutional Planning and Research; Lindy Brounley, Associate Director of Communications, Levin College of Law; Mickie Anderson, News Program Director, IFAS; Debbie Conlon, Director, Development Info. Systems, University of Florida Foundation; Julie Frey, APR, Associate Director Information/Publication Services, UF College of Design, Construction & Planning; Steve Orlando, Director of News and Public Affairs, University Relations; John Pastor, Information and Publications Coordinator, Health Science Center; Jean Starobin, Associate Director for Administrative Services, Reitz Union

Best Practices Subcommittee

Chair: Lindy Brounley, Associate Director of Communications, Levin College of Law

Members: Tracy Brown Wright, MAMC, Director, Public Relations and Alumni Affairs, UF College of Nursing; Florida Bridgewater-Alford, Director, Community Relations, University Relations; Christine Velasquez, Editor, Insider, Publications Coordinator, Advancement Communications, UF College of Medicine; Larry Lansford, Director, News & Communications, College of Education; Kathy Kinsley-Momberger, Office of Research; Sharon Blansett, Assistant Director, Housing Research and Organizational Development; Sarah Carey, Director of Public Relations, College of Veterinary Medicine; Jill Pease, Communications Director, Public Health and Health Professions; Quinten Eyman, Director, Broadcast Media, University Relations; Jeff Stevens, Webmaster, Writer, Graphic Artist, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Office of Communications and Outreach

Online and Electronic Communications Subcommittee

Chair: Christine Schoaff, Director of UF Web Administration

Members: Tami M. Wroath, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art; Mike Davis, Online Communications Coordinator, Levin College of Law; Jeff Stevens, Webmaster, Writer, Graphic Artist, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Office of Communications and Outreach; Julie Frey, APR, Associate Director Information/Publication Services, UF College of Design, Construction & Planning; Paul Messal, Office of Research; Bruce Floyd, UF Web Administration; Mike Davis, Online Communications Coordinator, Levin College of Law; Craig Lee, Web Administrator, College of Journalism and Communications; Nicole McKeen, Publications Editor, College of Engineering; Harry Monkhorst, Information/Publication Services, UF Office for Student Financial Affairs; Dan Shields, Web Manager

Executive Summary

Key Insights



Information, education and training is essential

- UF has many excellent programs that effectively use the tools of communications to achieve goals and objectives. Others, however, focus on the tool rather than the bottom line, and too many lack access to communications expertise. These areas need help if UF is to be consistent in the quality and focus of communications efforts.



Everyone's a communicator

- Thanks in part to technology and new communication channels, many of those communicating information do not see themselves as communicators. Information dissemination and training must reach a wider audience to be effective.



Executive Summary

We recommend an ongoing, results-driven strategic communications planning process supplemented by education and training programs to:

- Improve UF's ability to achieve institutional and unit-level goals and objectives by focusing and aligning communications efforts with priorities, goals and objectives
- Enhance UF's reputation and leverage its brand to focus attention on its success in key areas such as results-driven research, academics, leadership and service
- Increase interest and public and private support for UF and compliance with its initiatives, externally (alumni, legislature & other elected officials, community & business leaders, prospective students and faculty, etc.) and internally (faculty, staff, students)
- Promote collaborative efforts and partnerships, emerging technologies, and use of new media to reduce costs and increase efficiencies
- Increase quality and cost-effectiveness of communications efforts, strengthen compliance with UF Identity Standards, and improve communication to and among internal and external audiences



Executive Summary

Key recommendations

- Clearly identify and regularly communicate institutional priorities, goals and objectives to faculty and staff and key publics
- Improve communication flow to and among internal audiences
- Encourage and reward the use of collaborative efforts and new media to reduce costs and increase efficiencies
- Identify and promote UF's brand and sub-brands and key themes and messages
- Develop mechanisms to monitor quality, branding and cost-effectiveness of communications efforts and compliance with UF Identity Standards
- Provide complimentary services in essential communications areas to campus units to increase consistency, quality and cost-effectiveness
- Provide information, education and training in communications areas
- Planning efforts should be based on a understanding of how to create practical, implementable strategic communications plans in this academic environment, and how communications for large, complex, multifaceted institutions like UF vary from those for organizations with more homogeneous efforts and products.

