Strategic Communications Plan 2016-2020

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE LIBRARIES

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Strategic Communications Plan 2016-2020

Introduction

Central to intellectual life at the University of Louisville, the Libraries provide extraordinary services to a diverse regional and global community. This Strategic Communications Plan aims to enhance the University Libraries' position and promote their important work. It will serve as a guiding document for the next three to four years, and should be revisited yearly to ensure its ongoing viability.

Current Challenge

At present, the Libraries lacks broad structure for their marketing and communications efforts. Without a plan, many well-intentioned Libraries personnel may devote time to creating positive messages without strategy, schedule or clear mission. Successful communications and promotion occurs regularly within many units and libraries. Despite this, messages can be mixed and/or redundant.

Purpose

To promote the Libraries in a consistent and unified manner, the plan proposes goals, objectives, strategies and tactics that will support the goals of the Libraries' *Strategic Plan 2012-2020*, driven by the University of Louisville's *2020 Plan*. The vision of the Libraries' *Strategic Plan* is to "Transform relationships, collections, and spaces to become a nationally recognized model of user-focused, research library services." The University's 2020 Plan's mission to "be a premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university with a commitment to the . . . intellectual, cultural, and economic development of our diverse communities and citizens through the pursuit of excellence in five interrelated strategic areas: 1) Educational Experience; 2) Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activity; 3) Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Communication; 4) Partnerships and Collaborations; 5) Institutional Effectiveness of Programs and Services."

In support of these two guiding documents, our communications mission follows:

Libraries Communications Mission

Our mission is to increase the prominence of the University Libraries. We strive to raise awareness and increase affiliation, goodwill, and patronage through positive, consistent, truthful, clear messages supporting the strategic goals of the Libraries and the University.

Situational Analysis

A four-member communications committee reviewed data generated through primary research, an online survey, informal outreach and user assessments. The senior communications coordinator and

committee made every effort to create an inclusive process, welcoming many voices, with the intention of incorporating collective wisdom and creating a sense of shared purpose. The process included:

- Compiling a comprehensive list of stakeholders and audiences for each library and unit.
- Conducting a detailed communications inventory.
- Creating a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) list.
- Conducting outreach meetings with Libraries and units (communications coordinator) and with the Student Advisory Board.
- Hosting meetings with the Senior Administrative Team to review and discuss the Plan.

Findings

While many current efforts provide potential for marketing and communications, several areas will benefit from a fresh approach:

- A new brand for the Libraries will create a fresh image and raise the status of the Libraries. The University's Office of Communications and Marketing will assist in this effort.
- Stronger promotion to the University community – including students, faculty and staff – will help build greater awareness, affiliation and goodwill.
- Because no brand has been devised for the University Libraries, the website, following the University's Brand Guidelines, currently serves as the de facto brand for the Libraries. The website's visual branding needs updating where feasible.
- Most Libraries are active on Facebook, posting engaging items that are shared and liked. A group of individuals within the Libraries has formed a Social Media Group to streamline social media communications, share thoughts and best practices, and discuss common goals. This group has created and approved of a Social Media Policy, which is attached as an appendix in this Plan.
- Internal communications are an effective mechanism for strengthening cohesion among personnel, building goodwill, and generating enthusiasm for "speaking with one voice," a key component of a successful brand. Through its research, the communications committee found an expressed desire and need for clear and consistent internal communications about activities within the Libraries, on administrative decisions, and strategic initiatives.

What's Next

Pending approval, the Plan will be implemented beginning January 2016. A series of interactive sessions led by the senior communications coordinator with Libraries and units will address the timing, responsibility, messaging, and strategy for promotional efforts. The process of change will be incremental and gradual, with the first step to finalize a brand for the Libraries. With the help of the University's Office of Communication and Marketing, we will help determine and tell the Libraries' unique story and disseminate it to our important local and external constituencies. The following section

lists the necessary, achievable steps that will lead to successful promotion in the coming three or four years.

Communication Goals, Strategies, Objectives and Tactics

All goals, objectives, strategies and tactics fall into three main categories, below, beneath which are the specific, numbered strategies that address each. Following are the goals, etc., segmented by audience.

Awareness
Raise awareness of the University Libraries' services and collections.
(1.1; 2.1-3; 3.1-3; 4.1-2; 5.1; 5.3; 6.1-2; 7.1-2)

Affiliation
Increase and encourage affiliation and participation in the University Libraries.
(1.1; 2.2; 3.2; 5.2; 6.1-2; 7.2)

Goodwill
Increase goodwill and positive regard toward the University Libraries.
(1.A; 2.2; 3.2; 4.1-2; 5.2; 6.1-2; 7.2)

ALL AUDIENCES

GOAL 1: Establish a brand for the University Libraries.

