

University Budget Advisory Committee

Minutes – 9/22/2022 Meeting

At-large faculty representatives present:	Laura Bylenok (Asst. Professor, CAS) – Chair Brad Hansen (Professor, CAS) Dan Hubbard (Assoc. Professor, CAS) Drew Delaney (Senior Lecturer, CAS)
College faculty representatives present:	Liane Houghtalin (Professor, CAS) – Co-Secretary Alexis Rutt (Asst. Professor, COE) Smita Jain Oxford (Senior Lecturer, COB)
USC representatives present:	Arin Doerfler (Senior Accountant-Fixed Assets) – Co-Secretary Kim McManus-Carini (Operations and Finance Coordinator) Ryan Snellings (Collections Manager)
Athletics representative present:	Patrick Catullo (Director of Athletics)
Student representative present:	Ellelyshia Ardo (SGA)
Guests:	Amy Jessee (Executive Director of University Communications) Jeff McClurken (Chief of Staff and Clerk of BOV)

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm. Summary of discussion:

1. After announcing that the meeting would be recorded and that the recording was not to be shared outside the committee and after having the attendees offer brief introductions, Dr. Bylenok invited the meeting's guests, Ms. Jessee and Dr. McClurken to offer information on UMW's marketing budget and any needs it might have. Dr. McClurken pointed out that this was Ms. Jessee's "show," but that she asked him to join her, because she took up her position quite recently, this past June. He was there to answer questions about anything that took place before June 25th.
2. Ms. Jessee began by pointing out that she took over from Malcolm Holmes, who had retired, and that the budget as well as a "robust marketing plan" for 2022-2023 was already in place when she arrived. Last year (21-22) was the "brand rollout" ("meaningful inquiry to help shape a complex world"), and this year (22-23) the focus is on the "brand experience." There are currently five brand goals:
 - a. Expand awareness.
 - b. Positively position UMW among peer institutions and competitors.
 - c. Strengthen the undergraduate pipeline.
 - d. Generate pride within the internal community.
 - e. Reinforce University status.
3. Ms. Jessee continued by pointing out the increases in the marketing budget over the past few years (\$478,000 total budget in Fiscal Year 2021, \$769,000 in FY2022, and \$769,202 in FY2023), and she thanked UBAC for its support in maintaining a higher marketing budget.
4. The FY2022 budget contained \$300,000 for Mindpower agency fees, including creative development, and \$51,000 for summer advertising. Previously advertising was not year-round. The FY2023 budget contains \$100,000 for Padilla agency management fees and \$500,000 for initial media advertising. Padilla represents a switch from creative development

to a management agency. The media advertising includes \$150,000 digital and social; \$165,000 airport; \$55,000 billboards; \$55,000 streaming tv; \$50,000 transit; and \$25,000 streaming radio. You are likely to see the ads (Google, Youtube, Spotify, Snapchat, etc.) if you are in high school or have high school-aged children.

5. Regional billboards and transit ads; tv, radio, and Google ads; Google search and display campaigns; and social media campaigns produced good results in 2022: website users increased by 48% and sessions increased by nearly 20%. UMW is continuing with these strategies in FY2023, and is looking at analytics every two weeks to make adjustments as needed. Youtube and Snapchat are going especially well.
6. This year's strategies also include targeting transfer students; expanding marketing from February-April to year-round; and expanding marketing from concentrating on the DC to Hampton Roads areas to including the entire state.
7. Ms. Jessee also reported the use of interactive ads to find out what is important to prospective students in order to direct advertising in those directions. The top results of what is important so far include outstanding professors, collaboration over competition, fun campus life, and variety of majors. Seeing what potential students look at once they click on the UMW web site is important to successful recruiting.
8. Dr. Bylenok asked for more information on billboards on I-95, which last year the committee was given to understand is an important part of advertising. Ms. Jessee replied that we have two billboards—one (digital) in the Richmond area and one (print) near Fredericksburg. They are expensive and hard to schedule. Dr. McClurken pointed out that they are increasingly hard to book, due to recent attempts to reduce billboards. Most people will not see the bulk of UMW's advertising, which is targeted to high school- and college-aged demographics, but bill boards are prioritized to build brand awareness in general.
9. Dr. Houghtalin asked for a little more information on what Padilla does. Dr. McClurken responded that they are chiefly helping with the media buys. UMW is just too small, for example, to make all the negotiations with billboard owners.
10. Dr. Houghtalin also asked about the targeting of potential students. She understood that UMW was now advertising across the state, but wondered if Youtube would not actually be reaching a larger audience. Ms. Jessee said that by directing Youtube to a particular in-state audience, its videos would be seen more frequently by the intended targets. Dr. Houghtalin asked about audiences in Maryland and New Jersey and so on, areas in which UMW previously recruited. Ms. Jessee said that her office does have a few areas targeted outside Virginia and is working closely with Melissa Yakabowski to identify any others that might pop up.
11. Ms. Oxford asked about geofencing and recruitment at community colleges. Was that throughout the state or just in the local area? Ms. Jessee responded that she would need to check with Padilla whether efforts were being directed only at the community colleges from which UMW usually recruits students, or if the efforts were state wide. She thought it was the former, but said that UMW could certainly redirect efforts as needed. Dr. McClurken said that efforts are directed at the colleges with which UMW has a partnership or agreement (Germanna, NOVA, J. Sargeant Reynolds, and Rappahannock) and noted that those colleges make up the highest percentage of community college students in the state. Ms. Oxford suggested that it would be easy to expand advertising to additional community colleges in Virginia. Dr. McClurken noted that students at the more rural community colleges often take courses online, so geofencing won't work for them and UMW would need different ways to reach them. Ms. Oxford pointed out the pipeline for funneling students from Germanna to