Deliverables



UF Strategic Communications Plan

- Ongoing, results-driven, practical, implementable
- Incorporates online and social media
- “Big Picture” plan by Dec. 10, refinements in recommended follow-up phases
- A living document, plan will grow and change over time



Strategic Communications Toolkit & Web Site

- “Toolkit” of Best Practices, resources, templates, useful information and links important to everyone who communicates
- Centralized source for policies and procedures
- Toolkit content nearing completion, population of Web site to follow

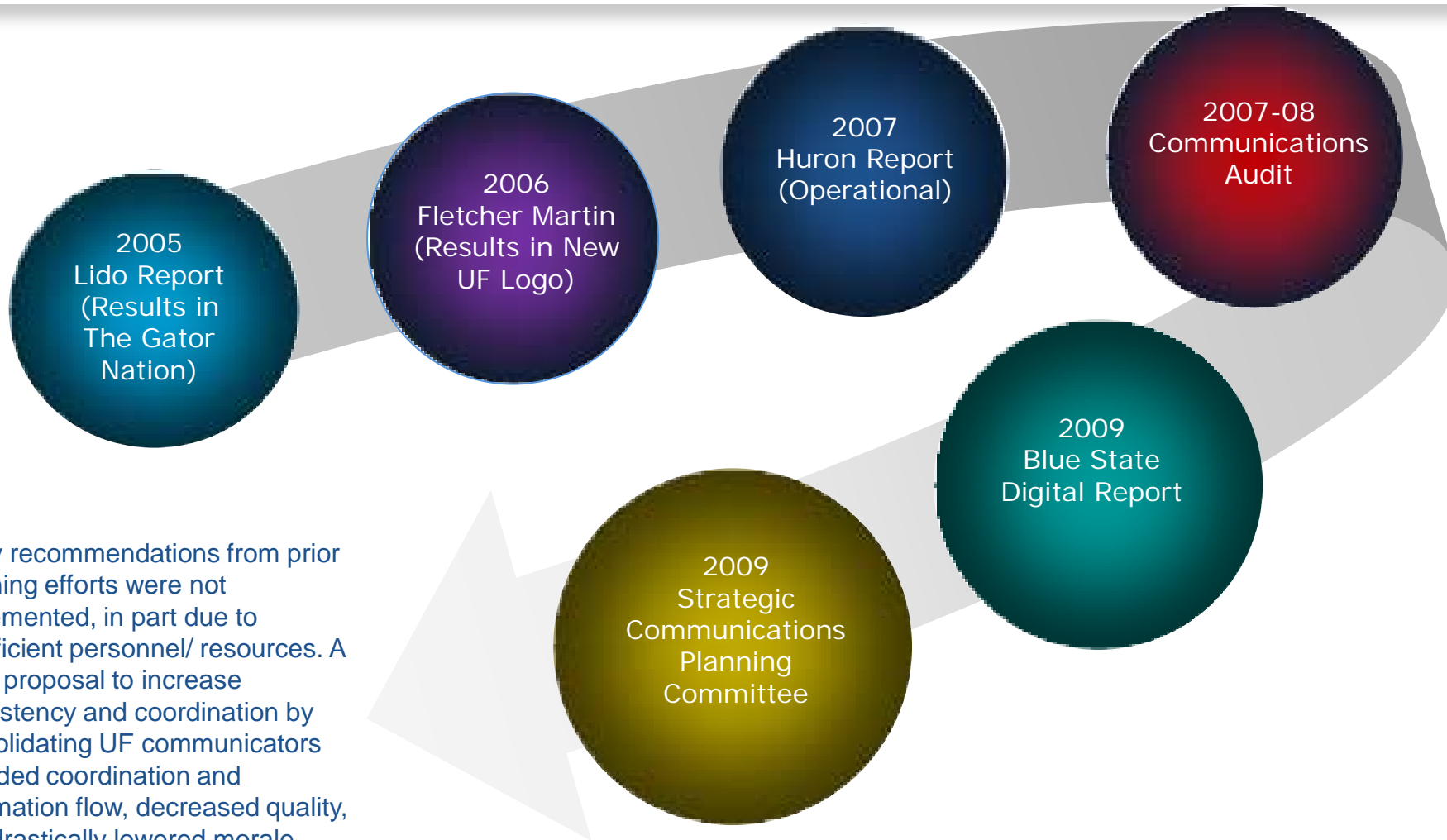


Information Awareness and Education Programs

- Everyone's a communicator: These efforts should widely disseminate information on policies, procedures, branding, standards, etc. to all UF faculty, staff and students. First seminar scheduled for Jan. 22, 2010
- Strategies and tactics outlined in Strategic Communications Plan



Situation Analysis



Many recommendations from prior planning efforts were not implemented, in part due to insufficient personnel/ resources. A 2009 proposal to increase consistency and coordination by consolidating UF communicators impeded coordination and information flow, decreased quality, and drastically lowered morale.



