

University Budget Advisory Committee

Minutes – 11/29/2021 Meeting

At-large faculty members present:	Nabil Al-Tikriti (Professor, CAS) Laura Bylenok (Assistant, CAS) – Secretary Randall Helmstutler (Associate, CAS) Suzanne Sumner (Professor, CAS)
College representative members present:	Chris Garcia (Associate, COB) Liane Houghtalin (Professor, CAS) – Chair
USC representative members present:	Arin Doerfler (Sr. Accountant-Fixed Assets) Kim McManus-Carini (Operations and Finance Coordinator) Marta Smith (Asst. Controller-Compliance)
Student representative member present:	Ellelyshia Ardo (SGA)
Athletics representative member present:	Patrick Catullo (Director of Athletics)
College representative member absent:	Kyle Schultz (Associate, COE)
Guest:	Malcolm Holmes (Director of Marketing)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm. The meeting was devoted to a presentation from Malcolm Holmes, Director of Marketing, and to begin Dr. Houghtalin requested an overview of how Marketing is doing with the budget that has been allocated and how our committee can advocate for what is needed. Summary of discussion:

1. Mr. Holmes provided an overview and context of Marketing, and he noted that last year was the first time in his experience starting in 2013 that Marketing was given a line item on the budget. Administration decided it was important enough to have a line item because of recruitment and the importance that marketing plays in recruitment. Overall, Marketing supports the top of the funnel and awareness-building for the University. At this time, there is very low brand recognition for the University, and though we've seen some incremental shifts and increases, there is still significant work to be done.
2. Mr. Holmes presented on several major areas of Marketing, including giving a recap of market research that informs goals, strategies and decisions, a comprehensive overview of the Marketing budget, and an overview of current campaigns.
 - a. Overview of market research. Primary research over the last couple of years has included 6,700 individuals participating in focus groups and surveys, representing a wide range of constituencies including prospective students, alumni, and parents. Secondary research includes the 2021 RNL E-Expectations Trend Report, which tells us what prospective students are looking for in terms of how we reach out and communicate. What we have learned from this research includes insights about our academic reputation, history, inclusivity, and students, along with location, value, and our marketplace in the Virginia higher education landscape, as well as our public perception, internal perception, campus, and external factors such as the demographic cliff and Covid-19. Enrollment at our institution and across the state has decreased. Covid-19 has been a major factor, and there are fewer students opting to go to college now. This year, we have 405 fewer students than we did in 2017-2018.

- b. Overview of Marketing goals and strategies. Primary goal for 2021-2022 is to increase overall awareness of UMW. Key performance indicators are click-through rates and site visits for the campaigns that we are running. Strategies include a mix of traditional and digital platforms and to keep all tactics fluid. Target markets include Northern VA, Richmond area, Hampton Roads area, and Maryland as our primary out-of-state market. Target households include students 15-18 years old. Our campaign calendar is June 2021-May 2022 to have year-round exposure and to account for the yield process that continues all the way up until August.
 - c. Overview of budget and how Marketing is utilizing that budget. The overall allocation is \$769,000 for 2021-2022 marketing budget. Last year the marketing budget was around \$478,000, and a major driver in the increased budget is that we are rolling out a new brand. Major components of spending include:
 - i. Summer advertising to support admissions to increase prospective student visits, TV, radio and other media. Total spending on advertising over the summer is \$51,000.
 - ii. Internal brand rollout. Starting in July 2021, we initiated an internal brand rollout, which included trademarking logos, light pole banners on campus, banners, displays, promotional items, and a pep rally. Total spending on the internal brand rollout is \$68,000.
 - iii. External brand-awareness campaign, running from October 2021 through April 2022. We have been working with Mindpower, who created the advertising and messaging strategy and did the media buy for us. This is a comprehensive awareness-building campaign including radio, buses, billboards, digital advertising, display advertising, TV, internet TV, and social media. Total spending on the media buy for this campaign is \$330,000. In addition, for Mindpower agency fees, including creative development, tracking, and management, spending is \$300,000.
 - iv. Grand total spending for 2021-2022 is \$750,375.
3. The meeting transitioned to questions and open discussion.
 - a. Dr. Al-Tikriti asked about the possibility of a permanent sign on the interstate, and Mr. Holmes noted the importance of having our name in the public all year long; in the past, a summer campaign that included billboards increased summer visits by 13-14%. There is the hope to continue to allocate money to do year-round advertising.
 - b. Dr. Houghtalin relayed concern from the community that individual webpages for departments are out of date, and asked whether there is a plan to address the website. Mr. Holmes said the website is an essential marketing tool, and he noted that according to web analytics there are 30,000 pages that no one has looked at in over five years. He said there is a move to create an updated website, but he is not sure how deep they will get with the current year's budget.
 - c. Dr. Sumner asked if there is any area or specific needs that our committee is able to advocate for Marketing. Mr. Holmes said to advocate to at *least* maintain the current level of budget. More money will be needed to do the revamp of the website, which is the number one marketing tool for any college or university, and we would need to boost the budget to make the website as it should be.

- d. Mr. Holmes noted that the University is a few years behind in terms of sophisticated marketing, strategies, and funding. Competitors are spending millions per year, and big schools such as Tech and UVA also get “earned media” through sports coverage on TV, equivalent to spending in the millions.
- e. In closing, Mr. Holmes noted that we are in a good space right now, that data is driving our decisions, and it’s important to continue to invest in primary and secondary research and make strategic decisions based on that research.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Bylenok

UBAC Secretary