COB and suggested that more specialized pipelines from more community colleges and for more majors would build UMW enrollment and revenue.

12. Ms. Jessee added that marketing is also looking into geofencing Governor's schools. Later in the meeting, Dr. Houghtalin suggested that Ms. Jessee might also want to look into targeting students at the Governor's Language Academies held in the summer (the Governor's French Academy, German Academy, Latin Academy, etc.).
13. Dr. Bylenok asked if UMW's new Carnegie classification is being factored into our marketing. Ms. Jessee replied that her office has embraced the reclassification and has made sure that Google search terms related to it will find UMW. Dr. McClurken added that UMW has not always done a good job of selling who we are (that is, we are not football and the Greek system, but we are small classes, etc.) and that we are doing a better job of presenting the University now.
14. Dr. Bylenok asked if we are still working with Mindpower at all. Dr. McClurken said that we are still working with them on the web refresh and they may do a brand awareness survey for us in the future.
15. Dr. Bylenok asked about the web refresh and if the way that the eye is drawn to an internally-focused menu at the top of the homepage would continue. Ms. Jessee answered that the current internally-focused menu will be readily available on a separate landing page and the current home page will be focused on what prospective students need to see.
16. Dr. Bylenok further asked whether departmental pages will be centralized or remain decentralized. Dr. McClurken said that they would be increasingly centralized for the sake of clarity and consistency for prospective students, but that there will be an inwardly facing option available for departments to address current students. Not all of Mary Washington's 40,000+ web pages will be touched, and determinations will be made about what everyone needs to see and what needs to look attractive versus what a certain office or department simply needs to have available and functional. Dr. Bylenok mentioned that in addition to consistency, pages must be current. Outdated pages and broken links are a red flag to potential students.
17. Dr. Bylenok then asked what she called "Suzanne Sumner's favorite question," that is, "What keeps you up at night?" Ms. Jessee replied that the worry is how to reach the students that UMW is not currently reaching. There are always more platforms and tactics for reaching parents and families of prospective students, but reaching the students not currently being reached is the big issue. Dr. McClurken confirmed that concern by talking about the need to target the kind of students who are likely to be successful at UMW and likely to be interested in the kind of education we offer. The platforms for reaching out are constantly changing, and we are in an "arms race" with other institutions. Three years ago, marketing was not even a line-item in UMW's budget, but pulled from reserves. We can always spend more. The trick now is to spend wisely and aim at our targets.
18. Dr. Bylenok asked about this "arms race" and what other institutions are spending compared to us. Ms. Jessee said that the large state institutions are outspending us by millions. Dr. McClurken pointed out that we are not in the Reagan National Airport, while Virginia Tech probably spends a million dollars in advertising there each year. Dr. McClurken said that for UMW, which does not spend a million on ads, targeting is key—for example, Melissa Yakabouski bringing guidance counselors to campus to show them who and what we are. Then the guidance counselors can recommend us to students they think would be a success here. Ms. Ardo reported that current students at other Virginia colleges do not seem to know where UMW is, so name recognition with current college students is not high.

19. Dr. Houghtalin asked Ms. Jessee if she could identify a gap in UMW's marketing and why money spent to fill that gap would be well placed. Ms. Jessee replied that the Google search has a 16% click through rate, which is amazingly good, and more money there could be used to increase it. Money could be taken from elsewhere for Google, so really the answer is that more could be done overall with more resources—more partnerships with Admissions, more with the college search site Niche, etc.
20. Dr. Bylenok thanked Ms. Jessee and Dr. McClurken for coming and sharing information with UBAC, and asked the committee members to stay a bit longer for some committee business.
21. Dr. Bylenok completed the meeting by giving committee members the following plan for future meetings. We may reserve October 13th for writing the required report to the UFC about how UBAC's recommendations from the previous year were implemented. UBAC this year also wanted to meet with the Campus Police and/or Physical Plant Operations, and invitations are out to those offices. Mr. Catullo suggested checking with David Hatcher or Gary Hobson about Physical Plant Operations.

September 29: Melissa Yakabouski (Admissions)

October 6: Juliette Landphair (Student Affairs)

October 13: TBD

October 20: Marion Sanford (James Farmer Multicultural Center)

October 27: TBD

Nov 3: Jessica Machado (ODR)

Nov 10: Tevya Zukor (Talley Center)

Nov 17: Planning meeting for Final Report

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Liane Houghtalin

UBAC Co-secretary