Situation Analysis

UF: Big, Complex, Diverse, High-Impact

- One of the nation's best, largest and most academically diverse public universities, with:
 - 50,000 students
 - 24,000 employees (14,000 benefits-eligible: 4,700 faculty; 8,200 TEAMS; 1,700 USPS)
 - 350,000-plus loyal alumni
 - 16 colleges
 - 150 research, service and education centers, bureaus and institutes
 - 100-plus undergraduate majors and 200 graduate programs
 - professional degrees in dentistry, law, medicine, pharmacy, nursing and veterinary medicine
 - long history of strong international programs
- Health Science Center serves as major referral center for patients in southeastern United States. Health and dental services are provided in Gainesville, Leesburg, Hawthorne, Fanning Springs, Ocala, Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Hialeah, and Vero Beach (UF Center for Psychiatry)
- Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences has 13 world-class research and education centers, including the world's largest citrus research center, and Cooperative Extension Offices in each of the state's 67 counties



Situation Analysis

University of Florida (continued)

- Facilities and offerings include the Cancer and Genetics Research Building; Florida Museum of Natural History, including the world's second-largest butterfly and moth collection; Harn Art Museum and Performing Arts Center, with artistic performances and exhibits from around the world; and award-winning institutes of documentary filming and digital media
- UF has one of the best sports programs in the U.S (top 10), and its championship football and basketball teams provide high visibility for The Gator Nation. The University Athletic Association supports and helps fund academic programs
- Every dollar appropriated to UF generates \$8 in total economic impact spent in Florida. UF contributes nearly \$6 billion annually to Florida's economy and is responsible for nearly 75,000 jobs. Student spending supports businesses and tourism
- Funding for UF is fundamental to developing an innovation economy for Florida. UF provides the highly skilled workers vital to success in the technology market; attracts grants, gifts and talented faculty, staff and students; and benefits the public through its economic impact and research discoveries.



Situation Analysis

University of Florida (continued)

- UF is a leading research university, and one of only 17 public, land-grant universities in the prestigious Association of American Universities. Its size and wide range of programs offer nearly unique opportunities for interdisciplinary efforts. UF consistently ranks in the top 10 in patents and licensing, and technologies contribute \$500M+ to Florida's economy. UF was awarded \$574 million in sponsored research in 2008. Also:
 - Milken Institute named UF one of the top-five U.S. institutions in the transfer of biotechnology research to the marketplace (2006)
 - Some 50 biotechnology companies have resulted from faculty research programs
 - Royalty and licensing income includes the glaucoma drug Trusopt, sports drink Gatorade, and Sentricon termite elimination system
 - In 2002, UF began leading six other universities under a \$15 million NASA grant to work on a variety of space-related research during a five-year period
 - UF began a partnership with Spain in 2000 and created the world's largest telescope in the Canary Islands, which was completed in 2009
 - In 2009, UF received a \$26 million Clinical and Translational Science Award
 - Plans are under way to construct a new 50,000-square-foot research facility in collaboration with the Burnham Institute in Orlando focusing on diabetes, aging, genetics and cancer



Situation Analysis

Key Areas

- Academic Affairs
- Admissions
- Alumni Association
- Athletic Association
- Career Services
- Colleges (Agricultural and Life Sciences; Business Administration; Dentistry; Design, Construction and Planning; Education, Engineering; Fine Arts; Health and Human Performance; Journalism and Communications; Law; Liberal Arts and Sciences; Medicine; Nursing; Pharmacy; Public Health and Health Professions; Veterinary Medicine)
- Health Affairs (Shands HealthCare and Health Science Center)
- Human Resource Services
- Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS)
- Libraries
- Sponsored Research, 150 Research Centers & Institutes
- Student Affairs
- University of Florida Foundation, Inc.
- University Relations
- Business Services
- Harn Art Museum
- Florida State Museum



