Assessment Report for
Office of Communications & Marketing, 2012

Expected Outcomes: Promote a strong Auburn University brand.
Provide a central resource for message strategies and clearly branded marketing materials for campus partners (enrollment management, development, student affairs, academic affairs, and the president's office).

Related typical general education outcomes: None

Assessment methods

Method: Create a brand steering committee
The steering committee will review research, discuss messages, and evaluate creative.

Findings:
Steering committee with representatives for all administrative and academic areas was established early in 2012.

How did you use findings for improvement?
The steering committee has reviewed existing research by Simpson Scarborough, analyzed metrics of audience perceptions, evaluated a potential brand platform, and is scheduled to evaluate creative in early 2013. Nine months of work in a two-year process is complete.

Additional comments: None

Method: Improve communication between colleges and central
Develop more consistent ties with college communicators.

Findings:
A dotted-line was established between the office and decentralized communicators.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Communicators were interviewed about the types of resources that would help them centrally.

Additional comments: OCM established several new users groups - video and news - that the communicators could join, and the large group meetings were changed to include a learning component (i.e. survey software, iTunesU usage, etc.).

Method: Track audience engagement
Use consistent metrics, such as website hits or social media engagement, to track audience engagement with marketing campaigns or news stories.

Findings:
Social media engagement remains the strongest, and news stories can easily be shared to increase audience reach. For printed media, the alumni magazine generates the best response.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Continued monitoring is necessary.

Additional comments: None

Method: Maintain and monitor graphic standards
Provide rules for graphics and logo use and provide approvals to print marketing materials in accordance with standards.
Findings:
As new employees are hired, the education process of using proper graphics and logos must continue.

How did you use findings for improvement?
One-on-one meetings are necessary to help with visual identity and understanding the rules.

Additional comments: Consistent use of logos aids with consistent recognition in the media and recruitment.

Expected Outcomes: Provide comprehensive communications resources.
Provide the following services to campus units: media relations, web design, social media, graphic design, editing, broadcast and video taping, events management, and photography. Audiences include internal (students, faculty, staff) and external (prospective students, parents, alumni, and fans).

Related typical general education outcomes: None

Assessment methods

Method: Deliver full-service multi-media campaigns
Working with campus clients, schedule and provide deliverable marketing pieces to reach target audiences.

Findings:
Creative services printed 533 pieces, up from 511 last fiscal year.

How did you use findings for improvement?
The coordination between printed design and electronic design improved with the addition of shared resources and QR codes on printed materials (scan with smart phone to access electronic media).

Additional comments: QR codes also provide an additional way to track engagement.

Method: Evaluate campaign effectiveness
Establish a metric of success to track for marketing campaigns. (i.e., level of adopters for new introduction, compliance with new rules promoted in a campaign, etc.)

Findings:
Social media remains the most effective way to engage audiences with a great deal of sharing of news items.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Coordination in each campaign to include print, web, and some element of social media.

Additional comments: None

Expected Outcomes: Maintain positive media relations.
Provide news about the university in a timely manner. Manage and respond to media inquiries, including critical issues and crisis communication situations.

Related typical general education outcomes: None

Assessment methods

Method: Monitor news reports.
Follow news reports and story trends.

Findings:
A new clipping service may be necessary that monitors both print and electronic media postings.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
Current evaluations and trial periods are underway for improvement in capturing broadcast news.

**Additional comments:** Electronic clipping service that evaluates positive and negative coverage trends has been purchased.

**Method: Track adjustment in media as news cycles change**
How does our ability to tell the Auburn story suffer as several major state publications have moved from daily distribution to three days per week supplemented by web distribution?

**Findings:**
Bloggers and social media often tells the story first. Relationships with reporters are more critical than ever if social media fails to capture the story correctly and/or does not allow for the depth necessary.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
Auburn features, photos, and video are made available to local reporters to help them do more with fewer resources.

**Additional comments:** Al.com has emerged as the most widely read source of state-wide news.

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**Expected Outcomes: Increase brand awareness**
Increase the frequency Auburn University is mentioned by prospective students and their parents when asked to name prestigious academic institutions in the Southeast.

**Related typical general education outcomes:** None

**Assessment methods**

**Method: Monitor unaided awareness survey responses**
According to Simpson Scarborough study, 48% of parents mention Auburn and 29% of prospective students mention Auburn in unaided awareness studies.

**Findings:**
2012 findings:
- 48% of parents mention Auburn
- 29% of prospective students mention Auburn

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
A comprehensive theme and messaging points are being developed. Direct mail marketing will be redesigned with more emphasis on bold statements of fact.

**Additional comments:** Focus groups with students are helping to finalize imagery to coordinate with messages.

**Method: Monitor list of differentiating attributes**
Assess list of positive and negative associations with Auburn using word clouds for prospects, alumni and parents

**Findings:**
Word clouds of positive attributes included - academics, athletics, and family. Negatives included cost and distance.
How did you use findings for improvement?
Develop marketing messages to focus on strong academic standings, outcomes for successful students, and quality of student experience

Additional comments: None

Expected Outcomes: Improve awareness of programs
Monitor the awareness levels of academic programs and expertise among prospective students, parents, donors, and alumni

Related typical general education outcomes: None

Assessment methods

Method: Survey level of understanding of programs offered
Current awareness levels in Simpson Scarborough for Engineering among prospective students.

Findings:
34% of prospective students associate Auburn with Engineering programs.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Develop a clearer outline for communications of all majors and programs of study available.

Additional comments: None