Objective 1.A: Create a Libraries brand by Summer 2016.

Strategy 1.A.1: Define brand with assistance of Office of Communications and Marketing.

AUDIENCE: STUDENTS

GOAL 2: Increase student awareness of the services and collections within the Libraries, to encourage participation in its activities and services, and generate goodwill and positive regard for the Libraries.

Objective 2.A: Increase student participation on Libraries social media by 10% over the next year.
Objective 2.B: Place at least one positive Libraries story per semester in student publications.
Objective 2.C: Host at least three events per semester targeting student audiences.
Objective 2.D: Create or improve at least three print and electronic marketing pieces per semester.

Strategy 2.1: Use electronic and print media to convey messages tailored to each student audience on a consistent basis.

Strategy 2.2: Host and improve events tailored to appropriate student audiences.

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Strategy 2.3: Create and improve print and digital marketing collateral, and swag, for appropriate student audiences.

AUDIENCE: UNIVERSITY FACULTY

GOAL 3: Faculty and researchers will have greater awareness of the Libraries services and strong collections.

Objective 3.A: Target faculty and researchers and encourage participation in Libraries services.
Objective 3.B: Create at least one major event per year inviting faculty and researchers to learn about Libraries' offerings. Event will promote Libraries' expertise.

Strategy 3.1: Use electronic and print media to convey messages tailored to faculty audiences on a consistent basis.

Strategy 3.2: Create events tailored to faculty and researcher audiences within each library.

Strategy 3.3: Create and improve print and digital marketing collateral, and swag, for faculty and researcher audiences within each library.

AUDIENCE: UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

GOAL 4: University administration will demonstrate that it values the Libraries by materially supporting their initiatives.

Objective 4.A: Help increase Administration awareness of Libraries' services.

Strategy 4.1: Use digital and print media to convey messages tailored to University Administration, sent on a periodic basis.

Strategy 4.2: Create events whose purpose is to make University Administration aware of Libraries offerings.

AUDIENCE: LIBRARIES PERSONNEL

GOAL 5: Improve internal communications within the Libraries

Objective 5.A. Motivate Libraries personnel to advocate for the Libraries.

Strategy 5.1: Use communications messages to conduct consistent and regular outreach to Libraries personnel via electronic and print media.

Strategy 5.2: Create events to promote cohesion and camaraderie among Libraries personnel, and to increase their ability to advocate for the Libraries.

Strategy 5.3: Create infrastructure that supports communications efforts.

AUDIENCE: LIBRARIES DONORS

GOAL 6: Donors will support the Libraries and fund its programs and projects generously.

Objective 6.A. Increase readership for Libraries' Donor newsletter.
Objective 6.B. Increase open and click-through rate for e-newsletter.
Objective 6.C. Help Development Representative increase attendance at donor events.

Strategy 6.1: Conduct consistent and regular outreach to donors via electronic and print media.

Strategy 6.2: Assist Director of Major Gifts in creating and publicizing events whose purpose is to inspire donor giving.

AUDIENCE: EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES

GOAL 7: Niche communities, external audiences, Libraries across the country, and other universities will understand what we offer, and have a positive regard for the University Libraries.

Objective 7.A. Publicize at least two stories or events per semester to the niche/external community.

Strategy 7.1: Use communications messages to conduct consistent and regular outreach to external community via electronic and print media.

Strategy 7.2: Create and improve print and digital marketing collateral for external audiences.

Plan Authorship

This plan is the result of a collaborative effort. A Communications Committee led by Carolyn Dowd, Senior Communications Coordinator, included Melissa Laning, Associate Dean; Terri Holtze, Head, Web Services; and Maurini Strub, User Experience/Assessment Librarian. These efforts were supplemented monthly by the directors of the Archives and Special Collections Library, Art Library, Ekstrom Library, Kornhauser Health Sciences Library, Music Library, and the University Libraries' Dean, all of whom reviewed, commented on, and suggested edits to the plan.

Plans Consulted

Chapman University, Leatherby Libraries: *Marketing Strategy Plan for the Academic Year 2014-2015*
Cornell University Library: *Toward 2015: Cornell University Library Strategic Plan, 2011-2015*
NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library: *Library Communications Plan*
Portland State University: *FY15 Comprehensive Plan*
The Rutgers University Libraries: *Multiyear Marketing Plan, Spring 2013-Fall 2015*
University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries: *2004/05 Communications and Outreach Plan*
University of Illinois Library: *Committee Report and Marketing Plan*
The University of Kansas Libraries: *Strategic Communications Plan, 2008-2009*
University of Nevada, Las Vegas: *Libraries Communications Plan, September 28, 2005*
University of Virginia: *University Communications: In Support of the Cornerstone Strategic Plan*
University of Wisconsin, Madison: *Communications Plan, 2015*