Situation Analysis

Strengths

- Highly ranked and respected in numerous areas of excellence, with a proven track record of success in numerous research areas (top-10 in patents & licensing)
- Large, diverse, and comprehensive, with nearly unmatched opportunities for effective interdisciplinary efforts
- Widespread awareness of University of Florida and Gator Nation theme personality and signature brand component, thanks in large part to success of athletic programs
- Nearly 350,000 loyal, proud alumni—including many leaders in politics, business, legal & health care professions—and 50,000 superb students
- Many faculty are leaders in key fields and recognized nationally for expertise in prominent areas such as law, business, medicine, agriculture and the environment
- Desirable location, extensive and high-quality facilities, strong presence in every Florida county
- Communications: Strong externally-oriented programs in media relations/news dissemination, government relations, and publications in many areas and units. Excellent self-contained programs in the Health Science Center, Shands, College of Law, Human Resources and other units.



Situation Analysis

Weaknesses

- Lack of resources and funding
- Large institutional size, complexity and inertia makes change difficult, and hampers efforts to respond rapidly to increased competition and shifts in the marketplace
- Emphasis on Gator Nation brand component solidified our reputation for athletic excellence, but overshadowed academic and research accomplishments
- UF is viewed as a regional school, not a national leader
- Low faculty/staff morale and motivation
- Communications: Campus culture does not encourage collaborative efforts, and internal mechanisms for sharing information and unifying efforts are inadequate; many communications efforts need to be results-oriented and focus on the goal rather than the tool (publication, press release, event, etc.), align with institutional goals and objectives, and comply with UF Identity Standards; key themes and messages and shifting university-wide priorities are not identified and communicated, leading to inconsistent messaging



Situation Analysis

Opportunities

- Exploring partnerships and collaborative efforts with others on and off-campus can leverage resources and improve results
- UF's proven success in research-related areas can attract faculty "stars" and increase funding through grants and gifts
- Strengthening strategic planning and communications efforts can improve UF's ability to justify and attract funding and attain goals and objectives
- Communications: Emerging technologies and new media offer new abilities to communicate quickly and cost-effectively; we can leverage our high-profile Gator Nation brand component to encompass other outstanding aspects of our institution; effective, results-driven communications efforts can assist units in meeting goals and objectives; providing students, alumni, faculty and staff with compelling, clear consistent messages can help them energize their peers and tell our story



Situation Analysis

Threats

- Increasing competition from other institutions for funding and quality faculty, staff and students
- Reduced funding (public, private, investment returns)
- Political loyalties increasingly lie with institutions in key constituent areas, weakening traditional support for UF as state's flagship university
- Staff reductions mean more work for fewer people and increases the possibility that duties are assigned to staff lacking appropriate expertise and/or training
- Lack of resources for staff education and training hampers ability of personnel to utilize new technologies and media and maintain quality work performance
- Communications: Emerging technologies and new media promote horizontal spread of information and widespread ability to communicate without the assistance of trained staff, often leading to poor-quality, uncoordinated products and efforts. In worst-case scenarios, careless use of social media can lead to legal action



Research Reports & Data

Communications Audit

Current Communications Efforts, Best Practices

Areas of Strength and Weakness

Target Audiences

Demographics
Desired Attitudes & Behaviors

Effective Communication Channels

Market Research

Top Universities

Peer Universities

Effective Communications

Standard and Emerging Communication Channels

Policies and Procedures, Techniques



Research Reports & Data

Major Reports Since 2005

- 2005 Lido Report (UF communications-oriented)
- 2006 Fletcher Martin Report (Gator Nation Branding Campaign)
- 2006 UF Media Relations Reports
- Gap Analysis reports (perceptions, comparisons, etc.)
- 2007 Huron Report (primarily operational)
- 2007 UFCN Publications Survey
- 2009 Blue State Digital Report



Research Reports & Data

Original Research

- Alumni Association Survey
- National Best Practices Survey with CASE
- Research on primary target audience demographics and preferred communication channels
- Market research and information on effective communications techniques and trends via CASE, Internet, conference information, etc.
- Student Survey, Office of Institutional Planning and Research
- Online and Electronic Media Report



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Goals

Strengthen and support UF's efforts to:

