



**COMMITTEE ON MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS  
AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Telephone Conference Call**

**February 26, 2019**

**123 Tigert Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL**

**Time Convened: 2:00 p.m.**

**Time Adjourned: 3:07 p.m.**

**Committee and Board members present:**

Robert G. Stern (Chair), David L. Brandon, Thomas G. Kuntz, Daniel T. O’Keefe, Rahul Patel, Marsha D. Powers, Katie Vogel Anderson and Anita G. Zucker.

**Others present:**

Nancy Paton, Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing; Mark Kaplan, Vice President for Government and Community Relations; Melissa Orth, Assistant Secretary and Becky Holt, Office of the Provost.

**1.0 Verification of Quorum**

Becky Holt called the roll and noted those Trustees that were in attendance.

**2.0 Call to Order and Welcome**

Committee Chair Stern welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that this was an informational meeting to prepare for the March 29, 2019 regular meeting, and no action was planned or taken at this preparatory meeting.

**3.0 Discussion Items**

Committee Chair Stern stated that Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing Nancy Paton will present the Strategic Plan for the Marketing, Public Relations and Strategic Communications Committee that will be presented at the March 29, 2019 meeting.

**Decision Day #UF23**

Chair Stern stated that UF had a total of 41,000 applications for admissions with only 6,550 open slots. February 8, 2019 was Decision Day and UF was on fire in the media. UF established a social media command center that was staffed with 27 staff and student interns. The social media command center was staffed from 3:00 p.m. – 12:30 a.m.

Vice President Paton indicated her office partnered with Enrollment Management to build the excitement and engagement through social media efforts. Since UF is recruiting the best and

brightest students and we need to let the students know that they are making the right choice to attend UF while they are deciding on which school they wish to attend.

UF is the first in higher education to engage in a new social media channel called Tic Tok which UF currently has 50,000 fans. It is a video sharing app that is geared towards 13-18 year olds who will be applying to UF in the next several years.

Twitter has biggest target audience and reaches people that have not been reached before. #UF23 trended nationally for 3 hours. Trending is important because Twitter users use trends to see what's happening in the world and puts more eyes on the University of Florida for a positive, academic cause. The heat map shows we reached national markets. It takes the conversation out of our community and puts us in the national conversation.

UF received national media exposure with the kid that got accepted into his dream school who was a star of a video that went viral 10 years ago with "David after Dentist" when he was 8 years old in a Gator t-shirt who exhibited bizarre behavior after a visit to the dentist. We shared the story on Twitter and Facebook and the story was picked up by the Orlando Sentinel as well as the Today Show.

Chair Stern thanked Vice President Paton and all of her team for a great job.

### **Peer Influencer Campaign**

We have a comprehensive plan to get the U.S. News and World Report ranking up. Comprehensive analysis to build the national brand. We will be targeting peer groups to reach those that influence the voters. We have found that reaching out to national higher education conferences, APLU and AMA with a variety of tactics, i.e. key cards to get in front of our peers and influencers to tell our story.

Vice President Paton stated that to get results it takes an average of 6 opportunities in messaging to target markets and achieve impressions. The reach is around the world. If the audience does not click on the display ad then the ad was not significant enough to catch their attention. The Fall 2018 digital campaign generated nearly 17 million impressions between September and December. The individuals that came into the UF portal last Fall to view the Solving for Next microsite was up by 164% from the previous year.

The voting period for the U.S. News and World Report ranking begins in early April and ends in early June. Our Spring 2019 campaign will coincide with the timing of this voting period. We are exploring some exciting new channels that we will utilize to target our key influencers but will continue to advertise in higher education, state and national channels that were successful in the past.

Chair Stern indicated that the reach will be a deeper and wider campaign to include friends, alumni, donors and legislators. We are targeting specific markets that help left student recruitment efforts, and support advancement and alumni affairs.

## **Website Redesign**

Vice President Paton stated that it had been over 5 years since the UF website has been looked at. There is no consistency. It needs to immortalize the experience of being here. It will be an 18 month project.

The homepage has more than 1 million plus pages in the digital ecosystem and 720 plus micro-websites and more than 12.5 million page views each year. Conducted in-depth research and an audit of the current site that shows where users have clicked and how far they went on the page. Usability testing was done as well to see how users completed a task by navigating the website. Interviews were conducted of 80 individuals across campus to find out their needs and wants for the site. The individuals were from all areas of campus.