- Fulfill its academic, research and service mission
- Achieve general and targeted goals and objectives
- Justify and attract support and funding

Improve, refine, focus and coordinate communications to:

- Improve return on investment
- Increase effectiveness in disseminating information and modifying opinions, attitudes and behaviors

Promote collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships and strategic alliances among internal and external constituents



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Goal: Strengthen and support UF's efforts to fulfill its academic, research and service mission, achieve general and targeted goals and objectives, and justify and attract support and funding

Strategy: Work with central administration and units to identify key goals and objectives and current priorities, identify target audiences and desired attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, and create tailored communications plans to increase efficiency and effectiveness

- **Tactic:** Structure and strengthen University Relations to provide expert consultation, training and at least basic communications services to units lacking in-house resources and others as needed and appropriate
- **Tactic:** Promote, recognize and reward strategic planning and approaches
- **Tactic:** Provide education and training in key communications areas to all those who communicate, including those not identified as professional communicators
- **Tactic:** Promote consistency and quality by providing free, high-quality, easy-to-use online templates and guides that conform to Best Practices and Identity Standards
- **Tactic:** Monitor communications and identify and work with units in need of guidance and assistance
- **Tactic:** Develop mechanisms for disseminating and sharing information and encouraging collaboration
- **Tactic:** Develop mechanisms for administrators, faculty and staff to regularly communicate key information to communicators to incorporate into communication vehicles, such as the need to increase awareness of UF's economic impact and relevance to business interests and the community
- **Tactic:** Collaborate with others to broaden and enhance efforts

(continued)



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Strategy: Strengthen efforts to attract and justify public and private engagement and investments and secure public and legislative support

- **Tactic:** Support University of Florida Foundation and other fundraising efforts
- **Tactic:** Discover and promote stories that position UF as a good steward of resources entrusted to it
- **Tactic:** Showcase outstanding examples of how public or private investments have paid off in results and/or benefits, emphasize “results-driven research” where unit-appropriate
- **Tactic:** Promote a culture of “Giving Back” among current students and continue theme in alumni audience
- **Tactic:** Increase awareness of UF’s economic impact and relevance to business interests and the community
- **Tactic:** Promote loyalty and continued support through strengthened stewardship efforts
- **Tactic:** Use e-mail and social media to support external fundraising efforts

Strategy: Improve UF’s reputation and rankings in academic and research areas

- **Tactic:** Develop communications vehicles targeted toward opinion-leaders and key audiences
- **Tactic:** Leverage publicity and widespread awareness gained through high-profile programs (example, athletics) to promote other aspects of the UF brand
- **Tactic:** Incorporate appropriate brand aspects and corresponding key themes and messages in all communications (must be done subtly and well in order to retain integrity and quality)
- **Tactic:** Continue to weave messages of research and academic excellence into Gator Nation advertising for television and print
- **Tactic:** Coordinate timing to maximize effectiveness (i.e. USNWR balloting)



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Goal: Improve, refine, focus and coordinate communications efforts to improve return on investment and increase cost-effectiveness in disseminating information and modifying opinions, attitudes and behaviors

Strategy: Strengthen and coordinate communications efforts

- **Tactic:** Work with units to ensure communications efforts comply with UF Identity Standards and meet minimum standard of quality and performance. Enforce compliance through tiered system of warnings. Recognize and reward outstanding efforts (Golden Gators Awards)
- **Tactic:** Create “Communications Certification” program in cooperation with Human Resource Services
- **Tactic:** Initiate regular UFCN programs and seminars on strategic planning, new media, branding, identity standards, and key themes and messages and how to incorporate them at the unit level. Archive online
- **Tactic:** Widely disseminate communications information, since technology and social media have accelerated communications-related efforts by many who do not consider themselves communicators
- **Tactic:** Align the diverse voices of campus communicators with key themes and messages and institutional goals and objectives
- **Tactic:** Educate and train communicators on how to include desirable brand components while maintaining quality and credibility
- **Tactic:** Consult with units to help them determine how resources can be best allocated to serve institutional priorities
- **Tactic:** If appropriate while maintaining effectiveness, shift from print to digital communications and redirect savings in printing and postage toward online and digital communications resources (personnel, infrastructure, training)
- **Tactic:** Evaluate the success of each effort and adjust as needed. Quality and consistency are key; develop systems to ensure both.



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Strategy: Improve effectiveness and return on investment through judicious and appropriate use of social media and online and digital communications

- **Tactic:** Consult with UF Privacy and General Counsel's Offices to identify proper use of new media, particularly as it relates to the Sunshine Law, and develop policies, procedures and guides to avoid legal liability and ensure best use of social media in alignment with best practices. Develop policy, disseminate, and post online. Offer a seminar on "Safe" Social Media (scheduled for Jan. 22, 2010) Offer continuing education and training on social media strategies and applications through Human Resource Services and UFCN and SCPC presentations
- **Tactic:** Reinvest postage and print savings in education, training, technology and personnel, since social media and digital communications are often time-intensive and require specialized skills
- **Tactic:** Promote and reward use of online and digital publications. Help ensure communications efforts comply with UF Identity Standards and meet minimum standard of quality and performance by providing an easy to use online archive of templates, procedures and guides and frequently updated Best Practices information
- **Tactic:** Develop and widely disseminate practical recommendations and communications strategies to guide the use of social networking sites, since technology and social media have accelerated communications-related efforts by many who do not consider themselves communicators
- **Tactic:** Position University Relations personnel to provide quality social media and digital communications services swiftly and at competitive rates through training and new hire selection
- **Tactic:** Identify best use of specific social media or digital media for target audiences and type of communication effort (i.e. information dissemination, branding, alerts)

(continued)



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

(Continued)

Strategy: Improve return on investment and increase effectiveness in disseminating information and modifying opinions, attitudes and behaviors of key target audiences

- **Tactic:** Identify specific target audiences for each product or effort and consider the most cost-effective way to reach each target audience
- **Tactic:** Increase number of valid and current alumni e-mail addresses and keep database updated
- **Tactic:** Work with communicators to develop unit-level strategic communications plans to support both institutional and unit goals
- **Tactic:** Educate and train communicators in message development and incorporation, audience segmentation, effective communications channels and related topics
- **Tactic:** Make information on current institutional priorities and key themes and messages, along with practical guides on integrating them into unit communications, readily available and update regularly
- **Tactic:** Recognize and reward outstanding and successful efforts

Strategy: Coordinate efforts and increase availability of key information and services

- **Tactic:** Strengthen University Relations Office to provide enhanced services and increased information flow to units
- **Tactic:** Develop systems for increasing internal collaboration and information sharing
- **Tactic:** Build strategic communications Web site that includes standardized policies and procedures, easy-to-use templates, and general recommendations

(continued)



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

(Continued)

Strategy: Align the diverse voices of campus communicators with key themes and messages and institutional goals and objectives

- **Tactic:** Widely disseminate information related to UF's economic impact and relevance, along with other key themes and messages, to communicators, with examples of how this information and message can be incorporated into communications efforts
- **Tactic:** Work with communicators in appropriate areas on message development and incorporation, audience segmentation, effective approaches and communications channels
- **Tactic:** Incorporate economic impact message into Gator Nation advertising for television and print



Goals, Strategies & Tactics

Goal: Develop and promote mutually beneficial partnerships, collaborative efforts and strategic alliances among internal and external constituents with common goals and objectives

Strategy: Tap into campus resources and expertise

- **Tactic:** Offer education & training in key communications-related topics. Initiate “Strategic Communications Seminar Series” to focus on areas of general concern or widespread interest. Create a Professional Development Committee through the UFCN to provide targeted education and training in key communications areas. Investigate partnerships with Human Resource Services, A&P Assembly, Faculty Development, Association for Academic Women and others.
- **Tactic:** Utilize student interns and volunteers. Create well-supervised systems where students can gain experience while providing inexpensive or free labor and provide opportunities for faculty/staff to share their expertise while gaining exposure and experience
- **Tactic:** Improve information dissemination and promote collaborative efforts among internal audiences. Work with groups already serving key audiences (Faculty Senate, Student Affairs, A&P Assembly, Community Relations, etc.)
- **Tactic:** Work with Office of Institutional Planning and Research and identify other sources to acquire current data and statistics to support key themes and messages and audience-specific brand aspects

Strategy: Develop public/private partnerships to enhance resources and leverage efforts

- **Tactic:** Identify potential partners (Chamber of Commerce, industry leaders, etc.) whose success would be enhanced by attaining this goal, or would otherwise benefit from collaborative efforts
- **Tactic:** Recognize and reward faculty and staff who successfully use collaborative techniques



Branding & Messaging

The reality of who we are (facts, figures, institutional efforts over time) intersects with what is important to UF's varied target audiences to create our brand: the essence of who we are as reflected in the minds and hearts of others.