The importance of the website is a means to enhance the institution's reputation and conduct business needs of each department and unit and to advance the One UF strategy through a seamless user experience. The goal is to create a website that is best in class and utilizes the highest standards of innovation. Will make sure the new templates and modules can accommodate the design and messaging needs while creating a consistent integrated messaging and visual adoption. And will make sure the system offers a simple back-end development for ease of use for those staff that do not have web experience.

## **Research Promotion Initiative**

Chair Stern indicated we need to take existing research and repurpose to broaden the audience. Put in other avenues beside the published journals. Chair Stern stated that Provost Glover funded a program to encourage faculty to share their scholarly research and reward them with an honorarium that could be used for research-related activities. To date there have been over 170 submissions and 21 awards given. Those that are not selected are looked at for other promotional efforts for branding and marketing. Chair Stern thanked Provost Glover for the monetary support.

Vice President Paton stated there were numerous stories that resulted in national and international media attention, for example:

A story from Dr. Rachael Seidler in the College of Health and Human Performance about how space flight affects the human brain appeared in Popular Science and 14 additional outlets with a reach of 3.6 million.

Dr. Aner Sela, a faculty member in the College of Business wrote an article on how we can get people to make better financial decisions by changing the way they think about those decisions. This story appeared in the New York Times and reached over 86 million readers.

A faculty member in the College of Education wrote an article on child abuse rising on the Saturday after report cards go home versus any other day of the week. The results of this story were staggering as it appeared on CBS News as well as 645 other outlets resulting in a reach of

more than 245 million. Trustee Zucker stated she was amazed to see what came out of the Anita Zucker Center in the College of Education.

## **Discussion**

Chair Stern indicated that Vice President Paton talked with everyone when she arrived to develop a Strategic Plan. She has covered a lot of ground in a short period of time.

Vice President Paton stated to get to Top 5 we need to:

- Look at trends
- Look outside higher education
- Be extremely innovative/thoughtful
- Look at trends in society

Vice President Paton indicated that there are a lot of questions about trust nowadays especially in technology companies. We have a multi-generational/multi-societal audience.

Vice President Paton stated she attended the Academic Deans Breakfast and received feedback that key stakeholders themes were focused on Performing Arts.

Vice President Paton stated that we need to build the National Brand by asking:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Why does it matter?
- Who are the students?
- What makes us different?
- Need to end whether we are in Tallahassee or Gainesville.
- We are more than football.

Vice President Paton indicated we need a cohesive messaging and she is working on taking a group of 300 communicators across campus to change the thinking of being a reporter to being a brand strategist.

Trustee Patel stated the messaging needs to be specific about the different audiences it is trying to reach. There needs to be different strategies designed to touch each of those constituencies. Who are the key constituencies? What are we solving for?

The media relations focus needs to infiltrate a number of channels and establish a thought leader. Trustees would serve as advocates on behalf of UF to Tell the story of Why.

Trustee Zucker commented about the Brain Summit that was recently held in Orlando and indicated that we have a huge opportunity to put UF on the map in leading the way to find solutions for brain cancer by using medical experts to get published. There are opportunities in every field. Engineers are working with doctors and are giving them things to think about that they wouldn't have thought about otherwise. Chair Stern stated the Brain Summit was a great opportunity for UF to be internationally recognized.

Vice President Paton stated she was looking at ways to communicate with Trustees and Stakeholders so that they are not reading about things happening at UF in the news. She is looking to bring the social media platform into Top 5. Need to add: Where We Are and Where We Stand in the Top 5 metrics. She will be looking to hire 2 Associate Vice Presidents (one in Communications and one in Marketing).

Trustee O'Keefe stated he was encouraged by the report and that it was on the right track and he was excited about the progress.

Trustee Stern indicated it was a lot for Vice President Paton to come in pull together in such a short time. The Strategic Plan will be run by the President and the Provost and then back to the committee before it is presented at the March meeting.

#### **4.0 New Business**

There was no new business to discuss.

#### **5.0 Adjourn**

Committee Chair Stern adjourned the meeting at 3:07 p.m.

**APPROVED AT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING ON MARCH 29, 2019.**