The dominance of specific brand components varies with target audience and project goal. Units often have unique brand components and target audiences.

Differential Branding:

Brand components that differentiate us from others. What is different and better about us compared to our competitors?



Key themes and messages illustrate and validate the brand, often support specific goals and objectives, and vary with the target audience.

Themes guide the content and thrust of the messages. There should be fewer than four themes; each with its own set of key messages.

Messages relate to project goals and resonate with key target audiences. Messages should be clear, concise, and positive.



Selection and types of stories, quotes, facts and figures, advertising, special events, online content and other communications tools support, justify and lend credibility to the brand and specific key themes and messages in support of institutional goals and objectives.



Branding & Messaging

Like other leading academic institutions and companies with many widely diverse programs, products and services, UF is branded by its name/logo and key brand components.



**We are stronger together.
Include UF name/logo and
focus on key themes**

UF brand components feed into key themes

Leadership

Results-driven research and discovery, athletic champions, state's flagship university, sustainability, success, innovation, collaboration, value/high return on investment

UF improves lives and serves our state and nation

Scientific, economic, cultural & legal impact; education and training of future workers/leaders; land grant institution; quality programs and services in health care, law, veterinary medicine, nursing, extension; improving lives through research & discovery

The Foundation for 'The Gator Nation'

Passion, loyalty, connection, success (signature brand identity)



Branding & Messaging

University Messages (preliminary, to be expanded and refined in Phase 2)

- The University of Florida is a national leader in results-driven research, and one of only 17 public, land-grant universities in the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is larger and offers a wider range of programs than most institutions, enabling it to offer nearly unique opportunities for interdisciplinary research.
- Funding for the University of Florida is fundamental to developing an innovation economy for Florida. UF provides the highly skilled workers vital to success in the technology market; attracts grants, gifts and talented faculty, staff and students; and benefits the public through its economic impact and research discoveries.
- Each dollar appropriated to the University of Florida generates \$8 in total economic impact in the state. UF contributes nearly \$6 billion annually to Florida's economy, and is responsible for nearly 75,000 jobs. Student spending supports local and statewide businesses and tourism.
- The Gator Nation is loyal, powerful, and everywhere...and you can join us. Your investment (tuition, donations, time, support, affiliation, loyalty, etc.) makes you part of the University of Florida's efforts to (cure cancer, prepare students for tomorrow's workplace, etc.)
- The University of Florida educates tomorrow's leaders, teachers, scientists; nurtures creation of original thought and research; and maximizes returns on public or private investments. We are one of the nation's best values in higher education, offering an exceptional and excellent range of educational choices and career paths.
- The University of Florida maximizes benefits to the people of our state and nation through collaborative partnerships and alliances with public and private entities.
- We strive for excellence and return value many times over for public and private investments. Our work is worthy of support and of significant impact to the people of our community, state, nation and beyond.
- UF's wide range of exceptional teaching, research and extension programs have a profound impact in areas ranging from the economy to the environment (healthcare to fine arts, athletics to agriculture, law to linguistics, physics to the performing arts...)



Branding & Messaging

Examples of Effective Branding in Targeted Efforts

- **UF&Shands: The Science of Hope**
UF brand components used: quality health care services, results-driven research, quality, innovation, excellence, value/high return on investment
- **UF: Working for Florida**
UF brand components used: results-driven research, success, quality, innovation, excellence, high return on investment, scientific, economic, cultural & legal impact; education and training of future workers and leaders; quality programs and services, improving lives through research & discovery
- **Gators for Higher Education**
UF brand components used: excellence, impact, connection, loyalty of alumni and students
- **Florida Tomorrow campaign**
UF brand components used: results-driven research, success, quality, innovation, excellence, high return on investment, impact, connection, passion and loyalty of alumni and students
- **The Gator Nation campaign**
UF brand components used: success, results-driven research, excellence, connection, passion and loyalty of alumni, students and fans--The Gator Nation
- **UF/IFAS: Solutions for Your Life**
UF brand components used: quality extension services, results-driven research, success, innovation, excellence, value/high return on investment, impact
- **Explore magazine**
UF brand components used: results-driven research, success, quality, innovation, excellence, high return on investment, scientific, economic, cultural & legal impact; education and training of future workers and leaders; quality programs and services, improving lives through research & discovery



Branding & Messaging

Key Message Development in Phase 2

- Communications today are increasingly targeted to specific audiences and project objectives. A large, complex, diverse institution like UF will have multiple sub-brands, themes and messages.
- Aspects of the University of Florida brand should be carefully chosen to tie into the unit brand in a way that contributes to both institutional and unit success. For example, as our “theme personality” and signature brand component, The Gator Nation resonates well with fans, alumni and other target audiences, but can conflict with efforts promoting collaboration with those affiliated with other universities. In those cases, other themes and aspects of the UF brand should be dominant (results-driven research, high return on investment, etc.)
- The continued review and/or development of general and unit- or project-specific key themes and messages is recommended following analysis of research efforts now underway by the Best Practices Committee and an internal communications survey that is highly recommended for early 2010.



Action Items

UF Board of Trustees External Relations Committee

- Review proposed Strategic Communications Plan
- Support efforts to ensure consistency in quality and compliance with Identity Standards
- Understand and support the value of communications efforts to the overall success of the university



Action Items

UF Administration

- Support development of mechanisms to increase information flow between administrative levels and units, horizontally and vertically, and promote collaborative partnerships and efforts
- Make it a priority to inform faculty and staff of institutional direction and priorities on at least an annual basis. Take an active role in ensuring that communications efforts are in alignment with institutional and unit goals
- Recognize and support the value of communications efforts to the overall success of the university. Provide funding to enhance and proactively extend main campus services in key communications areas to units



Action Items

UF University Relations

- Help develop mechanisms to increase information flow between administrative levels and units, horizontally and vertically, and promote collaborative partnerships and efforts
- Work with UFCN and other volunteers to implement Strategic Communications Plan, make information on priorities and key communications areas (marketing plans, digital publications, etc.) available through the Strategic Communications Web site, and publicize standards, rules and procedures
- Help develop a comprehensive communications & marketing “matrix” to identify potential communications partners and opportunities for collaborative efforts and minimize redundancy
- Enhance and proactively extend complementary services in key communications areas to units
- Help ensure communications efforts are in compliance with UF identity standards and Best Practices and in alignment with unit and institutional goals



Action Items

UF Communicators

- For every effort or product, identify its purpose and potential return on investment and then evaluate its effectiveness. Are your efforts reaching key audiences and changing their level of information, awareness, attitudes and/or behaviors? Factor in personnel time, often the greatest cost for online and digital publications and social media communication channels
- Reinvest savings from reduced print and postage costs in training and/or hiring personnel in online and digital communications strategies and in effective database management to improve accuracy and consistency in addresses, e-mail addresses, sorting options, etc.
- Alert University Relations or appropriate committee of needs for training or guidance
- Help ensure that communications efforts are in compliance with UF identity standards and Best Practices and in alignment with unit and institutional goals
- Use and help maintain Strategic Communications Web site



Resources

Resources Needed to Employ Strategies

- The basics of this plan can be accomplished using existing personnel and resources and by continuing to utilize volunteers through the Strategic Communications Planning Committee and University of Florida Communications Network. We note that this may significantly impact workloads and require reprioritization.
- We highly recommend units consider reinvesting savings from reduced print and postage costs in training and/or hiring personnel in online and digital communications strategies and in effective database management to improve accuracy and consistency in addresses, e-mail addresses, sorting options, etc.
- We highly recommend administrators consider high-quality, effective communications to be an institutional priority in funds allocation.



Recommended Phases

Phase 1 June-December 2009

- Situation/SWOT Analysis
- Identify and clarify brand components and key themes & messages
- Produce Strategic Communications Plan (SCP)
- Initiate Toolkit, Web site, and Seminar Series

Phase 2 January-May 2010

- Reconfigure SCP Committee
- Hold initial Strategic Communications Seminar
- Focus on key message development
- Populate SCP Web site

Phase 3 June-December 2010

- Continue SCP Implementation
- Identify and address areas of need and review increasingly specific areas
- Focus on external communications